



Review Article

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ALTERNATIVE HEALING THERAPIES IN TODAY'S ERA

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ABSTRACT

In today's stressful circumstances, people are migrating away from conventional cures and methods to check for deeper healing and solutions. People are switching to life and incorporating spirituality into their regular life to make them comfortable and happier. Trying to get some spiritual healing techniques that work, many people have chosen to support and promote this new approach. There is something for everyone.

Keywords: Healing, Ayurveda, holistic, herbal, yoga

INTRODUCTION

Complementary and alternative medicine has been defined by National Centre for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) as an association of different medical and health care systems, applications, and products that are not presently admitted being a section of conventional medicine. A holistic doctor may apply all methods of health concern, from current medication to alternative remedies, to heal a patient. Holistic medicine is a process of healing that recognizes and judges the entire person, body, mind, spirit and emotions in the search for full health and wellness. Concurring to the holistic medicine philosophy, one can get a full health the main goal of holistic medicine method is by achieving proper balance in life. Sometimes doctors are unable to treat a person suffering from debilitating pain or disease. Alternative medicine may give some relief or only can help patients who deal with life-changing health problems. Even healthy people may also join in traditional techniques as acupuncture, homeopathy or yoga to analyze and to manage their health more holistically or avoid the chemicals used in standard drugs therapy.

Yoga

Yoga is an ancient system of Indian philosophy that emphasizes the balance of physical, mental and spiritual health¹. The mortal body is made up of earth, air, water, fire, and spirit. When these elements are in equilibrium, a person feels good health and immunity. An abundance or deficiency of one of the factors can produce a disturbance that reveals as an illness or pain which may be emotional, mental², physical, or spiritual. Yoga as a practice is an alternative therapy and a modern phenomenon which has been inspired by the ancient Indian method of Yoga. It includes holding stretches like a low-impact physical exercise and is often used for therapeutic purposes.

Mudras are a part of Yoga and it usually works with fingers that are helpful in certain locations for a certain measure of time to bring about healing and balance. Yoga helps people all over the world to relax and improve muscle strength and flexibility. Evidences has proved that yoga may be effective against back pain, blood pressure, cancer^{3,4}, epilepsy, menopause related symptoms, pediatric conditions, rheumatic disease, decrease inflammation and many more. Numerous studies have documented that yoga and meditation may cut down a decline in specific cognitive domains and brain structure.

Homeopathy

Homeopathy is a method of medicine which includes treating the person with profoundly diluted substances, delivered mainly in tablet form, with the purpose of triggering the body's natural way of healing. Based on their particular symptoms, a homeopath offer the utmost relevant medicine to each patient. Homeopathy has been popularly used worldwide for more than 200 years and was created by a German doctor, Samuel Hahnemann. He was disturbed with the harsh medical practices of the day and looked for a way to diminish the damaging side-effects affiliated with medical treatment. Homeopathic practitioners look at patients, and then prescribe a mixture of pills to return the body into a healthy condition and get rid of the disease. Doses are infinitely small and merge several herbal and plant-based remedies as well as meditation, yoga and different traditional methods. It usually works on the principle of "like cures like." A genuine homeopath usually gives plenty of time to his patient and note down his history by asking questions before prescribing any medication because of the principle of holistic healing methods where all our mind, body, emotions and spirit are interconnected.

Ayurveda

Ayurveda is the ancient Indian method of natural and holistic medicine which means, Ayurveda “the medicine of life” (the Sanskrit Ayur means “longevity” or “life” and Veda means “science”). It has been practiced primarily in the Indian subcontinent for 5,000 years. Natural treatment or herbal remedy indicates to personal use of goods accessible in nature, essentially medicinal herbs, in consequence of their curative purpose. It further includes supporting a natural healthy lifestyle which will support person to sustain a vibrant and healthy life. Mankind in India has relied on the ancient method of treatment by means of Ayurveda for thousands of years to treat diseases. Ayurvedic practitioners apply herbs, diet, breathing, massage and meditation to heal the whole self and reestablish balance in the body. They center on maintaining a healthful personal or enhanced life energy, which shares many characteristics with the qi of Chinese medicine. An inadequately handled Prana is thought to cause illness, and this illness can solely be treated by realigning the body, spirit and mind to rebalance the prana.

Hypnosis

Hypnosis is a method of treatment in which a patient is brought into a changed state of consciousness, then execute detailed suggestions to help the patient to develop his health and well-being. Hypnosis has long been applied to help and encourage patients to stop smoking, lose weight and treat insomnia. Hypnosis in addition shows promises for stress relief, pain management, headaches, dental pain and childbirth.

Massage Therapy

Massage therapy has been developed into a mainstream part of the improved lifestyle, but few understand it as a reliable medical treatment. During the massage, therapists manipulate muscles to decrease and relieve pain and tension, but a few types of massage may additionally help to improve a variety of other health conditions. Massage has health benefits also, primarily for weekend warriors and professional athletes. Massage method is an application of stroke and pressure on the body to increase circulation, clear away stress and reduce muscle pain. Massage therapy can give comfort and increased body strength, as well as can be an invaluable way of losing physical and emotional stress.

Acupuncture and Acupressure

Acupuncture is the method of use of fine-gauged needles injected into precise points on the body to stimulate or separate the flow of energy. This ancient Oriental procedure is used to relieve pain or boost immunity by restoring energy flow. Massage, herbal and Ayurvedic medicine and nutritional counseling often used in combination with acupuncture. Acupressure is the application of use of finger and hand pressure over particular points on the human body to alleviate pain and distress and to influence the capacity of internal vital organs and whole body systems. Several approaches are applied to release tension and reestablish the natural movement of positive energy in the body.

