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## Yoga and drug addiction

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### Abstract

Drug addiction or substance abuse has been a social menace worldwide. Owing to various reasons the occurrence of drug addiction related problems cannot be done away completely by any country. But, as a responsible society every community, nations or administration cannot turn its face on this social evil. There has been an interest among healthcare providers and researchers in exploring the benefits of yoga in prevention and treatment of medical conditions, predominantly promoting awareness of the therapeutic effects of yoga non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular disease and substance abuse. The practice of yoga has been found to alter the structure and function of the brain, thus eliciting neurological effects.

Yoga also influences physiological systems, specifically the cardiovascular and respiratory systems. In addition to the biological benefits of yoga, the incorporation of mindfulness-based techniques helps achieve a peaceful mindset and relaxation.

**Keywords:** addiction, depression, anxiety, drug, treatment, yoga

### Introduction

Addiction is a complex problem that can affect all realms of life and calls for a holistic response. Nowadays, narcotics use have the perilous and quite complex shape. Narcotic drugs and their numeral and unexplainable damages can be considered as one of the human's destructive diseases and great mankind's social pests; there was no harmful and disastrous substance for human like narcotic drugs throughout the history.

Drug addiction is one of the fundamental problems of human being's life; it is for nearly a century that mankind has decided to solve this problem. Addiction is considered as one of the main four critics and a global issue too; its side effects are as follows: physical, mental, family, cultural, social and economical disorders. Not only addiction is a personal-social problem but also it is a family problem; it has negative effects on mental health of the addict and his/her family.

The aim of yoga, as an eastern life philosophy, is the mind and body balance; it has a positive effect on quality of life and feeling of whole body health; it also leads to more compatibility of mental, immunity, and cognitive systems; beside this, it leads to modification of automatic nervous system and more body stability and resistance. Since, addiction prevention should be logical as well as combinational, including skills, decision making, family interference and etc.; among which physical exercises and yoga can be of the useful components of the treatment programs and addiction prevention.

### Classification of drugs according to their main effects

#### 1. Central Nervous System Depressants

- a) Alcohol
- b) Hypnotics: Barbiturates and non-barbiturates
- c) Anxiolytics: diazepam
- d) Narcotic analgesics:
  - i. Opium and derivatives: Heroin, morphine, codeine, etc.
  - ii. Synthetic narcotics: methadone, etc.
- e) Antipsychotics (major tranquilizers)

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## 2. Central Nervous System Stimulants

- a) Alertness stimulants
  - i. Major: amphetamines, cocaine
  - ii. Minor: nicotine, xanthenes (coffee, tea, cocoa, etc.)
- b) Mood Boosters: antidepressants

## 3. Central Nervous System Perturbants (psychedelic)

- a) Hallucinogens: mescaline, LSD, etc.
- b) Derivatives of cannabis: marijuana, hashish
- c) Volatile solvents: glue, etc.
- d) Designer drugs: MDA, MDMA, etc.

### Types of drugs

1. **Depressants (Downers):** Depressants, also known as sedatives and tranquilizers, are substances that can slow brain activity. These include alcohol, hypnotics to induce sleep, anxiolytic to reduce anxiety, sedatives for relaxation and anticonvulsants such as barbiturates. Alcohol is the most commonly used depressant.
2. **Narcotics:** Narcotics or opioids are drugs that are used medically for pain relief but that have strong addictive potential. Opioids produce a rush, or intense feelings of pleasure, which is the primary reason for their popularity as street drugs. They also dull awareness of one's personal problems, which is attractive to people seeking a mental escape from stress.
3. **Stimulants (Uppers):** Stimulants act on the central nervous system to increase energy and alertness while suppressing appetite and fatigue. They include cocaine (such as freebase and 'crack'), amphetamines (for example Dexedrine, Benzedrine), methamphetamine (methedrine: 'speed', 'crystal', 'ice', 'crank'), MDMA (ecstasy), nicotine and caffeine
4. **Amphetamines:** Amphetamine (contracted from alpha-methylphenethylamine) is a central nervous system (CNS) stimulant. They are often taken in pill form or smoked in a relatively pure form called "ice" or "crystal meth". Amphetamines are also used for therapeutic purposes e.g., for the treatment of attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), narcolepsy, and obesity.
5. **Ecstasy:** The drug ecstasy, or MDMA (3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine) is a designer drug, similar in chemical structure to amphetamine. It produces mild euphoria and hallucinations and has become especially popular on college campuses and in clubs and "raves" in many cities.
6. **Cocaine:** Cocaine is a natural stimulant extracted from the leaves of the coca plant. Cocaine is usually snorted in powder form or smoked in the form of crack. In 2008, 5.3 million Indians age 12 and older had abused cocaine in any form and 1.1 million had abused crack at least once in the year prior to being surveyed.
7. **Nicotine:** Nicotine is found in tobacco products including cigarettes, cigars, and smokeless tobacco. Tobacco is used by smoking, chewing, sucking and applying to the teeth and gums etc. In India, there is a wide availability of smoking (e.g., bidi, cigarette, hookah etc) and smokeless tobacco (e.g., gutkha, khaini, zarda).
8. **Hallucinogens:** Hallucinogens, also called psychedelics, are a class of drugs that produce sensory distortions or hallucinations, including major alterations in color perception and hearing. Hallucinogens may also have additional effects, such as relaxation and euphoria or, in some cases, panic.
9. **Marijuana/ Cannabis:** Marijuana is derived from the

Cannabis sativa plant. It is generally classified as a hallucinogen because it can produce perceptual distortions or mild hallucinations. It is also known by various street names such as bhaang, gaanja, charas, hashish, pot, weed. Cannabis can produce anxiety, paranoia, and a sense of derealisation.

