



P-ISSN: 2394-1685
E-ISSN: 2394-1693
Impact Factor (ISRA): 5.38
IJPESH 2021; 8(3): 31-34
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www.kheljournal.com
Received: 18-03-2021
Accepted: 24-04-2021

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Effect of Jñāna mudra on anxiety level among young adults

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22271/kheljournal.2021.v8.i3a.2058>

Abstract

Gyan/Jñāna mudra the mudra of knowledge gives rise to the knowledge, the root chakra and reduce tension and depression. Stimulating the air element this pose spiritually awakens and calm the body and mind and resulted into increasing memory power, pituitary gland production and stimulate nervous system. It sharpens the brain and increases the concentration ability, building mental prowess. A regular practice of this mudra considerably controls the level of anxiety, anger, stress, depression and even insomnia. For the present study, male and female students aged between 18-25 years were included. Yogmudra intervention (Jñāna Mudra) was tried as per experimental design and anxiety level was measured using through SCAT questionnaire (Sports competition anxiety Test). Scores were recorded before and after performing yogmudra. This was observed that regular practice of Jñāna Mudra in normal healthy person creates and improves mental toughness and reduces level of anxiety.

Keywords: Yogmudra, Jñāna mudra, chin mudra, anxiety

Introduction

Mudras has been described as attitudes of energy flow, designed to connect discrete pranic force with Universal or cosmic force. There exists a plethora of ancient techniques associated with yoga. Yogmudra is a primeval style practiced along with pranayama or meditation. The word Mudra finds its roots in Sanskrit meaning 'gesture' or 'attitude'. Mudras represent the psychic, emotional, devotional and aesthetic gestures or attitudes ^[1].

In scientific expressions, mudras act as a tool to access and inspire the unconscious reflexes and primal, instinctive habit patterns which are originated in the primitive areas of brain around the brain stem. They create a subtle, non-intellectual connection with such areas. Each mudra establishes a specific link and simultaneously affects the body, mind and prana differently. The target is to generate fixed, repetitive postures and gestures which can be easily snapped by the practitioner out of natural habits and thus set up a more polished consciousness ^[2].

The science of mudra is an ancient science which relates to the energy flows in mind and body. Its an expression of internal feeling by ways of posturers, hands, palm, fingers, feet and body ^[3]. This is an integral part of yoga and a scientific knowledge of spirituality and physical wellbeing. Mudra involve the entire body, by doing mudras, subtle hand and finger movements make important connections in the nervous system and stimulate specific energy pathways. These mudras (hand postures) have potential benefits for physical, mental and emotional wellbeing ^[4]. There are mudras to address headaches, pain, anxiety, depression, stress, the health of lungs and heart, cholesterol, pain in any body part and almost every system of the body ^[5].

Anxiety is an individual's response to dangers or threats, real or imagined. While some degree of anxiety response is beneficial to prepare the body to cope better with the stressful condition, excessive anxiety results in deterioration in performance. Thus, one can speak of normal anxiety and pathological anxiety ^[6]. Pathological anxiety is an inappropriate response to a given stimulus, by virtue of its intensity or duration. It probably results from a poorly regulated or overreactive adrenergic system of the midbrain locus ceruleus, and manifests as heightened sympathetic activity ^[7].

Science of mudra

The principle of mudras is that the transfer of energy takes place from higher level to the lower level. This law is applicable in thermodynamics, electricity, electrostatics, magnetism, atomic and nuclear bonding. According to Ayurveda, human body is made up of five elements: Agni (fire), Vayu (Air), Aakash (space), Pruthvi (Earth) and Jal (water). Under healthy conditions, our body has an optimum balance of all these elements. However, imbalance in any one of them affects the body in a negative way. This ultimately leads to illnesses. When specific mudras are performed, any imbalance in the above stated five elements is restored and the person recovers [8].

Jnāna mudras

The word jnana means wisdom or knowledge thus jnana mudra is the gesture of intuitive knowledge. Jnāna mudra, therefore, is the psychic gesture of consciousness. Symbolically, the small, ring and middle fingers represent the three gunas or qualities of nature: tamas, inertia; rajas, activity and creativity; and sattwa, luminosity and harmony. Jnana Mudra (psychic gesture of knowledge) Assume a comfortable meditation posture. Fold the index fingers so that they touch the inside root of the thumbs. Straighten the other three fingers of each hand so that they are relaxed and slightly apart. Place the hands on the knees with the palms facing down. Relax the hands and arms [9].

