

## **Summary of Scientific Research on Maharishi's Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi Programme**

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## **Introduction**

Transcendental Meditation, as taught by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, is a simple technique practised for 15-20 minutes twice daily, sitting comfortably with eyes closed. It can be learned easily by anyone regardless of age, educational background, or culture. The technique is effortless and requires no belief, nor any change in lifestyle or diet.

Over six million people have learned Transcendental Meditation (TM) around the world over the past 56 years. Instruction involves a standard seven-step course taught by qualified teachers who have undergone an extensive and systematic training programme, ensuring quality and consistency in instruction worldwide.

Scientific research on Transcendental Meditation comprises more than 600 studies conducted at over 250 independent universities and research institutions in 33 countries [1-424]. These studies have demonstrated a wide range of benefits for mind, body, behaviour, and society (see Table 1), and have appeared in many leading, peer-reviewed journals (see Table 2).

## TABLE 1

### Overview of Research Findings on the Transcendental Meditation Programme

- Reduced need for medical care and decreased health care costs [4-8, 399]
- 48% reduction in the rate of major clinical events (all-cause mortality, non-fatal myocardial infarction and stroke) in patients with coronary heart disease [9]
- Reduction of major risk factors for cardiovascular disease and improved cardiovascular health in both normal subjects and patients with heart disease [9-50, 52, 60, 62-64, 98, 316, 318, 320, 396, 408-409, 413-414]
- Healthier ageing and increased longevity [4, 8, 12, 15-17, 95-102, 106-109]
- Improvements in common chronic disorders, including hypertension, coronary heart disease, heart failure, type 2 diabetes, asthma, post-traumatic stress disorder, insomnia, ADHD [9-50, 52-59, 62, 65-94, 289, 396, 404, 409, 413-414, 418, 420-421]
- Improved quality of life and mental health in patients breast cancer and other chronic disorders [53, 21, 59, 415]
- A unique state of deep rest during Transcendental Meditation [110-168, 416]
- Increased orderliness and integration of brain functioning [110-113, 115-119, 130, 151-188, 402-404, 407, 416]
- Reduced physical and mental stress [9, 23-25, 35-38, 45-46, 49-50, 53, 56, 61-62, 66-67, 71, 84, 114, 116, 135-139, 141, 170, 178-179, 189-196, 200, 204, 212, 239-246, 281, 288-289, 316, 318-320, 343-361, 365, 401, 406, 410, 417-421, 423]
- Growth of positive psychological health and enhanced cognitive development [201-238, 12, 31, 180-182, 187-188, 277, 279-282, 290, 401, 404]
- Reduced anxiety, depression, hostility, and other forms of psychological distress [200, 9, 21, 25, 31, 53, 56, 61, 67, 71, 211-212, 217, 240-246, 266-267, 269, 277, 288-291, 295, 316, 318-320, 343-344, 347-348, 351-352, 359, 401, 410, 417-421, 423]
- Increased intelligence and creativity; improved memory, learning ability, and academic performance; higher graduation and college acceptance rates; lower school dropout [266-268, 270-280, 282-287, 290-292, 400, 404, 422]
- Improved perception, mind-body coordination, and athletic performance [266, 274-276, 296-315, 101, 179, 184-186, 397]
- Increased job satisfaction and performance; improved occupational health [61-62, 287, 316-334, 423]
- Improved relationships, including in marriage, families, at work, and in schools [56, 316-318, 335-339, 401]
- Decreased smoking, alcohol consumption and drug abuse [60, 56, 62-64, 246-265, 316, 318, 398]
- Effective rehabilitation of offenders [340-365, 403, 424]
- Improved quality of life for society as a whole: reduced crime, violence, and accidents; increased economic prosperity; more effective leadership [366-395]
- Reduced civil and international conflict; decreased deaths and injuries from war and terrorism; increased progress towards peace [385-395, 405]

**TABLE 2**

**Scientific and medical journals that have published original research or reviews on Transcendental Meditation**

**Medicine**

*American Journal of Cardiology*  
*Archives of Internal Medicine*  
*Circulation: Cardiovascular Quality and Outcomes*  
*Stroke*  
*Hypertension*  
*American Journal of Hypertension*  
*Current Hypertension Reports*  
*Current Hypertension Reviews*  
*Integrative Cancer Therapies*  
*Respiration*  
*Behavioral Medicine*  
*Cardiology in Review*  
*American Journal of Managed Care*  
*Japanese Journal of Industrial Health*  
*Japanese Journal of Public Health*  
*American Journal of Health Promotion*  
*Health and Quality of Life Outcomes*  
*Journal of the Association of Physicians of India*  
*AIDS Care: Psychological and Socio-medical Aspects of AIDS/HIV*  
*Psychosomatic Medicine*  
*Lancet*  
*Homeostasis*  
*Journal of Behavioral Medicine*  
*Ethnicity and Disease*  
*Journal of the National Medical Association*  
*Journal of Aging and Health*  
*Socialstyrelsen (Swedish Health Board publication)*  
*Acta Medica Okayama*  
*Health Promotion*  
*Harefuah, Journal of the Israel Medical Association*  
*Canadian Medical Association Journal*  
*Lakartidningen (Swedish Medical Assoc. Journal)*  
*New Zealand Medical Journal*  
*Australian Family Physician*  
*New Zealand Family Physician*  
*Le Médecin du Québec*  
*Schweizerische Ärztezeitung*  
*The Permanente Journal*  
*Est-Medicine*  
*Journal of Human Stress*  
*British Journal of Nursing*  
*Journal of Holistic Nursing*  
*Ugeskrift for Læger*  
*Biologische Medizin*  
*Zeitschrift für Allgemeinmedizin*  
*Medizinische Klinik*  
*Australian Dental Journal*  
*Journal of the American Association of Nephrology Nurses and Technicians*  
*Complementary Medicine International*