10. **PCP (Phencyclidine):** Phencyclidine was developed as an anesthetic in the 1950s but was discontinued as such when its hallucinatory side effects were discovered. Use of this substance causes hallucinations, accelerates the heart rate and blood pressure and causes sweating, flushing, and numbness.

### Effects of Drugs

- Drugs act on the central nervous system (i.e., they affect the individual's neurological functioning). The physiological correlates and effects vary according to each substance; there are specific mechanisms that involve precise receptors for each substance type. In this section we present some common aspects to the physiological effects of drugs.
- When a substance enters the body it first affects the neuronal receptors, which are structures located within a neuron or in its membrane and are characterized by selective binding to a substance and the physiological effect that accompanies the union.
- The presence of a drug in the body affects the presynapse, altering the production/ release of neurotransmitters. During the next step, the drug affects the synapses, by increasing the presence of neurotransmitters in the synaptic space. There can be a reuptake inhibition, blockade of reuptake channels, or inhibition of degradation.
- The activity of the drug in the body over a period of time comprises the processes of absorption, distribution, localization in tissues, biotransformation and excretion.
- Physical dependence emerges as the need to maintain certain levels of a substance in the body. Therefore, it involves the development of a drug organism link and neuro adaptation process.

### Yoga Practices For Drug Addiction

#### 1. Asanas

- Sitting Mountain Yoga Poses (Vajrasana)
- Child's Yoga Poses (Balasana)
- Seated Forward Bend Yoga Poses (Paschimottanasana)
- Fish Yoga Poses (Matsyasana)
- Low Lunge Yoga Poses (Anjaneyasana)
- Legs-Up-The-Wall Pose (Viparita Karani)

#### 2. Spinal Breathing Pranayama

Many yoga practices begin with breathing exercises. These basic breathing exercises help to promote mind and body connections. Pranayama practices will help you to keep your mind focused and calm. The intuition that this position helps you build will be helpful in your quest for changing addictive behaviours.

- Dirga Pranayama: Three Part Breath
- Nadi Sodhana: Alternate Nostril Breathing
- Shitali Pranayama: Cooling Breath
- Ujjayi Pranayama: Ocean Breath
- Bhramari Pranayama: Humming Bee Breath
- Bhastrika Pranayama: Breath of Fire

### 3. Meditation

Meditation is a generally safe exercise that focuses on the mind-body connection with the goal of inducing relaxation and serenity. It has been shown to improve physical and mental health.

### 4. Yoga Nidra

Yoga nidra or yogic sleep is a state of consciousness between waking and sleeping, like the "going-to-sleep" stage, typically induced by a guided meditation. Yoga nidra is a state in which the body is completely relaxed, and the practitioner becomes systematically and increasingly aware of the inner world by following a set of verbal instructions.

### The benefits of yoga for Drug Addicts

#### Yoga heals the brain

Yoga is a form of meditation. It helps heal the prefrontal cortex of the brain, which is the part of the brain responsible for choice. Unfortunately the prefrontal cortex is damaged by drug or alcohol addiction. Meditation helps heal and restore this area of the brain. Yoga helps restore control of choice for the individual. Yoga also increases control over stress and anxiety levels, and helps to repair the nervous system. Over time the yoga practitioner masters specific breathing exercises that can be used on demand to cope with stress and fear.

#### Stress relief

Yoga participants learn to draw their awareness from external stimuli, detach from their senses, and direct their attention inward. This leads to a deeper connection with the inner self. Over time the person learns to be more reliant on obtaining peace from within and less reliant on external influences. This reduces the temptations to rely on substances for pleasure and stress relief.

#### Improved self control

Yoga enhances self-control of one's mood. The study of yoga and meditation teaches participants better methods of controlling thoughts, emotions and responses. This, in conjunction with healing the brain and nervous system, work together to improve the person's coping mechanisms. When stressed, the yoga student turns to their yoga mat to "escape" from stress and chill out. This effectively curbs the desire to turn to alcohol or drugs.

#### Yoga improves sleep

The act of meditating, with or without yoga, makes it easier to fall asleep. A variety of yoga techniques can help your body and mind ease into sleep and obtain a better quality sleep. Yoga Nidra uses progressive muscle relaxation to bring on relaxation. Yoga can also aid in returning to sleep when you awaken in the middle of the night.

### Conclusion

Asana (posture), pranayama (breath control), pratyahara (withdrawal of senses), dharana (concentration), dhyana (meditation) which are the part of Astang yoga, by practicing this Drug Addict patients surely benefit in anxiety, agitation, insomnia, loss of memory, improve body strength, mental strength and so many disorder which is develop due to alcohol addiction and its withdrawal. And also it improve the patient will power to reduce or stop the chance of recurrence of alcohol.

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