

# Health Insights Today

A SERVICE OF CLEVELAND CHIROPRACTIC COLLEGE

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## Mind-Body NEWS

*When reading reports on new research, it is important to remember that no single study should be seen as providing the whole truth. The following reports offer helpful clues but in most cases further research is needed before firm conclusions can be drawn.*

### **Mindfulness Meditation May Influence Immune Cells in People with HIV**

This study tested the efficacy of an 8-week mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) meditation program compared to a 1-day stress reduction education seminar for levels of CD4+ T lymphocyte counts in stressed HIV infected adults. Participants in the 1-day control seminar showed declines in CD4+ T lymphocyte counts whereas counts among participants in the 8-week MBSR program were unchanged from baseline to post-intervention. This effect was independent of antiretroviral medication use. Additional analyses indicated that treatment adherence to the mindfulness meditation program, as measured by class attendance, mediated the effects of mindfulness meditation training on buffering CD4+ T lymphocyte declines.

Creswell JD, Myers HF, Cole SW, Irwin MR. Mindfulness meditation training effects on CD4+ T lymphocytes in HIV-1 infected adults: a small randomized controlled trial. *Brain Behav Immun.* Feb 2009;23(2):184-188.

### **Yoga May Ease Hot Flashes in Breast Cancer Survivors**

Breast cancer survivors have limited options for the treatment of hot flashes and related symptoms. Further, therapies widely used to prevent recurrence in survivors, such as tamoxifen, tend to induce or exacerbate menopausal symptoms. The aim of this preliminary, randomized controlled trial was to evaluate the effects of a yoga intervention on menopausal symptoms in a sample of survivors of early-stage breast cancer. Thirty-seven disease-free women experiencing hot flashes were randomized to the 8-week Yoga of Awareness program (gentle yoga poses, meditation, and breathing exercises) or to wait-list control. The primary outcome was daily reports of hot flashes collected at baseline, posttreatment, and 3 months after treatment. Women who received the yoga program showed significantly greater improvements relative to the control condition in hot-flash frequency, severity, and total scores and in levels of joint pain, fatigue, sleep disturbance, symptom-related bother, and vigor.

Carson JW, Carson KM, Porter LS, Keefe FJ, Seewaldt VL. Yoga of Awareness program for menopausal symptoms in breast cancer survivors: results from a randomized trial. *Support Care Cancer.* Feb 12 2009.

### **Transcendental Meditation May Decrease College Students' Stress, Sleepiness**

This randomized controlled trial investigated effects of Transcendental Meditation (TM) practice on Brain Integration Scale scores (broadband frontal coherence, power ratios, and preparatory brain responses), electrodermal habituation to 85-dB tones, sleepiness, heart rate, respiratory sinus arrhythmia, and P300 latencies in 50 college students. After pretest, students were randomly assigned to learn TM immediately or learn after the 10-week posttest. There were no significant pretest group differences. Researchers found significant increases in Brain Integration Scale scores for immediate-start students but decreases in delayed-start students; significant reductions in sleepiness in immediate-start students with no change in delayed-start students; and no changes in habituation rates in immediate-start students, but significant increases in delayed-start students.

Travis F, Haaga DA, Hagelin J, et al. Effects of Transcendental Meditation practice on brain functioning and stress reactivity in college students. *Int J Psychophysiol.* Feb 2009;71(2):170-176.

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## Distant Healing May Influence Chronic Pain

A double-blind randomized controlled study of 16 subjects evaluated the effects of distant healing performed by a professional Japanese healer on chronic pain. People suffering from chronic pain (not caused by clear organic diseases or that persists long after a reasonable period of healing following injuries or surgery) were recruited through local radio and newspaper advertising. Subjects were randomly assigned to a treatment group or control group. All subjects met the healer at the initial session at which a 20-minute group meditation was performed. The healer went back to Japan after the session and started distant healing only to the treatment group for a 2-month period. All participants were asked to meditate for 20 minutes every day during this 2-month period. Outcomes measures were the Visual Analog Scale (VAS) and McGill Pain Questionnaire. Comparison of pretreatment and posttreatment scores on the VAS indicated a slightly significant effect of distant healing. The Present Pain Intensity Scale showed significant improvement in the treatment group compared to the control group. The Pain Rating Index showed improvement in the treatment group, but the difference between both groups was not statistically significant ( $P=.12$ ).

Tsubono K, Thomlinson P, Shealy CN. The effects of distant healing performed by a spiritual healer on chronic pain: a randomized controlled trial. *Altern Ther Health Med*. May-Jun 2009;15(3):30-34.