

Effectiveness of Vipassana in Improving Mental Health: A Review Paper

Abstract

Vipassana, is one of an India's oldest technique of meditation, enabling an individual to be aware of the things as they are. Vipassana is a process helping in self change by self-observation, *the object is to eventually reach a state of inner and outer calmness and balance of mind.* It focuses on the deep interconnection between mind and body. It is a Self-exploratory process to the regular foundation of brain and body that breaks up mental pollution, bringing about a better personality loaded with adoration and empathy. As indicated by the World Health Organization (WHO), mental health is a condition of prosperity wherein the individual understands his or her very own capacities, can adapt to the typical worries of life, can work gainfully and productively, and can make a commitment to his or her locale. This study made an attempt to study the effectiveness of Vipassana as a technique to improve general mental health of the individuals. Researcher has reviewed 23 research papers to get the overall understanding of the subject matter.

Keywords: Vipassana, Mental Health.

Introduction

Vipassana, is one of an India's oldest technique of meditation, enabling an individual to be aware of the things as they are. Vipassana is a process helping in self change by self observation, *the object is to eventually reach a state of inner and outer calmness and balance of mind.* It focuses on the deep interconnection between mind and body. It is a Self-exploratory process to the regular foundation of brain and body that breaks up mental pollution, bringing about a better personality loaded with adoration and empathy. It continuously interconnect and condition the life of the mind. Vipassana meditation can be said as a procedure of refine the brain of its baser impulses so one starts to show the really human characteristics of widespread generosity, graciousness, compassion, resistance, poise, and so forth. and at the same time picks up a knowledge into the genuine nature and reason for human presence. This is accomplished in an extremely logical way through an efficient development of right Mindfulness combined with non-reactivity; in other words, referring towards undistracted attention to whatever is going on in an organism - with its five senses and the mind which works in and through it-with no combination of subjective decisions or responses.

The system of Vipassana is a way helping an individual to get rid from all misery; it kills the hankering, fear and numbness which are in charge of every one of our agonies. The individuals who practice it expel, gradually, the main drivers of their anguish and consistently rise up out of the obscurity of previous pressures to lead upbeat, solid, profitable lives.

As indicated by the World Health Organization (WHO), mental health is a condition of prosperity wherein the individual understands his or her very own capacities, can adapt to the typical worries of life, can work gainfully and productively, and can make a commitment to his or her locale. Jahoda subdivided mental well-being into three areas: self-acknowledgment, in that people can completely use their potential; feeling of control over the environment; and feeling of self-governance, for example capacity to distinguish, face, and take better decisions and solve problems. Purpose here is to see does Vipassana actually has any effect on mental health of individuals. Various research papers were reviewed to see the same. Studies have confirmed the potential advantages of long- term meditation techniques on non-secular, physiological and psychological functioning. However results of short term meditation practices haven't been totally explored. The researchers found that meditation offers large advantages in uniting the body, mind and spirit. Incorporating it into routine will facilitate better health, increase strength and cut back symptoms of

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stress, depression and anxiety. It offers instant gratification and lasting transformation, giving you peace, tranquility and satisfaction in every sphere of life. Mindfulness meditation has beneficial effects on brain and body. With enhanced awareness comes the ability to discover oneself and improve interpersonal relationships. Through the technique of introspection,

individuals become benignant and empathetic to one another.

Aim of the Study

to provide an understanding of effects of Vipassana meditation on improving mental health.

