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## EFFECTIVENESS OF YOGA AND ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES ON DYSMENORRHEA

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this research studies to use yoga and alternative therapy to get relief from menstrual pain . 75% of the girls experiences some problem associated with the menstruation , dysmenorrhea is common problem in women of reproductive age .

Menstrual pain affects most of the female whether they are married or unmarried and can affect their daily routine work for days or week . there are many factors which make pain worse include heavier , irregular or longer menstrual cycle , lack of exercise ,mental or social stress , sedentary lifestyle , irregular or poor diet , lack of sleep , irregular sleeping habit , drinking alcohol , smoking , being overweight and other factors

Most of the studies show that yogic practices (asana) , acupressure therapy , naturopathy , sujok therapy have proven very beneficial to reduce the pain during menstrual cycle .

This study focus on to find easiest and reliable method to relief from pain with the help of yoga practice, acupressure , naturopathy and sujok therapy , these therapy are easy to perform and may give complete relief from pain with no side effects .

After reviewing literatures it conclude that yoga and alternative therapies are effective for menstrual cramp.

KEY WORDS – dysmenorrhea , yogic management , alternative therapy

### INTRODUCTION –

Before knowing the effectiveness of yoga and alternative therapies on menstrual cramps , its is important to know what it is ? its cause and effect on the body .

Dysmenorrhea also known as menstrual cramps , pain associated with menstruation is called dysmenorrhea . it usually occurs in the first to third day of mentuation period but in women this pain can be pre and post ,means before the menstruation starts and after the period of 2-3 days of menstruation . The pain is usually around the pelvis , back, lower abdomen and other symptoms include leg pain ,headache weakness and mood swing .

More then half of the women suffer from dysmenorrhea each month. Usually this pain is mild but for some women it is unbearable and disturb their daily activities for days or weeks .

Dysmenorrhea can be classified into two – primary and secondary dysmenorrhea.

Primary dysmenorrhea – it is the pain that comes before and during the period .this pain is caused by the natural chemical prostaglandin that is made into

the lining of the uterus. Prostaglandin contracts the muscle and blood vessels of the uterus. on the first day of period due to the high level of prostaglandin the pain felt is also high , as the bleeding continues and the lining of uterus is shed , the level goes down and the pain tends to lessen after the second or third day of period .

Secondary dysmenorrhea – its is caused by the disorder in reproductive organ .The pain tends to get worse over time and it often lasts longer than normal menstrual pain . Example – the pain may begin a few days before period starts and it may get worse as the period continue and may not go away after it ends .

Literature review –

1- This study is aimed at evaluating the efficacy of yoga as alternative therapy for primary dysmenorrhoea and stress.

113 medical students, unmarried girls, with primary dysmenorrhoea and stress, were randomly assigned to study (n = 60) and control group (n = 53). Semi structured questionnaire, the Numerical rating scale for pain and the Perceived Stress Scale were administered at baseline and after three months. The study group was subjected to yoga intervention.

Significant ( $p < 0.0001$ ) reduction in the perceived pain after yoga intervention in study group. 88% of the study group reported complete pain relief and 12% reported mild pain. Compared to control group, students with yoga intervention demonstrated significant improvement in perceived stress ( $P < 0.0001$ ). 82% of the study group reported complete stress relief. After yoga intervention, absenteeism dropped to 10% and improvement in daily activity was observed in study group.

With yogic exercises the stress and pain of dysmenorrhoea was controlled indicating the benefits of yoga in primary dysmenorrhoea. Yoga lessens psychosocial stress levels, so it should be implemented among college students to augment their menstrual well-being.

2- Study conducted by researcher from Kermanshah university of medical science , Kermanshah ,Tehran , IR Iran .

The objective of this study was to determine the effect of acupressure at sanyinjiao (SP6) point and diji (SP8) point on pain severity of primary dysmenorrhea and the associated systemic symptoms .

In this crossover clinical trial 50 females aged 18-30 years old who met the study criteria and were under the care of sarpolezahab health centre were selected .

They evaluated pain severity using the McGill pain scale and associated systemic symptoms using a verbal multidimensional scoring system . Data acquired from 42 cases were analyzed using SPSS software , with a  $P$  value of  $< 0.05$  considered significant.

