ABSTRACT

The topic of the present study is "Role of meditation in the management of certain cardiovascular disorders amongst type A and type B patients". Cardiovascular disorders are the largest killers affecting millions of human lives all around the world. Although these pathologies are reasonably well controlled by different medical procedures, the fact that these procedures may have many hazardous side effects on physical as well as psychological wellbeing has led to the search for healthier options. Meditation has proved to be a strategy that not only promotes physical health but also enhances overall wellbeing of the individuals.

In the present study role of meditation in the management of cardiovascular disorders was investigated. The subjects fell into one of the following three disease groups - hypertension, angina and combined disease (i.e. subjects suffering simultaneously from both hypertension and angina). Each disease group was subdivided into two groups, one group underwent meditation and second group did not undergo meditation. Both groups underwent drug therapy. The nature of drug and dosage was same for all subjects in both the groups. Further, both the groups were equalized on certain parameters i.e. sex, family history of disease, marital status, occupation, rural/urban, and smoker/nonsmoker status. Each disease group also consisted of an equal number of type A and type B patients.

Research objectives formulated by the investigator were concerned with finding out (i) whether patients undergoing meditation showed greater improvement in management of systolic blood pressure
(SBP), diastolic blood pressure (DBP) and sense of wellbeing (SWB) than those not undergoing meditation in all the three disease groups, (ii) whether there was any difference between type A and type B patients in drawing benefit from meditation in terms of management of SBP, DBP and SWB, (iii) whether there was any difference between the two gender groups in drawing benefit from meditation in terms of SBP, DBP and SWB.

The sample for the present study was drawn by means of purposive sampling. The sample consisted of a total number of 60 subjects, those suffering from hypertension were 20 in number; angina and combined disease groups also consisted of 20 patients each.

Type A type B rating scale developed by Bortner (1966), was used to identify type A and type B subjects. In order to assess subjective wellbeing of the subjects, the researcher developed Sense of Well-Being Scale consisting of items related to symptoms of the disease and symptoms other than those of the disease. Before starting the intervention, written informed consent was taken from each subject. Each subject in the meditation group was explained the meditation procedure in detail and was given a copy of instructions for ready references. Both groups reported every week to the clinic and blood pressure record together with their responses on sense of well-being scale were noted. This procedure was followed for a period of 24 weeks.

Researcher used t-test to study the significance of difference between the means for various group comparisons made.
The findings of the study may be summarised as follows:

1. When the initial score on SBP, DBP and SWB of hypertension patients was compared with mean of reading obtained during 24 weeks, improvement was observed in both groups i.e. those undergoing meditation as well as not undergoing meditation. Extent of improvement was significantly greater in subjects undergoing meditation. Similar results were obtained in combined disease patients and angina patients.

2. Comparison of post-test scores on all parameters showed significantly greater advantage of meditation group over those who were not undergoing meditation in all the three disease groups.

3. It was also noted that, there was immediate lowering of blood pressure and increase in sense of wellbeing in the meditation group. Meditation resulted in a stable condition on all parameters.

4. There was no immediate fall in blood pressure and increase in sense of wellbeing in the group that was not undergoing meditation. Fluctuations were seen on all parameters throughout the entire period of study.

5. No significant difference was found between type A and type B subjects in the two treatment groups.

6. In terms of gender also no difference was observed in the two treatment groups.
7. Both groups i.e. meditation group and non-meditation group showed improvement on symptom-related sense of wellbeing. However, meditation group showed improvement on non-symptom related sense of wellbeing, also non-meditation group did not show improvement on non-symptom-related sense of wellbeing.

On the basis of results obtained the researcher suggests that doctors should include meditation as an additional intervention in their treatment regimen. In-depth studies of a limited number of cases may yield important information.