*Medical Hypotheses*  
*Military Medicine*  
*Cardiology Research and Practice*  
*Health Promotion*  
*Journal of the American Society of Psychosomatic Dentistry and Medicine*  
*Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine*  
*Alternative Therapies in Clinical Practice*  
*Focus on Alternative and Complementary Therapies*  
*Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*  
*Alternative Therapies*

**Physiology and Neuroscience**

*Science*  
*American Journal of Physiology*  
*Scientific American*  
*International Journal of Neuroscience*  
*Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*  
*NeuroReport*  
*Experimental Neurology*  
*Journal of Applied Physiology*  
*Consciousness and Cognition*  
*Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews*  
*Electroencephalography and Clinical Neurophysiology*  
*Biological Psychology*  
*Psychoneuroendocrinology*  
*International Journal of Psychophysiology*  
*Biomedical Research*  
*Biofeedback*  
*L'Encephale*  
*Cognitive Processing*  
*Sleep*  
*Dreaming*  
*International Journal of Dream Research*  
*Indian Journal of Physiology and Pharmacology*  
*Journal of Neural Transmission*  
*Signal Processing*  
*Psychophysiology*  
*Physiology and Behavior*  
*Revista Internacional De Ciencias Del Deporte*  
*Human Physiology (Fiziologiya Cheloveka)*  
*Bulletin of Experimental Biology and Medicine (Byulleten' Eksperimental'noi Biologii i Meditsiny)*  
*Zeitschrift für Elektroenzephalographie und Elektromyographie EEG-EMG*  
*Psychopathometrie*  
*Proceedings of the San Diego Biomedical Symposium*

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**TABLE 2 (continued)**

**Scientific and medical journals that have published original research or reviews on Transcendental Meditation**

**Physiology and Neuroscience** (continued)

*Hormones and Behavior*  
*Journal of Psychosomatic Research*  
*Revue d'Electroencéphalographie et de Neurophysiologie Clinique*  
*Progress in Brain Research*  
*Experientia*  
*Biofeedback and Self-Regulation*

**Psychology and Psychiatry**

*Journal of Clinical Psychology*  
*Journal of Psychology*  
*British Journal of Psychology*  
*American Psychologist*  
*American Journal of Psychiatry*  
*Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*  
*Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*  
*Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*  
*Hospital and Community Psychiatry*  
*Mind & Brain, The Journal of Psychiatry*  
*Perceptual and Motor Skills*  
*Memory and Cognition*  
*Psychological Reports*  
*Journal of Traumatic Stress*  
*Journal of Counseling and Development*  
*Journal of Personality and Individual Differences*  
*Psychological Studies*  
*Journal of Counseling Psychology*  
*Journal of Humanistic Psychology*  
*Journal of Personality Assessment*  
*Journal of Indian Psychology*  
*Zeitschrift für Klinische Psychologie*  
*Gedrag. Tijdschrift voor Psychologie*  
*Psychotherapie-Psychosomatik Medizinische Psychologie*  
*Western Psychologist*  
*Psychologia*  
*Modern Psychological Studies*

**Education**

*British Journal of Educational Psychology*  
*Intelligence*  
*Education*  
*Educational Technology*  
*Journal of Adult Development*  
*Higher Education Research and Development*  
*Journal of Creative Behavior*  
*Journal of Moral Education*  
*Journal of Instructional Psychology*  
*Current Issues in Education*  
*College Student Journal*  
*Explore*

**Sociology and Rehabilitation**

*Journal of Conflict Resolution*  
*Social Indicators Research*  
*Journal of Mind and Behavior*  
*Psychology Crime and Law*  
*Journal of Crime and Justice*  
*Criminal Justice and Behavior*  
*Journal of Criminal Justice*  
*International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice*  
*Criminal Law Journal*  
*International Journal of Offender Therapy and Criminology*  
*Caribbean Journal of Criminology and Social Psychology*  
*Ratio Juris*  
*Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*  
*FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*  
*Social Science Perspectives Journal*  
*Journal of Scientific Exploration*  
*Proceedings of the American Statistical Association*  
*Proceedings of the Midwest Management Society*  
*Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly*  
*International Journal of the Addictions*  
*Bulletin of the Society of Psychologists in Addictive Behaviors*  
*Addictive Behaviors*  
*Bulletin on Narcotics*  
*Drug Forum*

