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Common Herbs and *Yoga* Practices for Wellness

Saroj Kumar Sahu and Sheetal Arya

Divine Life Holistic Health Centre

3rd Floor, Subash Chandra Bose Arcade, Cuttack - 753001, Odisha, India

Email – Id: drsarose@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The process of holistic healing is achieved by herbs and *yoga* practices treats through. The Herbs and *yoga* practice are well established by many medical research studies for their physical, mental and spiritual benefits. These are beneficial for the management of diabetes, respiratory disorders, hypertension, hypotension and many lifestyle related disorders. Both are ancient and traditional healing system. The major non communicable diseases are Cardiovascular Diseases (CVD) such as heart attacks and stroke, Diabetes, Chronic Respiratory Diseases (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Diseases and Asthma) and Common Cancers (Oral, Breast and Cervical). They are the leading cause of death. Most of the non-communicable diseases can be prevented by holistic life style which includes Herb and *Yoga* therapies.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is an ancient and traditional healing system which relies on herbs for maintaining good health. Herbs are at the heart of Ayurvedic medications. Whole flowers, roots, stems and leaves are manually processed in various ways and their optimal potential is used. Over 15000 herbs are mentioned in scriptures of which only around 850 are commonly used in Ayurvedic medicines today (Balkrishna 2008).

Yoga is an art and science for healthy living. *Yoga* is the science of right living

and is intended to be incorporated in daily life. The aim of *yoga* practice is to overcome all kinds of sufferings of life with holistic health, happiness and harmony (MDNIY 2019).

It works on all aspects of the person: the physical, vital, mental, emotional, psychic and spiritual. The science of *yoga* applies itself to all aspects of life. The yogic practices are potent means to restore and maintain physical and mental health. On a more practical level, *yoga* is a means of balancing and harmonizing the body, mind

and emotions (Saraswati 2004; Karamananda 2006).

DIFFERENT TYPES OF WELLNESS HERBS

I. BOWEL WELLNESS HERBS

1) **Beal** (*Aegle marmelos* – **Bael Tree**) – It offers efficient management of intestinal infections. It has antidiarrheal and antidysenteric actions. It helps to maintain favourable intestinal flora.

2) **Triphala - Haritaki** (*Terminalia chebula* – **Chebulic Myrobalan**), **Vibhitaki** (*Terminalia chebula* – **Belliric Myrobalan**) and **Amalaki** (*Embelica officinalis* – **Indian Gooseberry**) – It is the prokinetic cleanser. It improves digestion and assimilation, cleanses and tones the GI tract, acts as an effective detox and corrects constipation. It has non habit forming effective laxative action (Sharma 1999; Balkrishna 2008; Sharma & Dash 2011; www.himalayawellness.com 2020).

II. DIGESTIVE WELLNESS HERBS

1) **Sunthi** (*Zingiber officinale* – **Ginger**) – It is the dependable anti-nausea therapy. It stimulates digestion. It has carminative and anti-nausea properties.

2) **Trikatu** (*Piper longum* – **Indian Long Pepper**, *Piper nigrum* - **Black Pepper** and *Zingiber officinale* - **Ginger**) – It is the digestive par excellence. It enhances metabolism, reduces mucus and increases bioavailability of nutrients (Sharma 1999; Balkrishna 2008; Sharma & Dash 2011; www.himalayawellness.com 2020).

III. GASTRIC WELLNESS HERBS

1) **Yastimadhu** (*Glycyrrhiza glabra* – **Licorice**) – It is used for holistic management of acid peptic disease (APD). It provides relief from gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) (Sharma 1999;

Balkrishna 2008; Sharma & Dash 2011; www.himalayawellness.com 2020).

IV. SKIN WELLNESS HERBS

1) **Haridra** (*Curcuma longa* – **Turmeric**) – It is the versatile cytoprotective in chronic skin diseases. It offers the powerful antioxidant ‘curcumin’.

2) **Manjistha** (*Rubia cordifolia* – **Indian madder**) – It is effective in skin pigmentation disorders. It eliminates toxins and purifies blood.

3) **Neem** (*Azadirachta indica*) – It is derma specialist. It exhibits antibacterial, antiviral, anti-inflammatory and immunomodulatory properties. It removes toxins from the body and purifies blood. It is safe and effective for comprehensive management of skin health (Sharma 1999; Balkrishna 2008; Sharma & Dash 2011; www.himalayawellness.com 2020).

V. GENERAL WELLNESS HERBS

1) **Asvagandha** (*Withania Somnifera* – **Winter Cherry**) - It calms nerves, revives mind and body. It is a natural, safe, anti-stress herb that helps cope with life’s daily stress. It is safe and effective for comprehensive management of stress. It promotes sexual health by uplifting the mood, reducing anxiety, improving energy levels and fertility, thus supporting sexual performance. It promotes physical and mental health, rejuvenates the body in debilitated conditions and increases longevity.

