

Meditation beats workplace stress

Meditation really does work to ease stress at work according to one of the most thoroughly designed studies of meditation ever published. Full-time workers who used Sahaja Yoga meditation became much less stressed and depressed compared to more conventional approaches to relaxation or even placebo.

A team of researchers, at Sydney University's Meditation Research Programme, monitored stress levels of full-time Australian workers in Sydney's CBD to determine the effectiveness of meditation in combating this widespread and expensive problem.

The 8 week clinical trial provides strong evidence that there are measurable, practical and clinically relevant effects that appear to be specific to Sahaja Yoga meditation.

The study divided volunteers into three groups. And those who used Sahaja Yoga meditation showed significant reduction in their stress levels compared to those who used other methods of meditation that didn't involve thoughtless awareness, which usually only generate a placebo effect at best.

It's one of only a few meditation studies in the world that clearly demonstrates an effect that is much greater than just placebo hence it has broad and important implications for all levels of society.

Work stress is described by many experts as a modern epidemic. It costs the Australian economy \$15 billion per year and the US economy more than \$300 billion. It is a leading cause of absenteeism, causing both mental health problems such as anxiety and physical problems such as heart disease. Sahaja Yoga can now be confidently put forward as a simple, low cost intervention that can help prevent this.

The strategies currently available to tackle work stress often have limited effectiveness. This is where this study is remarkably relevant. It shows that a simple, mental silence orientated meditation skill, reduces stress significantly more than other often more expensive approaches to stress management.

Another remarkable aspect of the study was the impact on depressive mood. Depression is a major problem in our society, so any low cost intervention that reduces the risk of depression is of great public health significance. This study, along with the evidence from other research that we have done, indicates that strategies such as Sahaja Yoga should be used to prevent some of the major mental health problems that are facing our community.

A substantial proportion of depression in the community starts as works stress, says recent Australian research. Given the shortage of other options to prevent the mental health epidemic that threatens the younger generation, we should seriously examine the potential of this unique finding to stem the tide of depression that affects our communities.

Stress is not just limited to the workplace. In western countries, studies estimate that more than 70% of medical consultations feature stress as a major issue. Until now medical practitioners have been at a loss to know what to recommend that is safe, effective and scientifically evaluated to tackle this stress. This study clearly says that Sahaja Yoga is something that health professionals can confidently recommend to both prevent and reduce stress.

Dr Ramesh Monocha suggested



www.freemeditation.com.au and www.researchingmeditation.com as good places to start to learn meditation.

Source: Journal of Evidence Based Complementary Medicine