They find that the severity of dysmenorrhea pain diminishes significantly for up to 2 hours following treatment with acupressure at the SP6 and SP8 points ( $P < 0.001$ ).

Table1

Pain severity experienced by subjects before, immediately, 30 minutes, 1 hour, and 2 hours after acupressure at the Sanyinjiao (SP6) and Diji (SP8) points

**Cycle Mean and standard deviation of pain severity**

	Before acupressure	Immediately after acupressure	30 minutes after acupressure	1 hour after acupressure	2 hours after acupressure
SP6	6.56 ± 1.05	5.69 ± 1.14	5.20 ± 1.25	4.20 ± 1.41	2.89 ± 1.36
SP8	6.84 ± 1.09	4.47 ± 0.99	4.08 ± 1.01	3.17 ± 0.96	2.03 ± 0.94
Comparing SP6 and	NS	$P < 0.001$	$P < 0.001$	$P < 0.001$	$P < 0.001$

### Cycle Mean and standard deviation of pain severity

Before acupressure	Immediately after acupressure	30 minutes after acupressure	1 hour after acupressure	2 hours after acupressure
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SP8

Furthermore, the severity of associated systemic symptoms reduced significantly after acupressure at the SP6 and SP8 points, except for nausea

and vomiting. Comparison of the severity of systemic symptoms with acupressure at the SP6 and SP8 points revealed no significant difference except for severity of fatigue, which was reduced significantly further with SP6 point compared to SP8 point ( $P = 0.004$ ).

Acupressure at the SP6 and SP8 points can reduce pain severity of dysmenorrhea for up to 2 hours after application, and these points may be used to alleviate the severity of systemic symptoms accompanying dysmenorrhea.

TABLE 2

Mean severity of systemic symptoms of study units before and after acupressure at Sanyinjiao (SP6) and Diji (SP8) points

Systemic symptoms	Mean and SD severity of systemic symptoms			Comparison of cycles (P values)	
	Before Acupressure	SP6	SP8	Before acupressure and SP6	Before acupressure and SP8
Exhaustion	0.87 ± 0.58	0.25 ± 0.30	0.13 ± 0.20	<0.001	<0.001
Vomiting	0.11 ± 0.28	0 ± 0	0.02 ± 0.11	0.010	NS
Paralysis	0.96 ± 0.75	0.10 ± 0.20	0.05 ± 0.14	<0.001	<0.001
Diarrhea	0.08 ± 0.32	0 ± 0	0 ± 0	0.039	0.039
Headache	0.25 ± 0.36	0.007 ± 0.05	0.03 ± 0.16	<0.001	<0.001
Neural	0.61 ± 0.65	0.007 ± 0.17	0.03 ± 0.13	<0.001	0.001
Faint	0.21 ± 0.52	0.007 ± 0.05	0.02 ± 0.11	0.005	0.016

### EFFECTS OF ASNAS ON MENSTRUAL PAIN

Some yoga positions are so effective at relieving menstrual pain. Once you attempt them, they will probably become part of your pain management routine. Exercise, in general, is a great way to ease the pain caused by your period—and yoga is one of the best options.

Using yogasana for menstrual cramps is an effective pain-relief strategy. First, think about the areas of your body that typically experience pain from cramping—your belly, pelvis, hips, and lower back. These areas can be targeted for pain relief through certain yoga poses.

Additionally, the emotional symptoms of menstruation can also be reduced by yoga, so it can do more than treat period pain. Here are a few specific yoga poses for menstrual cramps –

## CHILD POSE (BALASANA )

Child's pose is one of the most familiar yoga poses, even to less experienced practitioners or those who are quite new to yoga practice. This

pose targets menstrual pain that is found primarily in the back.

Balāsana is a good exercise for period cramps. It flexes reproductive organs and reduces menstrual cramps, muscle, and joint pain during menstruation. It also releases tension from the back, shoulder and neck. It relaxes the body and induces good sleep.