S.No.	Title of Paper	Name of Author	Name of Journal	Findings
1	Effect of Vipassana Meditation on quality of life, subjective well-being and criminal propensity among inmates of Tihar jail, Delhi	Dhar, P. L.; Khurana, Amulya	Vipassana Research Institute, 2002	Vipassana meditation significantly improved Subjective well being and reduced Criminal propensity of inmates of Tihar Jail.
2	Changes in self concept, ego defence mechanisms, and religiosity following seven day vipassana meditation retreats	Tipawadeemavardhana; Christopher d. Tori	<i>Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion</i> Vol. 36, No. 2 (Jun., 1997), pp. 194-206	Ego defense mechanisms of the meditation participants also underwent significant change with coping becoming characterized by greater maturity and tolerance of common stressors.
3	Mindfulness meditation, well-being, and heart rate variability: A preliminary investigation into the impact of intensive Vipassana meditation	Jonathan R.Krygier; James A.J.Heathers; SaraShahrestani; MareeAbbott	International Journal of Psychophysiology Volume 89, Issue 3, September 2013, Pages 305-313	participants showed significantly increased well-being, and decreased ill-being
4	Vipassana meditation: A naturalistic, preliminary observation in Muscat	Atsu S.S. Dorvlo; Ala'Aldin Al-Hussaini; Sajjeev X. Antony, Dhananjay Chavan	J Sci Res Med Sci v.3(2); 2001 Oct	10 days practice had significantly improved their physical and psychological well-being. The control group did not exhibit such changes.
5	Meditation in a Deep South Prison: A Longitudinal Study of the Effects of Vipassana	Abigayl M. Perelman, Sarah L. Miller, Carl B. Clements, Amy Rodriguez, Kathryn Allen & Ron Cavanaugh	Journal of Offender Rehabilitation Volume 51, 2012 - Issue 3 Pages 176-198	VM participants achieved enhanced levels of mindfulness and emotional intelligence and had decreased mood disturbance relative to a comparison group.
6	Meditation Research: The State of the Art in Correctional Settings	Samuel Himelstein	International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology Volume : 55 issue: 4, page(s): 646-661	Findings shows enhancement of psychological well-being, a decrease in substance use, and a decrease in recidivism.
7	Evaluation of sleep architecture in the practitioners of Vipassana meditation	Sathamma Sulekha Kandavel Thennaras Appajachar Vedamurthach ar Trichur R. Raju Bindu M. Kutty	Sleep and Biological Rhythms October 2006, Volume 4, Issue 3, pp 207-214	Vipassana practitioners showed a significant enhancement in their REM sleep state from that of the age-matched control subjects
8	Cognitive and Emotional Differences between Short- and Long-Term Vipassana Meditators	Barbara L. Easterlin Ph.D., Etzel Cardena	Imagination, Cognition and Personality Volume: 18 issue: 1, page(s): 69-81	As compared with beginners, advanced practitioners reported greater self-awareness, positive mood, and acceptance. Greater stress lowered mood and

				self-acceptance in both groups
9	Effect of vipassana meditation on state and trait anxiety scores	Sunita Dhule, Swati Gawali, Amit Lomate	Indian Journal of Basic and Applied Medical Research; September 2014: Vol.-3, Issue- 4, P. 243-247	study showed a statistically significant decrease in state, trait and total anxiety scores before vipassana training and after regular practice of vipassana
10	Mindfulness meditation and substance use in an incarcerated population.	Bowen, Sarah, Witkiewitz, Katie, Dillworth, Tiara M., Chawla, Neharika, Simpson, Tracy L., Ostafin, Brian D., Larimer, Mary E., Blume, Arthur W., Parks, George A., Marlatt, G. Alan	Psychology of Addictive Behaviors, Vol 20(3), Sep 2006, 343-347	VM participants showed decreases in alcohol-related problems and psychiatric symptoms as well as increases in positive psychosocial outcomes.
11	Intensive Mindfulness Training and the Reduction of Psychological Distress: A Preliminary Study	Brian D. Ostafin, Neharika Chawla, Sarah Bowen Tiara M. Dillworth, Katie, Witkiewitz G. Alan Marlatt	Cognitive and Behavioral Practice Volume 13, Issue 3, August 2006, Pages 191-197	A repeated-measures analysis of variance indicated reductions in overall psychological distress.
12	Effects of a brief mindfulness meditation intervention on student stress and heart rate variability.	Shearer, A., Hunt, M., Chowdhury, M., & Nicol, L.	<i>International Journal of Stress Management</i> , 23(2), 232-254. (2016)	These preliminary findings suggest that brief mindfulness training can help college students manage their stress in response to the ubiquitous academic and cognitive challenges of college life.
13	Heart rate variability spectrum during vipassana mindfulness meditation.	Telles, S., Mohapatra, R. S., & Naveen, K. V.	<i>Journal of Indian Psychology</i> , 23(2), 1-5. (2005)	Hence the results suggest that during the breath awareness phase of <i>Vipassana</i> meditation there is a shift in the cardiac sympathovagal balance, with a reduction in sympathetic tone, while vagal tone increases.
14	The Impact of Vipassana Meditation on Quality of Life	Minoo Dargah	Indian Journal of Basic and Applied Medical Research; September 2016: Vol.-2, Issue- 5, P. 247-251	Results revealed that Vipassana meditation were associated with high quality of life satisfaction
15	The role of thought suppression in the relationship between mindfulness meditation and alcohol use	Sarah Bowen, Katie Witkiewitz, Tiara M. Dillworth, G. Alan Marlatt	Addictive Behaviors Volume 32, Issue 10, October 2007, Pages 2324-2328	Those who participated in the course reported significant decreases in avoidance of thoughts when compared to controls.
16	Effect of vipassana meditation on mindfulness and life satisfaction of employees.	PRADHAN, SEEMA; V. V., AJITH KUMAR; MANJU, SINGH	CLEAR International Journal of Research in Commerce & Management. Mar 2016, Vol. 7 Issue 3, p11-16. 6p.	Results showed higher levels of mindfulness and life satisfaction in the group.
17	Effectiveness of mindfulness meditation (Vipassana) in the management of chronic	Sangram G Patil	Indian J Anaesth. 2009 Apr; 53(2): 158-163	He found that mindfulness based meditation program had sustained positive effects in reduction in