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was drawn for the study:

1. The 4 weeks Jnāna yogmudra interventions will have positive impact on anxiety level on young female adults.

2. The 4 weeks Jnāna yogmudra interventions will have positive impact on anxiety level on young male adults.

Methodology

For the study Pre-test and Post-test randomized group experimental design was used. For the present study 25 male and 25 female students for experimental group. The following practices were performed by the experimental groups for 4 weeks except Sundays and holidays. The training program was prepared for the students keeping in view to improve the selected physiological characteristics. Preparation and Gayatri Mantra: 3 minutes followed by yogmudra practice for 15 minutes and ending om for 2 minutes. In this study psychological characteristic anxiety was measured pre- and post-training thorough pre- and post-experimental research method in which standardized methods have been used for collection of data. Pre-test and Post-test data of selected physiological characteristic were collected with the help of reliable tools of measurements to find out the significant difference. The data was collected with the reliable instruments and tools before and after giving the Yogmudra Intervention to the experimental group using SCAT questionnaire (Sports competition anxiety Test). Scores were recorded before and after performing Yogmudra. For the purpose of the study, descriptive statistic (mean, standard deviation, standard error and independent t-test) as the statistical technique and the level of significance was set at the 0.05 level.

Analysis of data

Tables Effect of Gyan/Jnana Mudra on Anxiety level

Table 1: Female Students

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean		
Before Training	25	20.8800	2.90574	.58115		
After Training	25	15.6400	1.38082	.27616		
Test Value = 0						
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Before Training	35.929	24	.000	20.88000	19.6806	22.0794
After Training	56.633	24	.000	15.64000	15.0700	16.2100

Table 2: Male Students

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean		
Before Training	25	21.4400	2.16179	.43236		
After Training	25	16.1200	2.18556	.43711		
Test Value = 0						
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Before Training	49.589	24	.000	21.44000	20.5477	22.3323
After Training	36.878	24	.000	16.12000	15.2178	17.0222

Table 3: Impact of Gyan/Jnana Mudra on Anxiety level: on. Value=Mean±SD

S. No.	Before yoga mudra Mean±SD	After yoga mudra Mean±SD	P value
Male students	21.44±2.16	16.12±2.18	0.1
Female students	20.88±2.90	15.64±1.38	0.001

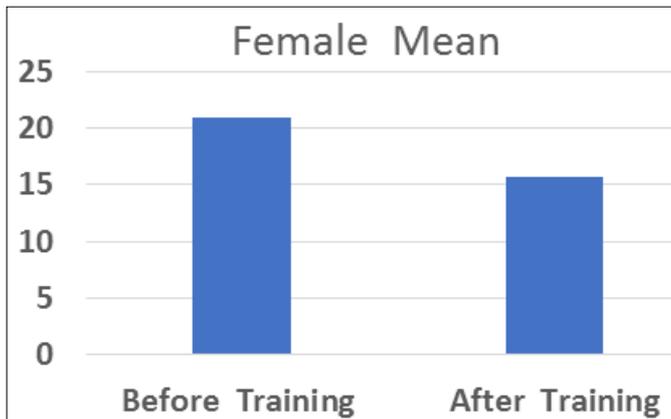


Fig 1: Significance of difference between pre and post (** $P < 0.1$, *** $P < 0.01$ Student's 't' test)



Fig 2: Significance of difference between pre and post (** $P < 0.1$, *** $P < 0.05$ Student's 't' test)

Results and Discussion

The data for 20 students who performed Jñāna Yogmudra for 15 minutes were analyzed. The results obtained are expressed as mean \pm standard deviation (Table-3) The effect of Jñāna Yogmudra on experimental group of male and female students measuring anxiety is as shown in table. The level of anxiety data shows statistically significant results after performing Jñāna Yogmudra. Further Breathing Rate also showed similar results. All experimental values are significantly lower than pretest result.

In a study conducted by Kuldeep Singh (2015) showed that hand and fingers gestures stimulates energy flows and makes significance connections in nervous system and specific energy pathways. Yogis of ancient time experienced and designed hand areas and its reflexes associated with various parts of nervous system and effects on other organs of body and blood circulation. The study also showed that mudra increases the blood circulation to various parts of the brain and to the important junction of nerves and glands^[10].

In a study conducted by Balaji P V Deekshitulu (2016) reviewed that interventions of mudra yog reduce and control stress, anxiety, depression, fear and promote many other psycho- physiological health issues. The study also indicated the beneficial effects of mantra therapy on the level of mental and physical health of an individual^[11].

Another study on yoga hand mudra conducted by Deepti Tripathi *et al.*, (2016) studied that yog hand mudra helps in a novel way and to be effective in controlling high blood pressure and found a effective way of normalizing high blood pressure. This was also studied that hand mudra is helpful in emergency situation where immediate medical help is not available^[12].

Conclusion

Regular practice of Jñāna mudra yoga may reduce the anxiety level to normal which indicates sound mind, balanced thinking and appropriate mental responses to a situation of danger or threat and it also helps in improvement of mental wellbeing and mental fitness of individuals.

It may be concluded from the findings from the present study, that Jñāna yogmudra interventions decreases the level of anxiety to normal responses to situation of anxiety in a healthy person. A significant level of anxiety decrease was indicating better thinking and responsiveness in an individual. Therefore, it is suggested that Jñāna yogmudra practices is an appropriate solution for maintaining good mental health and fitness, it is helpful in reducing anxiety level and to deal with psycho-physiological related problems.

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