## BADDA KONASANA –

Uterus contracts during menstruation, which leads to either constipation or diarrhoea. The baddha konāsana pose soothes the digestive organs and also relieves menstrual cramps. The pose also stimulates the ovaries and revives the body's energy levels during periods.

If you feel anxious during periods, you can modify the pose and lean backward instead of forward. This is one of the best exercises for period cramps as it relaxes your abdominal muscles, giving immense relief. It will help in period-induced insomnia, anxiety, headaches, and fatigue.

Opening the hips and pelvic area allows for deep belly breathing, which can alleviate intense pain. This is also a good pose to diffuse the ache that can travel down into the legs with cramping

## BHUJANGASNA (COBRA POSE )

The cobra pose stimulates abdominal muscles. It is a backbend that stretches the front abdomen muscles and tones the back muscles. It relieves back pain and anxiety, and improves mood as suggested by a study.

Bhujangāsana is a great way to tone your abdomen and strengthen your back, shoulders and neck. It eases discomfort and lowers stress and lethargy.

## MALASANA -

This squat strengthen the pelvic muscle and help relieve pain ,cramping and digestive concern. It

gently stretches the lower back , hip and thighs which increase flexibility and circulation .

## SURYA NAMASKAR (SUN SOLUTATION )

Surya namaskar is a series of asana with lot of benefits it not only work on physical level but also mental . it can restore the hormonal balance in the body . it directly work on the major glands like , pituitary , adrenal , thyroid gland .

It will more effective if we practice these asana with its mantra and right breathing .

Beside these asanas there are many asana which are very beneficial for menstrual cramps , like- Dhanurasana (first variation ) , ustrasana (camel pose ) padmasana , parvatsan , pawanmuktasana , vakrasana , sputa baddha konasana etc . Back bending asana give relief from the back pain which is basically mild but continues and does not goes away until period stops and can affect daily activities .

We should practice yoga not only at the time of period but in our daily routine . Doing yoga practices daily removes toxins from our body which are main cause of any disease occurs in our body , it gives strength flexibility ,help to improve body deformities , keeps the body and mind active .

Disorder in our body can be of two types – physical and mental . As for physical disorder we can treat them by mean of various medical treatments , by doing asana and though alternative therapies but mental disorder are not same as physical but we can treat them easily by mean of pranayam and meditation . it only need time and concentration to treat mental disorder .

## Pranayama we can do during periods –

Pranayam such as bhramari , anuloma viloma and shitali can be very helpful during menstruation as they calm our mind immediately and can get rid of stress , tension we face during periods .

## Bhramari pranayam –

It is the best cure for stress .  
It release cerebral tension .  
It soothes the nerves .

Its benefits the pineal and pituitary glands by stimulating them and thus supporting their proper functioning .

Its helps dissipate anger.

### **Anulom - vilom**

Improve focus , patience and control.

Relief from stress and anxiety .

A better overall sence of well being .

Improvement to brain , respiratory and cardiovascular heath

Keep mind cool and fresh which is helpful during menstrual pain .

### **ALTERNATIVE THERAPY -**

Alternative therapy is a group of diverse therapies , health care system ,practices that are not generally considered

The plus point of these therapy are that we can perform these at home we don't need to go to doctor again and again . there are many therapies comes under alternative therapy some of them are as follows -

### **Acupressure -**

Acupressure refers to s therapy wherein pressure is applies at specified location of therapeutic calue in the human body to heal disease .

The word acupressure has two parts 'Acu' and 'pressure' . acu means needle (or minute points like the tip of a needle ) and pressure means to press (with the help of thumb , finger or any other object ).

### **SP6 ans SP8 point -**

Applying pressure at the SP6 and SP 8 (fig 1) point can reduce pain severity of dysmenorrhea for up to 2 hour after application .

This point is present about 4 finger widths above your ankle . hold your hamd flat and put your little finger on your ankle , the point should be just above your index finger .press down and massage here for cramping and abdominal Pain .