**Management**

*Journal of Business and Psychology*  
*Academy of Management Journal*  
*Human Resource Management*  
*Journal of Transnational Management Development*  
*Journal of Management Education*  
*Career Development International*  
*Journal of Organizational Change Management*  
*Anxiety, Stress and Coping*  
*Journal of Managerial Psychology*  
*Management Decision*  
*The Learning Organization: an International Journal*  
*Leadership and Organization Development Journal*  
*The TQM Magazine*

## **Decreased Need for Medical Care: Reduced Hospital Admissions and Outpatient Consultations**

A study of data from major US health insurer Blue Cross/Blue Shield examined medical care utilization over five consecutive years among 2,000 subscribers practising Transcendental Meditation, as compared to norms and control groups matched by age, gender, occupation, and health insurance terms (drawn from a total sample of 600,000). Both hospital admission and outpatient consultation rates were over 50% lower for subjects practising TM than norms or controls. In the over-40 age group, the reduction was over 70%. In contrast to controls, the TM group showed relatively little rise in health care needs with advancing age [4].

Rates of hospital admission for medical and surgical conditions were 60-70% lower in the Transcendental Meditation group, with reductions in all 17 disease categories studied. For example, admissions were 87% less for heart and blood vessel disorders, 55% less for tumours, 73% less for respiratory disorders, 87% less for neurological problems, and 30% less for infections [4].

These findings are supported by a subsequent eleven-year study of Blue Cross/Blue Shield data for individuals practising TM in conjunction with a comprehensive natural Vedic health programme. Again, marked reductions in medical care utilization were found compared with normative data and matched control groups. Overall medical expenditure was 59% lower than norms and 57% lower than controls, with 80% fewer hospital admissions and 55% fewer out-patient visits to the doctor. TM subjects over 45 years spent 88% fewer days in hospital than controls. Hospital admission rates were 92% lower for immune, endocrine, and metabolic disorders; 92% lower for cardiovascular disease; 92% lower for mental health and substance abuse; and 94% lower for musculoskeletal disorders [5].

## **Reduced Health Care Costs**

Reduced need for medical treatment as a result of Transcendental Meditation is also indicated by a 14-year controlled retrospective study of medical expenses for 2836 people enrolled in the Quebec provincial health insurance scheme. Monthly data on payments to doctors were adjusted to account for age, inflation, and other influences using normative data provided by the Quebec government. Before beginning Transcendental Meditation, payments did not differ significantly between TM and

control groups. After learning the technique, the TM group showed a progressive decline in payments to doctors compared to controls: the average annual difference was 13%, leading to a cumulative reduction of 55% after six years [6-7].

These findings are supported by further analyses of Quebec health insurance data for two important subgroups: the highest-cost 10% of subjects; and individuals over 65 years. In most populations, the higher medical needs of these subgroups contribute very strongly to overall health care costs. For high-cost subjects, the TM group's payments decreased by 11% over one year, with a cumulative reduction of 28% after five years compared to controls [399]. For older individuals, the TM group showed a five-year cumulative cost reduction of 70% [8]. This finding is consistent with research indicating that TM counters deleterious effects of ageing and promotes longevity (see below) [12, 15-17, 95-102].

These results are further supported by a study showing a 57% reduction in medical expenditure in subjects practising TM in conjunction with a comprehensive natural health programme (Maharishi's Vedic Approach to Health) [5].

### **Reduction of Major Risk Factors for Disease**

Transcendental Meditation simultaneously ameliorates many important risk factors for disease, including major risk factors for coronary heart disease, stroke, and cancer. Findings include reductions in: high blood pressure; insulin resistance; smoking; alcohol consumption; drug abuse; obesity; physical and mental stress; and adverse psychological traits such as anxiety, depression, and hostility. TM also enhances protective factors including improved occupational health and job satisfaction; more harmonious relationships; and positive psychological health and well-being [see Table 1 for references].

### **Reduction of High Blood Pressure, Improved Cardiovascular Health, Reduced Cardiovascular Events, and Decreased Mortality**

In recent years, a multi-centre medical research team in America has attracted grants totalling over \$25 million, principally from the US National Institutes of Health, for research on Transcendental Meditation and prevention of cardiovascular disease in older African-Americans (a high-risk group for vascular disease). These and other randomized controlled trials have shown:

- In a nine-year study of patients with coronary heart disease, TM led to a 48% reduction in the rate of major clinical events (all-cause mortality plus non-fatal myocardial infarction and stroke) compared to controls who received education on risk factor reduction, including diet modification and exercise. TM also reduced blood pressure and psychosocial distress [9].
- TM produced clinically significant reductions in systolic and diastolic blood pressure, without adverse side-effects [9-18, 22-25, 32-45, 413-414].
- TM was more effective in reducing mild hypertension than either progressive muscular relaxation, a pseudo-meditation procedure (which attempted to imitate the TM technique), or a 'usual care' programme of advice on weight loss, salt restriction, exercise, and alcohol intake [10-12, 32].
- TM was effective in lowering systolic and diastolic blood pressure for men and women in both high- and low-risk groups on six measures of hypertension risk: psychosocial stress, obesity, alcohol use, physical inactivity, dietary sodium-potassium ratio, and a composite measure of these factors [11].
- Follow-up studies confirm sustained blood pressure reductions with TM [13].
- Cost-effectiveness of TM for reducing high blood pressure compared favourably with drugs [14].
- Pooled data from two randomized studies on older people with elevated blood pressure showed that TM was associated with a 23% reduction in all-cause mortality and a 30% decrease in cardiovascular deaths [15-17].
- In patients with stable coronary heart disease (CHD), TM decreased both blood pressure and insulin resistance – key components of the 'metabolic syndrome' associated with many major disorders of modern society, including CHD, type 2 diabetes, and hypertension. TM also increased stability of the cardiac autonomic nervous system [18].
- TM reduced carotid artery atherosclerosis compared to control groups who either practised progressive muscular relaxation or received health education [19-20].



- TM improved functional capacity and quality of life in patients with chronic heart failure. TM subjects also showed reduced depression and had fewer hospitalizations [21].
- In university students, TM reduced blood pressure; decreased total psychological distress, anxiety, depression, and anger/hostility; and improved coping [25].
- In pre-hypertensive adolescents, TM improved blood pressure at rest, and during both acute laboratory stress and normal daily activity [22-24].
- TM decreased left ventricular mass in pre-hypertensive adolescents compared to a control group receiving health education, indicating reduction of an early sign of left ventricular hypertrophy (the strongest predictor of cardiovascular mortality apart from age) [408].

Controlled research has also shown benefits from TM for patients with angina pectoris (cardiac pain on exercise) who had angiographically-proven coronary artery disease and positive exercise-stress tests. TM improved exercise tolerance and maximum workload achieved during a standard exercise test, and delayed the onset of electrocardiographic evidence of myocardial ischaemia (shortage of oxygen in the heart muscle) [26].

A British study found positive effects from Transcendental Meditation on exercise ECG testing and quality of life in patients with cardiac syndrome X (anginal chest pain, positive response to exercise stress testing, and normal coronary angiogram). Despite a generally good prognosis, this distressing and disabling condition often necessitates expensive and invasive investigations, and recurrent hospital admissions; drug treatment is frequently unsatisfactory [27].

Other controlled studies on TM have shown: reduced cardiovascular risk factors and levels of the stress hormone cortisol in post-menopausal women [28]; reduced cholesterol levels independent of changes in diet, medication, or weight [29-30, 320]; and more effective weight reduction and improved psychological health in obese subjects on a weight reducing diet [31].

## **An Effective Non-Pharmacological Approach to High Blood Pressure**

A systematic review and meta-analysis of 107 published studies on stress reduction and high blood pressure found that TM reduced both systolic and diastolic blood pressure, while other methods of meditation and relaxation, biofeedback, and stress management did not produce significant effects [32].

A second meta-analysis by an independent team confirmed that TM leads to clinically important reductions in blood pressure; this conclusion was robust when only the highest quality research was analyzed. The authors conclude that sustained blood pressure changes of the magnitude produced by TM would be associated with substantially decreased risk of heart attack and stroke, the leading cause of mortality worldwide [33]. These findings are supported by other reviews on TM and cardiovascular health [34-50, 396, 409, 413-414].

Non-pharmacological methods have long been recognized as crucial to therapy for hypertension. For example, the US Joint National Committee on the Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Pressure recommended that non-pharmacological, behavioural approaches ‘should be used both as definitive intervention and as an adjunct to pharmacologic therapy and should be considered for all anti-hypertensive therapy’ [51]. A review of research on behavioural therapy for hypertension concluded that Transcendental Meditation could provide an optimal non-pharmacological treatment and preventive programme for high blood pressure [52], because the technique:

- produces rapid, clinically significant blood pressure reductions;
- is distinctly more effective than other meditation and relaxation procedures;
- is continued by a high proportion of subjects (in contrast to lower continuation rates for relaxation techniques and the frequent problem of poor compliance with anti-hypertensive drugs);
- has documented acceptability and effectiveness in a wide range of populations;
- is effective in reducing high blood pressure when used as sole treatment or in concert with medication;
- reduces high blood pressure in ‘real-life’ environments outside the clinic;
- is free from harmful side-effects or adverse reactions;
- also reduces other cardiovascular risk factors and improves health in a general way.

## **American Heart Association Scientific Statement**

A scientific statement from the American Heart Association (AHA) published in 2013 concluded that the Transcendental Meditation technique lowers blood pressure and recommends that TM may be considered in clinical practice for the prevention and treatment of hypertension [413-414].

After considering meta-analyses and the latest clinical trials, the report found that Transcendental Meditation is the only meditation practice that has been shown to lower blood pressure. Indeed, according to the AHA, ‘Because of many negative studies or mixed results and a paucity of available trials, all other meditation techniques [including mindfulness] received a “Class III, no benefit, Level of Evidence C” recommendation. Thus, other meditation techniques are not recommended in clinical practice to lower BP at this time.’ [413]

The AHA statement surveyed eleven randomized controlled trials (RCTs) on TM and blood pressure, with more than 1200 subjects, as well as two well-conducted meta-analyses. Most of the RCTs have been competitively reviewed and externally funded, rigorously conducted in collaboration with leading academic medical centres, blinded, independently monitored, published in peer-reviewed journals, and replicated. The beneficial effect of TM on blood pressure has been confirmed by numerous investigators, in multiple populations, and with ambulatory monitoring [414].