2) **Tulasi** (*Ocimum sanctum* – **Holy Basil**) – It ensures rapid control of upper respiratory disorders.

3) **Vasaka** (*Adhatoda vasika* - **Malabar Nut**) – It is an effective respiratory care.

4) **Karela** (*Momordica charantia* – **Bitter Gourd**) – It is the secure glycemetic control from nature.

5) **Meshashringi** (*Gymnema sylvestre* – **Gymnema**) – It is the ‘sugar destroyer’

that reduces craving for sweet foods. It helps to inhibit hyperglycemia (Sharma 1999; Balkrishna 2008; Sharma & Dash 2011; www.himalayawellness.com 2020).

VI. CARDIAC WELLNESS HERBS

1) **Arjuna** (*Terminalia arjuna* – **Arjuna**) – It is used for comprehensive control of hypertension.

2) **Lasuna** (*Allium sativum* - **Garlic**) – It prevents cardiovascular diseases and lowers plasma lipid levels. It has cholesterol-lowering effect.

3) **Shuddha – Guggula** (*Commiphora wightii* – **Indian Bdellium Tree**) – It is the effective lipid regulator. It lowers Low Density Lipoprotein (LDL). It supports weight control and body fat reduction (Sharma 1999; Balkrishna 2008; Sharma & Dash 2011; www.himalayawellness.com 2020).

VII. URINARY WELLNESS

1) **Punarnava** (*Boerhaavia diffusa* – **Spreading Hogweed**) – It is used for comprehensive control of urinary tract infection. It has diuretic properties.

VII. Immune Wellness Herbs

1) **Amalaki** (*Emblica officinalis* – **Indian Gooseberry**) – It is nature's prime antioxidant. It helps maintain immunity. It has anti-aging properties that improve skin health.

2) **Guduchi** (*Tinospora cordifolia* – **Tinospora Gulancha**) – It strengthens anti-infective response. It is an effective immunomodulator – builds up immunity (Sharma 1999; Balkrishna 2008; Sharma & Dash 2011; www.himalayawellness.com 2020).

VIII. BONE AND JOINT WELLNESS HERBS

1) **Hadjod** (*Cissus quadrangularis* – **Winged Treebine**) – It accelerates fracture healing and increases bone

strength. It also relieves pain and inflammation. It increases bone mineral density (BMD).

2) **Shallaki** (*Boswellia serrata* - **Boswellia**) – It is the key to healthy joints. It decreases knee pain, increases knee flexion and walking distance. It has anti-arthritic and analgesic properties.

3) **Shigru** (*Moringa pterygosperma*- **Drumstick**) – It alleviates joint inflammation. It has anti-arthritic, anti-inflammatory.

IX. MIND WELLNESS HERBS

1) **Brahmi** (*Bacopa monnieri* – **Bacopa**) – It is the cerebral herb. It promotes clarity of thoughts, calmness, memory and concentration.

XII. SLEEP WELLNESS HERBS

1) **Tagara** (*Valeriana wallichii* – **Indian Valerian**) – It relaxes the mind and promotes sleep. It provides sedative and sleep-enhancing effects. It restores circadian rhythm and maintains daytime freshness.

XIII. MEN'S WELLNESS HERBS

1) **Gokshura** (*Tribulus terrestris* – **Small Caltrops**) – It revives libido and intensifies performance. It improves the sexual desire and drive, which subsequently improves sexual performance. It helps increase muscle mass.

2) **Kapikachhu** – (*Mucuna pruriens* – **Cowhage**) – It elevates sperm count. It significantly improves sperm count and motility. It helps in the management of stress-related infertility.

XIV. WOMEN'S WELLNESS HERBS

1) **Shatavari** (*Asparagus racemosus* – **Asparagus**) – It promotes lactation. It has estrogenic effect on the female glands and reproductive system. It boosts postpartum health.

XV. WEIGHT MANAGEMENT HERBS

1) **Vrikshamla** (*Garcinia indica* - **Garcinia**) - It is successfully used for weight control. It stimulates the metabolic fire that improves metabolism and oxidises fat. It acts as appetite suppressant. It has also anti-glycation activities.

COMMON YOGA PRACTICES FOR WELLNESS AND LONGEVITY.

I. CALANA KRIYAS / LOOSENING PRACTICES

The loosening practices are yogic *sukshma vyayamas* help to increase microcirculation. These practices can be done while standing and sitting.

A. Griva Sakti Vikasaka (Griva Sanchalana - Neck Movement) : These are Neck bending, Neck stretching, Neck twisting, Neck rotation and *Skandha cakra* (shoulder rotation).