This point is also associated with relieving insomnia , which could make you feel more relaxed during period

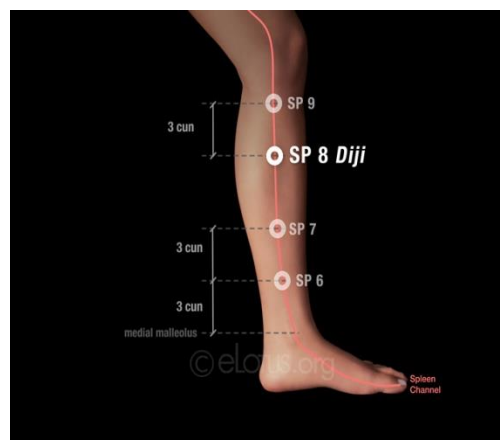


Fig 1

### **LV3 point -**

LV3 point is effective for cramping and back pain from PMS and it is also good for general back pain .

It also lower the stress and blood pressure .

This point is on the top of foot , in the tissue between the bones of your big toe and the finger next to it (fig 2)

Press your finger into this spot and massage up and down to access the point .



Fig 2

### **Sujok therapy -**

In sujok therapy , palm and foot represent all the organ / meridians in the body .

Sujok is made up of two words 'su' and 'jok' .su means palm and jok means foot .

It is possible to get rid of pain during menstruation and uterine cramps to at least considerably reduce it using su jok therapy , which each person can do on their own .

This therapy is similar to acupressure , first we need find the area on palm that correspond to the

problematic area in the body according to su jok therapy .

For the treatment of dysmenorrhea the areas to be treated are uterus and ovaries ,the corresponding areas on the palm is middle part of the ring finger and the middle finger .

Massage this area by using a probe(fig 3) . find the most painful point of this area and press this point with a moderate effort and begin a slow rotation of the stick in both direction , continue massaging those area for several minutes and the pain will disappear .

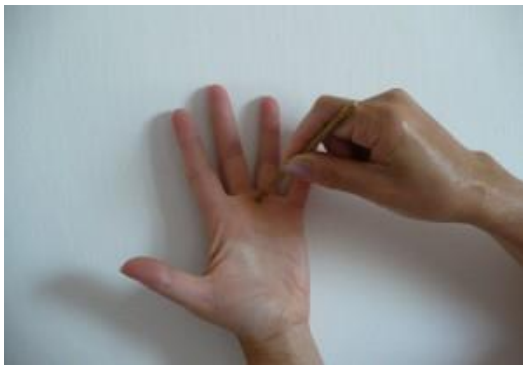


Fig 3

If you still feel discomfort ,massage the proximal phalax on each finger using a spring ring(fig 4) (if you don't have strong flow )



(fig 4)

### NATUROPATHY -

Naturopathy is a form of therapy , which excludes medicinal and surgical agents and depend entirely on natural forces such as , light , water , air , heat, massage etc

It help to inhance the body's innate power to heal itself .

Through fasting -

Seven days before Menstruation starts, the patient should live for the first 4 days on juices

and the next 3 days on juicy fruits. During this period Enema should be taken both times.

Hot water bath -

Every day she should sit in a tub for 5 to 20 minutes in which there is luke water upto 10-12 cms. Head should be wrapped by wet towel. If there is pain, hot and cold fomentation should be given to that part two or three times a day.

Besides the above treatment, the patient should take Hip bath in the morning every day and take Sitz bath in the evening.

Mud pack -

Before sleeping, wet mud pack should be kept on the abdomen and should remain there for 30 minutes. Local steam can also be given. If there is pain in the abdomen hot mud pack should be put there.

CONCLUSION -

Considering the result of both the research study it appears that yoga and acupressure help to alleviate menstrual pain .

They observe that acupressure at the SP6 and SP8 point alleviate menstrual pain .the resting period was 2 hour after application and was more pronounced with the SP8 point compared with the SP6 .therefore, the SP8 point can be considered an emergency point for relieving primary dysmenorrhea .

The result suggest that psychosocial stress is associated with menstrual pain and yoga has been found to be effective method to produce considerable pain relief in primary dysmenorrhea. With yogic practices the stree and pain of dysmenorrhea was controlled indicates the benefit of yogic practice on menstrual pain .

Any disease we suffer from is due to our sedentary life style , poor diet and lack of exercise. According to ayurveda if we follow dincharya , ratricharya and ritucharya we can live a healthy life .

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