Prevention of major clinical events is the purpose of any anti-hypertensive therapy and the ultimate test of its effectiveness. The AHA report noted research on Transcendental Meditation demonstrating substantially reduced rates of major clinical events (death, heart attack and stroke) [9]. TM research includes such hard event outcome trials, which are not available for other non-pharmacological approaches. Moreover, in addition to reducing high blood pressure, TM improves multiple factors relevant to cardiovascular health, which likely contribute to the technique’s observed preventive effects [34-50, 55, 409, 413-414]

The AHA Scientific Statement represents an important research landmark since it is the first time that Transcendental Meditation has been recognized and recommended for consideration by a national medical organization that provides professional practice guidelines to physicians, health care payers, and policymakers [414].

## **Improved Quality of Life and Mental Health for Patients with Breast Cancer and Other Chronic Disorders**

Breast cancer is the commonest malignancy in women in Britain and USA, affecting 11% of UK women, especially after age 50. Impairment of quality of life and psychological health affect both newly diagnosed and long-term survivors. Psychosocial stress has been implicated as contributing to the onset, progression, and mortality from this disease. A pioneering trial examined effects of TM on quality of life and mental well-being in 130 women with breast cancer (stages II to IV, average age 63.8 years) [53]. The study was supported by grants from the US National Institutes of Health National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, and the Retirement Research Foundation of Chicago.

Patients were randomly assigned to learn TM or act as controls, following stratification to ensure that groups were well matched for age, stage of cancer, and timing of metastases in stage IV patients (spread of cancer to distant sites). All patients received standard medical care. Well-documented measures were administered six-monthly over an average 18-month intervention period. Compared to controls, subjects practising TM showed improvements in overall quality of life, emotional well-being, social well-being, and mental health [53].

Other long-term health problems also impair quality of life and psychological well-being, which in turn can adversely affect physical health. National guidelines for UK doctors emphasize screening for depression in patients with chronic disorders, including heart disease. A randomized trial of patients with chronic heart failure found that TM improved quality of life and reduced depression, as well as improving functional capacity and reducing hospitalizations [21]. Two further randomized studies have found reduced symptoms of depression as a result of TM in patients at increased risk of cardiovascular disease (see below under 'Improved Mental Health and Well-Being') [242].

Stress has also been implicated in the pathogenesis and progression of HIV [415]. In a community-based randomized controlled trial of people with HIV, subjects who practised TM for 6 months showed improvements in both general and HIV-specific health-related quality of life compared to control subjects who received education on healthy eating. The TM group exhibited improved total and general health scores on Functional

Assessment of HIV Infection compared to controls. Increased vitality and physical well-being were also observed in TM subjects, but not in controls [415].

### **Benefits for Common Health Problems**

In Britain and abroad, TM has been widely recommended by doctors for its contribution to prevention of disease, management of common disorders, and promotion of positive health [[www.DoctorsonTM.org](http://www.DoctorsonTM.org)].

Research and/or clinical experience have identified benefits of Transcendental Meditation, in the management of a range of common clinical problems, including hypertension, coronary heart disease, and heart failure (see above ) [9-50]; asthma [54]; post-traumatic stress disorder [56, 401, 418-421], type 2 diabetes [55]; migraine [57]; ADHD [289, 404]; sleep disturbance [56, 62, 67-68, 343-344, 404]; occupational stress [61-62, 316, 318, 320, 423]; anxiety, depression, and substance misuse [see Table 1 for references]; as well as in improving quality of life and mental health in patients with chronic disorders, including breast cancer, coronary heart disease, heart failure, HIV, and chronic renal failure [53, 9, 21, 59; 65-94; 415]. In some original studies and reviews, TM has been investigated in conjunction with other aspects of a comprehensive natural health programme—Maharishi's Vedic Approach to Health [5, 20, 55, 89-94].

### **Healthier Ageing and Increased Longevity**

It has been observed that many effects of Transcendental Meditation are opposite to deteriorations usually seen with ageing (see Table 3). Other findings indicate a strengthening of factors known to favour longevity, such as cardiovascular health, work satisfaction, positive health habits, good mental health, happiness, and intelligence (see Tables 1 and 3).

