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**Media Advisory**

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## **Transcendental Meditation Reduces Congestive Heart Failure, New Study Shows**

**Results of NIH-Funded Study Published in *Ethnicity & Disease***

**Nearly 300,000 Americans die of congestive heart failure each year**

(MARCH 1, 2007) A widely practiced, stress-reducing meditation technique significantly decreases the severity of congestive heart failure, according to a first-of-its-kind randomized study published in *Ethnicity & Disease* (Winter 2007).

Researchers from the University of Pennsylvania evaluated 23 African American men and women, average age 64, who were recently hospitalized with New York Heart Association class II or III congestive heart failure. Participants were randomized to either the Transcendental Meditation (TM) technique or health education—in addition to usual medical care.

Researchers measured changes in heart function with a six-minute walk test, and measures for quality of life, depression, and rehospitalizations. Changes in outcomes from baseline to three and six months after treatment were analyzed.

According to lead author, Ravishankar Jayadevappa, Ph.D., of the University of Pennsylvania Department of Medicine, the TM group significantly improved on the six-minute walk test after both three and six months of TM practice compared to the control group. The TM group also showed improvements in quality of life measurements, depression, and had fewer rehospitalizations.

According to the American Heart Association, congestive heart failure accounts for more than 2.5 million hospital admissions per year in the U.S. Nearly 500,000 new patients are diagnosed with congestive heart failure every year—and 300,000 patients die each year from this disease. Despite advances in treatment, the number of deaths from congestive heart failure increased steadily over the past decade.

On top of these high levels, African Americans have twice the mortality rates from congestive heart failure as white Americans.

Transcendental Meditation improves heart functioning likely by reducing sympathetic nervous system activation associated with stress that is known to contribute to the failing heart, according to the authors.

“The results indicate that TM can be effective in improving the functional capacity, and quality of life, of congestive heart failure patients. These results also suggest long-term improvements in survival in these individuals,” Dr. Jayadevappa said.

Further validation of the outcomes is planned via a large multicenter trial with long-term follow-up.

“This present finding is consistent with previous research demonstrating that the Transcendental Meditation program reduces factors that contribute to the cause or progression of heart failure, such as high blood pressure, stress, metabolic syndrome, left ventricular hypertrophy (enlargement of the heart) and severity of atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries),” said Robert Schneider, M.D., F.A.C.C., co-author of the study and director of the Institute for Natural Medicine and Prevention at Maharishi University of Management in Fairfield, Iowa.

The study was sponsored by the National Institutes of Health–National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NIH-NCCAM) in a collaboration between the University of Pennsylvania with the Institute for Natural Medicine and Prevention at Maharishi University of Management.

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*Ethnicity & Disease*, the official journal of the International Society on Hypertension in Blacks, is an international publication that exclusively publishes information on the causal relationships in the etiology of common illnesses through the study of ethnic patterns of disease. Citation for this article is: Jayadevappa R, Johnson JC, Bloom BS, et al, Effectiveness of Transcendental Meditation on functional capacity and quality of life of African Americans with congestive heart failure: a randomized control study. *Ethn Dis*. 2007;17:72-77. The complete article is available at [http://ishib.org/ED\\_journal\\_17\\_1.asp](http://ishib.org/ED_journal_17_1.asp).

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