B. Shoulder's Movement : These are Shoulder's Stretch and *Skandha Cakra* (shoulder rotation).

C. Trunk Movement : Trunk twisting (*Kati Sakti Vikasaka*).

D. Knee Movement : Strengthening the knees (*Janu Sakti Vikasaka*). (Saraswati 2004; Brahmachari; Director, MDNIY 2019)

II. YOGASANAS

A. Standing Postures : These are *Tadasana* (Palm tree pose), *Padahasthasana* (Hand to foot pose), *Trikonasana* (Triangle pose), *Vrksasana* (The Tree posture), *Utkatasana* (Chair pose) and *Virabhadrasana II* (Warrior pose II) · (Saraswati 2004; Iyenger 2019; MDNIY 2019).

B. Surya Namaskara (salutation to the sun) : The postures are *Pranamasana* (Prayer pose), *Hasta Utthanasana* (Raise arm pose), *Padahasthasana* (Hand to foot pose), *Ashwa Sanchalanasana* (Equestrian

pose), *Parvtasana* (Mountain pose), *Ashtanga Namaskara* (Salute with eight parts or points), *Bhujangasana* (Cobra pose), *Parvtasana* (Mountain pose), *Ashwa Sanchalanasana* (Equestrian pose), *Padahasthasana* (Hand to foot pose), *Hasta Utthanasana* (Raise arm pose) and *Pranamasana* (Prayer pose) · (Saraswati 2004; Iyenger 2019; MDNIY 2019).

C. Sitting Postures : The postures are *Bhadrasana* (Gracious pose), *Vajrasana* (Thunderbolt pose), *Ardha Ushtrasana* (Half camel pose), *Ushtrasana* (Camel pose), *Shashankasana* (Pose of the moon or hare pose) and *Meru Vakrasana* (spinal twist) · (Saraswati 2004; Iyenger 2019; MDNIY 2019).

D. Prone Postures : The postures are *Makarasana* (The Crocodile Posture), *Bhujangasana* (Cobra pose) and *Shalabhasana* (Locust pose).

E. Supine Postures : The postures are *Setubandhasana* (The Bridge Posture), *Utthanpadasana* (Raised leg pose), *Pavana muktasana* (The Wind Releasing Posture) and *Shavasana* (Corpse pose / Dead Body pose).

F. Inverted Postures : The postures are *Halasana* (Plough pose) and *Sarvangasana*.

III. Kriya (Detoxification Procedure) : *Kapalabhati* (Frontal brain cleansing).

IV. Pranayama: The *pranayama* practised are *Nadisodhana* or *Anuloma Viloma pranayama* (Alternate Nostril Breathing), *Sitali pranayama* (cooling breath) and *Bhramari pranayama* (Humming bee breath) (Saraswati 2004; Saraswati 2012; Gharote et al. 2017; Maheshananda et al. 2018).

V. Relaxation : The relaxation practices are relaxation *asanas*, *yoganidra* and abdominal breath awareness in *Savasana*.

VI. Dhyana (Meditation) : The practices are meditative postures, sambhavi mudra, khechari mudra, *ajapa japa* (using the mantra *so-ham*) and *antarmouna / vipasana* (inner silence).

VII. Mantra Japa : It is continuous repetition of a mantra. *Japa* produce positive mental tracts, helping us to gradually overcome stress (Digambarji et al. 2017; Bharati 2019).

VIII. Yuktahara (Mitahara) : One should take half stomachful of wholesome food and fill a quarter with pure water and leaving the rest free. It plays a vital part in keeping up perfect health because almost all diseases are due to irregularity of meals. It advocates appropriate food and food habits for healthy living. A vegetarian diet is usually recommended, and for a person over 30 years, two meals a day should suffice, except in cases of illness or very high physical activity or labor (Sivananda 2003; Sharma & Dash 2011).

IX. Yukta-Karma : It advocates right karmas or actions for a healthy living.

CONCLUSION

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Even today people in remote villages and the tribal's in far-flung areas have great faith in the effectiveness of medicinal herbs provided by nature. Rich and vast traditional experience and knowledge of herbs is still available in villages and tribal areas. Medicinal herbs do not have side effects. Therefore a thorough knowledge of herbs and of the methods of their use becomes all the more important, so also of yogic methods (Balkrishna 2008).

Herbs and *yoga* practices treats through the process of holistic healing. The physical, mental and spiritual benefits of herbs and *yoga* practice are well established by many medical research studies. These are beneficial for physical fitness, musculoskeletal functioning and cardiovascular health. It is beneficial in the management of diabetes, respiratory disorders, hypertension, hypotension and many lifestyle related disorders. Both help to reduce depression, fatigue, anxiety disorders and stress. *Ayurveda* and *Yoga* are essentially the paths to liberation from all the bondages.

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