## **TABLE 3**

### TABLE 3

## Effects of the Transcendental Meditation Programme Opposite to Detrimental Effects of the Ageing Process

### PHYSIOLOGY

#### Increase with ageing; Decrease with TM

Blood pressure – systolic [9-13, 15-18, 22-25, 29, 32-34, 40, 52, 96-98, 320, 413-414]

Blood pressure – diastolic [9-11, 13, 15-18, 22-25, 29, 32-34, 40, 52, 320, 413-414]

Atherosclerosis [19-20]

Heart failure [21]

Major cardiovascular events (death, myocardial infarction, stroke) [9]

Visual evoked potentials – P300 latency [102]

Reflex latency (monosynaptic reflex) [197]

Reflex recovery time (paired H-reflex) [198]

Muscular contraction time (fast and mixed muscles) [197]

Susceptibility to stress [23-25, 28, 114, 170, 178-179, 189-192, 194-195, 316, 365]

Erythrocyte sedimentation rate [100]

Insomnia (time to fall asleep) [343-344, 67-68, see also 56, 62]

Sleep disturbance (awakenings per night) [343-344, 67-68; see also 56, 62]

Daytime sleep [68; see also 178]

#### Decrease with ageing; Increase with TM

Cardiovascular efficiency [21, 23-24, 26, 314-315]

Vital capacity [314-315]

Cerebral blood flow [124, 127, 166]

EEG alpha power [110-113, 115-119, 151-160, 162, 169, 402, 416]

Temperature homeostasis [103]

Neuromuscular co-ordination [314-315]

Periodontal health [75]

Physical health and well-being in later life [9-13, 21, 28, 53]

Longevity [12, 15-17]

### BIOCHEMISTRY

#### Increase with ageing; Decrease with TM

Serum cholesterol [29-30, 318]

Insulin resistance [18]

#### Decrease with ageing; Increase with TM

DHEA-S (dehydroepiandrosterone sulphate) [99]

Efficiency of endocrine control (pituitary-thyroid axis) [193]

Glucose tolerance [104-105]

**TABLE 3 (continued)**

**Effects of the Transcendental Meditation Programme  
Opposite to Detrimental Effects of the Ageing Process**

**PERCEPTION AND MIND-BODY CO-ORDINATION**

**Decrease with ageing; Increase with TM**

Visual perception [12, 184, 276, 308]  
Dichotic listening [306]  
Field independence [274-276, 298-299, 397]  
Perceptual flexibility [12, 184, 276, 307, 309]  
Perceptual-motor performance [101, 297, 309-311]  
Complex sensory-motor performance [310-311]

**Increase with ageing; Decrease with TM**

Auditory threshold [96-97, see also 1-2]  
Behavioural rigidity [12, 309]  
Reaction time – simple [101, 296, 314-315]  
Reaction time – complex [297, 184]

**PSYCHOLOGY**

**Decrease with ageing; Increase with TM**

Fluid intelligence [266-267, 270, 275, 101]  
Creativity [266, 277-278, 283]  
Learning ability [12, 279, 284]  
Memory – verbal [284]  
Memory – visual [101]  
Organization of memory [285]  
Cognitive flexibility [12, 266, 276, 184-185]  
Self-evaluation of health and well-being [12, 61, 71]  
Mental health and well-being in later life [12, 9, 21, 53, 109, 242]

**Increase with ageing; Decrease with TM**

Depression [21, 56, 61, 211-212, 242, 319, 401, 423]

**REQUIREMENTS FOR HEALTH CARE**

**Increase with ageing; Decrease with TM**

Patient days in hospital (medical and surgical) [4-5; see also 21]  
Outpatient visits (medical and surgical) [4-5]  
Health care costs [6-8, 399]  
Rise in health care needs with advancing age [4]  
Rise in health care costs with advancing age [8]

In keeping with these observations, a study employing a standardized ageing index found that the biological age of middle-aged individuals practising Transcendental Meditation was significantly younger than both their chronological age and the biological age of non-meditating controls. The longer subjects had been practising TM, the greater the degree to which biological age was younger than chronological age [95]. A British study subsequently found similar results in a younger population [96-97].

A meticulously controlled, randomized study from Harvard University found that elderly individuals who learned Transcendental Meditation showed greater improvements in cognitive and behavioural flexibility, learning ability, self-assessment of well-being and ageing, systolic blood pressure, and staff assessment of mental health than subjects taught either a relaxation procedure or 'mindfulness' training, or who acted as a no-treatment control group. Those who learned the relaxation procedure (which attempted to imitate TM) showed no improvement on any measure. A clear majority of TM subjects rated their technique as personally useful and easy to practise, in contrast to lower ratings for the other techniques [12].

Strikingly, after three years, all those who had learned Transcendental Meditation were still living in contrast to lower survival rates for the other three groups and for the remaining inhabitants of the institutions where the study was conducted [12]. Moreover, significantly greater longevity in the TM group was subsequently maintained over a 15-year follow-up period. Average survival times were 2.2 years (18%) longer for cardiovascular mortality and 1.73 years (19%) longer for all-cause mortality in the TM group, compared to the other three groups combined [17].

These findings are supported by an eight-year randomized controlled study showing reduced cardiovascular and all-cause mortality in elderly African Americans with mild high blood pressure [16]. A third analysis combined data from these two studies, totalling 202 subjects. Mortality rates were significantly reduced among TM subjects compared to controls: 23% lower for all-cause mortality, and 30% lower for cardiovascular mortality [15].