Guided Imagery

Guided imagery is a traditional mind-body technique which is also regarded as a form of hypnosis and offers tools to direct one's concentration on images held in the mind's eye. It is also growing ground for cancer patients and stroke victims. Guided Imagery is not necessarily just confined to visual, but rather involves use of all the senses. This treatment can be made more effective by making efforts to smell, feel or even taste the imagined scene. A few minutes every day can reap fruitful results than spending more time on it less often. A person experiencing guided image therapy is usually provided something to concentrate on such as voice or verbal evidences, allowing them to access into a situation of complete and total relaxation. Guided imagery procedure does the creative process to generate an image of something a person intends to achieve. In order to fight stress a person might be taught to visualize them to be calm, comfortable and trouble free particularly if they are anticipating a condition that could exacerbate their stress.

Meditation

Meditation has been broadly defined as “an intentional and self-regulated focusing of attention, whose purpose is to relax and calm the mind and body”^{5,6}. Studies have shown that meditation is useful to reduce perceived stress⁷, anxiety^{7,8}, and depressive symptoms⁹, improve quality of life, decrease sleep disturbance¹⁰, improve several domains of cognition¹⁰, reduce sympathetic activation and enhance cardiovagal tone¹¹, both acutely and long-term in clinical as well as non-clinical populations. During the meditation, patients concentrate on slow, steady breathing and keeping the mind clear of stress and distraction. A few also use a trigger word or idea to support them ease into practice while others may even combine prayer or spiritual teachings. For the most of practitioners, meditation gives a free, personalized and ingenious means of stress relief that can be performed practically anywhere and at any time. For others, this application may also have far-reaching health effects. Moreover, it shows there's a growing body of scientific evidence to support its effectiveness.

Aromatherapy

Aromatherapy is a method of alternative medicine that uses volatile and aromatic plant materials acknowledged as essential oils and different aromatic compounds which are aimed at improving and altering a person's mind, mood, cognitive function or health. The essential oils applied in aromatherapy own a different composition related to other herbal manufactured product because the distillation applied in aromatherapy recovers the lighter phytomolecules. The oils are smelled, implemented externally, or ingested. Other applications of aromatherapy involve anxiety and pain control, increase of vital energy and recovering from short-term memory loss, relaxation and decrease in hair loss and decrease of eczema-induced itching. Most of the times it cannot be used directly on the skin or consumed.

Crystal Therapy or Healing

Crystal therapy is an ancient pseudoscientific healing process concerned with interpreting and treating patients holistically through the correct arrangement of crystals on the body and the encircling room. Crystals have a life force in them which is known as piezoelectricity. This energy works by amplifying the intentions and healing and working for the highest good of all concerned. Crystal therapy process of healing is a non-invasive, relaxing, natural and pleasant process. Whether a person assumes in the physical healing qualities of crystals or not, the treatment itself will allow a chance to lie back, relax and get in touch with positive body's energies so one can start feeling refreshed, recovered and de-stressed - an excellent method for improving physical and mental health.

There is surprisingly little observable proof to verify the unsuccessfulness of crystal healing on a medical level of treatment. However, crystals have been used, admired and appreciated for thousands of years for their aesthetic excellence and for the peace, relaxation and harmony they appear to invoke.

Herbal Medicines

The use of herbs and their chemical properties is to reduce particular conditions and to promote and support the function of various vital body systems. Herbal formulas have three essential functions: health management and maintenance, elimination and detoxification, and health building. The traditional use of medicinal plants can lead to the invention of creative and potent botanical agents in the treatment of various diseases. Some 7000 natural plant and mixture of herbs are used in modern medicine; most of these had been accepted for centuries as a traditional healer. Ayurveda is a prehistoric science popular in Asia and Europe and is fast gaining recognition worldwide. In Ayurveda, naturally occurring herbs and shrubs are used to offer a cure for medical ailments without causing any undue side effects. Nowadays, suitable drugs and preparations from natural sources are the centers of attraction in the field of research for preventing immunological complications of different organs¹².

Reiki

Reiki is a Japanese term denoting Universal Life Energy. The word reiki is made up of two Japanese words: rei that means God's wisdom or higher power and Ki which signifies life force or energy. Reiki is based on the belief that when spiritual energy is channelled through a Reiki practitioner, the patient's spirit is healed, which in turn heals the physical body. Application of Reiki is to reduce stress, begin the healing and relaxation process so the body can heal from ailments within and restore unbalanced vital energy. Although individual results may vary, reiki helps to reduce symptoms and can provide a cure. Reiki is a Japanese technique for stress reduction and relaxation that also promotes healing. It is administered by "lying on hands" and is based on the idea that an unseen "life force energy" flows through us and is what causes us to be alive.

CONCLUSION

Alternative healing is an emerging field that supports the life process. It is relatively nontoxic and biocompatible treatment modality. Holistic health is a proposal to life. Rather than concentrating on illness or particular parts of the body, aforementioned ancient method for health acknowledges the whole person and how he or she communicates with his or her environment. It maintains the connection of mind, body, and spirit. The goal is to get best well-being, where everything is performing the very best that is achievable. With holistic health people acquire responsibility for their personal level of health and everyday preferences are used to hold charge of one's personal health. Depending on the care, a person can choose healing methods; there may be risks in using particular complementary or alternative treatments. The knowledge and understanding of Holistic approach of treatments are still an ongoing process and further investigations should be carried out in this regard.

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