

Effect of the comprehensive Art of Living yogic breathing programme on the physiological and psychological well-being

Results:

The aim of this study was to investigate the effect of the AOL program on the physiological and psychological well-being of healthy volunteers and to determine significantly changed markers in order to use them in subsequent studies. Comprehensive yogic program consisting of yogic postures, unique breathing exercises, relaxation techniques and stress management has been applied. Effect was measured by a) physiological parameters - metabolic, inflammatory, oxido-reductive and stress status, as well as cardiovascular and autonomic system parameters, and b) psychological parameters - health status, satisfaction with life, quality of life, self-esteem, emotional status, anxiety and neuroticism. The study included pre-post test design with wait-listed control group. Intervention group participated in the initial 6 day course, with regular daily home practice and weekly follow-ups for a period of three months.

Results of this study show: a) psychological parameters - significant decrease in anxiety and negative emotions, significant increase of positive emotions, increase in self-esteem and overall satisfaction with life. Health self-estimate shows that after the course participants exhibit better social functioning, smaller emotional barriers regarding everyday challenges, increased health self-estimate, better mental health and vitality; b) physiological parameters – significant decrease of total and LDL cholesterol, and slight increase of cortisol were measured immediately after the course. Three months after the course statistically significant decrease of total cholesterol and diastolic pressure, and slight increase of super oxide bismutase and C-reactive protein were measured. Most significant changes were measured for spirometric parameters which points to more effective pulmonary function. As the changes of psychological parameters were most prominent immediately after the course, changes in physiological parameters show slower trend, with increased changes three months after the course.

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