Increased health care needs and costs are among the most important correlates of ageing. As discussed above, a 14-year study of medical expenses among people over 65 years in Quebec showed that individuals practising TM had markedly reduced annual change in payments to doctors compared to matched controls, with a cumulative



difference of 70% after five years [8]. An earlier American study of health insurance data also found relatively little increase in health care needs with advancing age among individuals practising Transcendental Meditation, in contrast to a marked increase seen in a normative control group [4].

Middle-aged and older individuals practising TM have been found to maintain higher levels of the hormone *dehydroepiandrosterone sulphate* (DHEAS) than controls. DHEAS usually declines steadily throughout adult life; low levels have been linked to a variety of diseases and to increased mortality. On average, DHEAS levels in individuals practising TM were comparable to levels of non-meditators who were 5-10 years younger—a difference that could not be explained by variations in diet, weight, or exercise [99].

In another study, individuals practising Transcendental Meditation were found to have lower average erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR) and a higher frequency of zero ESR compared to controls. Increased ESR is correlated with ageing and is a well-established clinical marker of inflammation [100].

Ageing research has focused extensively on the role of *free radicals* – small, highly reactive molecules or molecular fragments which can powerfully oxidize and damage vital bio-molecules, injuring tissues and disrupting physiological repair mechanisms. Free radicals are thought to be involved in key aspects of ageing and are also implicated in many major diseases, including coronary heart disease, cancer, Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, and inflammatory disorders such as rheumatoid arthritis [94]. A recent study examined free radical activity, as measured by ultraweak photon emissions at 12 anatomical locations, in 60 middle-aged male subjects practising either TM or other forms of meditation, or acting as non-meditating controls. Subjects who practised TM showed significantly lower free radical activity than both controls (at all 12 anatomical sites) and practitioners of other types of meditation (at 11 out of 12 sites). Compared to non-meditating controls, free radical activity was 27% lower among TM subjects, compared to 17% lower in practitioners of other techniques [106-107].

An earlier study found lower blood levels of lipid peroxides (another index of free radical activity) in elderly people who practised Transcendental Meditation compared to non-meditating peers [108]. Lower lipid peroxide levels in older long-term participants in TM have been found to correlate with better performance on tests of

fluid reasoning, verbal intelligence, long-term memory, and speed of processing, suggesting a link between free radical activity and cognitive functioning in later life [109].

### **Physiological Changes during TM: a Unique State of Restful Alertness**

Extensive physiological research over 40 years has shown that Transcendental Meditation gives rise to a unique physiological state characterized by deep rest [110-134]; increased orderliness and integration of brain functioning [110-113, 115-119, 130, 151-175, 416]; increased blood flow to the brain [124, 127, 166]; decreased peripheral vascular resistance [128]; features directly opposite to the physiological and biochemical effects of stress (including high and stable galvanic skin resistance [110-112, 114, 121, 131, 314], decreased plasma cortisol [135-136], reduced arterial blood lactate [110-112, 114, 122, 124, 126], and deep muscle relaxation [150, 158]); and other distinctive neuroendocrine changes [137-149].

Taken together, these studies clearly distinguish the physiology of TM from sleep, drowsiness, or ordinary relaxation. Researchers have concluded that TM gives rise to a fourth major state of consciousness – Transcendental Consciousness – which is both experientially and physiologically distinct from waking, sleeping, and dreaming. Like these three states, Transcendental Consciousness has its own unique correlates, aptly described as a state of ‘restful alertness’ in mind and body [111, 115-119, 129-130, 151, 155-156, 161-162, 416].

EEG (‘brain wave’) studies show that while the level of excitation in the nervous system is greatly reduced during TM, wakefulness increases [110-113, 115-119, 130, 151-164, 167-168, 407, 416]. At the same time, integration between different areas of the brain is enhanced [115-119, 151-164, 402-404, 416], with high EEG coherence<sup>1</sup> between front and back of the brain and between right and left cerebral hemispheres [115, 119, 130, 151, 154-156, 159-160, 162, 170, 403-404, 416].

A recent comprehensive review of different forms of meditation identified characteristics of practice and EEG patterns that clearly distinguish TM from other methods. Specifically during TM, high levels of alpha-1 activity spread globally over the cerebral cortex, indicating that the technique brings the whole brain to a state of

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<sup>1</sup>EEG coherence measures the correlation between brain waves from different areas of the cerebral cortex, providing an index of orderliness and integration in brain functioning [159-160].

restful alertness [119]. In addition, TM is the only technique for which EEG correlates have been documented in randomized controlled trials [119], and also the only practice for which specific physiological correlates (including characteristic EEG patterns), have been identified both for experiences of Transcendental Consciousness during meditation, and for experiences of higher states of consciousness developed through regular practice of the technique [416, 180-182].

High EEG coherence during TM has been found to correlate with higher scores on measures of creativity, intelligence, concept learning, academic performance, mathematical skills, moral reasoning, emotional stability, neuromuscular efficiency, self-development, self-awareness, and experiences of higher states of consciousness; and with lower anxiety and neuroticism [115, 117, 119, 130, 155-156, 170, 172-175, 180, 187-188, 205].