	low back pain			pain, psychological and overall health measures.
18	Therapeutic effects of Vipassana Meditation in tension headache.	Sharma, M. P., Kumaraiah, V., Mishra, H., & Balodhi, J. P.	<i>Journal of Personality and Clinical Studies</i> , 6(2), 201-206 (1990)	Headache was reduced in terms of intensity, frequency, and duration, and there was improvement in associated anxiety symptoms.
19	Evaluation of Vipassana Meditation Course Effects on Subjective Stress, Well-being, Self-kindness and Mindfulness in a Community Sample: Post-course and 6-month Outcomes	Roberta A. Szekeres Eleanor H. Wertheim	<i>Stress & health</i> Volume 31, Issue 5 December 2015 Pages 373-381	Findings, suggested positive effects of the Vipassana course in reducing subjective stress and increasing well-being, self-kindness and overall mindfulness (present-moment awareness and non-reaction).
20	The Impact of Intensive Vipassana Mindfulness Training on Attentional Control, Cognitive Style, and Affect	Chambers Barbara Chuen Yee Lo Nicholas B. Allen	<i>Cognitive Therapy and Research</i> June 2008, Volume 32, Issue 3, pp 303-322	Results indicated improvements in self-reported mindfulness, depressive symptoms, rumination, and performance measures of working memory and sustained attention.

Result and Discussion

After thorough analysis of the research papers, Vipassana has been found to be very effective short term meditation technique to touch almost every sphere of lives. Research papers reviewed above are covering diverse areas ranging from physical to spiritual or social to psychological aspects of human being. Findings of the review are as follows:

1. It is clearly evident that Vipassana meditation improves stability of mind, will power, makes a person less anxious, depressed, angry and tensed.
2. It helps in dealing with pain and developing better coping abilities, thus making a person stronger and resilient.
3. Facilitates mindfulness, positive thinking, objective outlook, intellectually refined, and higher level of happiness.
4. Improves concentration, attention, cognition and decision making skills.
5. Reduces stress and depressive symptoms
6. A person feels more satisfied with life.
7. Reduction in substance use and its cravings.

Conclusion

To finish up, it very well may be stated, the system of Vipassana is a way that helps you eradicate all your sufferings; it removes the fear, yearning, unawareness which are in charge of every one of our agonies. The individuals who practice it, gradually, gets rid of their basic reasons of suffering, helping them to lead upbeat, solid, beneficial lives. It empowers us to encounter harmony and agreement: it purges the psyche, liberating it from miseries and the profound situated reasons for anguish. The training drives well-ordered to the most noteworthy profound objective of full freedom from every psychological

pollution. There are less mental issues, and even psychosomatic scatters like hypertension, peptic ulcer, bad tempered entrail disorder, and asthma and skin inflammation get improved. Vipassana meditation, accordingly, prompts better wellbeing and an upbeat, euphoric personality. There is less mental pressure and perplexity, and with such a reasonable and quiet personality, one can manage one's issues, subsequently carrying on with a joyful and euphoric life. Decision making skills, memory and capacity to get a handle on the material has likewise improved immensely.

Limitations

1. Due to paucity of time, gender differences could not be studied.
2. Only few papers could be studied.
3. Effect of Vipassana meditation on other variables could also be viewed.
4. Empirical research could not be done.
5. Demographic details, geographic details could also be taken into consideration

Further Suggestions

1. Gender differences can be studied.
2. A wide range of papers can be studied.
3. Effect of Vipassana meditation on other variables other than mental health can be studied.
4. Empirical research can be done.

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