EEG coherence increases progressively with regular practice of Transcendental Meditation, and peaks during Yogic Flying, an aspect of the advanced TM-Sidhi programme [115, 117, 119, 151, 154-156, 159-160, 169-171]. A recent study has further documented highly integrated EEG patterns characteristic of the TM-Sidhi programme, and correlated these findings with classical descriptions of this practice from the ancient Vedic Literature, as brought to light by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi [402].

Sophisticated neurophysiological and neuroimaging techniques are shedding further light on TM's integrative effects on the brain [153, 166, 179]. A magneto-encephalographic study identified the prefrontal cortex and anterior cingulate brain regions as the source of the widespread EEG alpha wave activity observed during TM [153]. Positron emission tomography also highlighted the role of the prefrontal cortex (the highest level of regulation in the brain), showing increased blood flow to this region [166], consistent with the findings of earlier cardiovascular research [124, 127].

Regular practice of TM is associated with sustained increases in brain integration, including during challenging cognitive tasks [178-188] (see below under 'Comprehensive Benefits in Education'), and with reductions in physiological and biochemical correlates of stress [189-196, 359, 365], reduced sleepiness [178], and increased neurological efficiency [197-199]. Recent research on the brain's response to pain, using functional magnetic resonance imaging, indicates that regular practice of TM reduces distress associated with painful stimuli, without impairing sensory acuity [179].

## **Improved Mental Health and Well-Being**

A large body of research has demonstrated that Transcendental Meditation produces comprehensive improvements in mental health, enhancing positive aspects of psychological and social functioning, reducing various forms of distress, and developing a more stable, balanced, and resilient personality. Findings include:

- Increased self-actualization and enhanced self development [201, 203-238]
- Improved self-concept and increased self-esteem [220, 319, 58, 211, 215-216, 218, 225, 229, 280, 290]
- Increased autonomy and independence [217, 277]
- Decreased anxiety, tension and depression [200, 417, 21, 25, 56, 61, 71, 211-212, 225, 242, 244, 246, 269, 277, 289, 290, 316, 319, 343-344, 347-348, 351-352, 401, 423]
- Reduced aggression and hostility [25, 31, 343-344, 347-348]
- Decreased irritability and impulsiveness [61, 217, 241, 289, 338, 343-344]
- Increased emotional well-being, stability, and maturity [25, 31, 53, 61, 67, 201, 212, 244, 246, 267, 281-282, 338, 343-344]
- Decreased behavioural rigidity [12, 309, 359]
- Increased sociability, friendliness, tolerance, and good humour [31, 215, 217, 223, 225, 246, 359]
- Less sensitivity to criticism and greater trust [211]
- Increased ability to be objective, fair-minded, and reasonable [338]
- Increased social maturity [223]
- Increased tolerance and appreciation of others [215, 217, 277, 336]
- Enhanced capacity for warm interpersonal relationships [31, 211, 219, 225, 246, 338]
- Improved personal, family, and work relationships [56, 226, 316-318, 335-339, 401]
- Increased marital harmony and adjustment [335, 338-339]
- Reduced perceived stress and occupational burnout [423]
- Improvements in post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) [56, 401, 418-421]
- Improvements in attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) [289, 404]

## **Increased Self-Actualization – Enhanced Personal Development**

In a meta-analysis of 42 independent research results, Transcendental Meditation proved three times as effective as other meditation and relaxation procedures in increasing self-actualization, an overall measure of positive mental health and personal development. Further analysis revealed that the technique is exceptionally effective in developing three independent components of this dimension: emotional maturity, a resilient sense of self, and a positive, integrated perspective of self and the world [201, 203-238].

## **Decreased Anxiety**

A systematic review and meta-analysis of 146 independent outcomes found that Transcendental Meditation was more than twice as effective in reducing trait anxiety<sup>1</sup> as other techniques (including progressive muscular relaxation, methods claimed to induce a ‘relaxation response’, and other forms of meditation). Only TM showed a positive correlation between duration of regular practice and reduction of anxiety. The greater effectiveness of Transcendental Meditation remained highly significant when only the strongest and most rigorous studies were included in the analysis. This result remained robust even when analyses were limited to randomized controlled studies by researchers known to be neutral or sceptical towards TM, and when other potentially confounding factors were controlled [200].

These findings are supported and extended by a recent systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials, which confirmed that TM was effective in reducing trait anxiety, with greater effects seen in subjects with high anxiety levels before starting the technique. Studies using repeated measures showed substantial reductions in anxiety within two weeks of learning TM, and sustained improvements after one and three years. No other alternative active treatment was more effective than TM. Moreover, TM had a greater effect in decreasing anxiety than was observed with mindfulness in a previous meta-analysis [417].

TM was also exceptional in the breadth and depth of beneficial effects associated with anxiety reduction, including decreases in depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, neuroticism, autonomic stress reactivity, sleep disturbance, anger, hostility, and drug

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<sup>1</sup>*Trait anxiety* denotes anxiety that is (or has become) a persisting feature of a person’s psychological make-up and response to situations and events.

misuse; and improvements in blood pressure, cardiovascular health, brain integration, intelligence, creativity, and perceptual ability [417]. The analysis found no evidence that author affiliation influenced outcomes: effect sizes of studies conducted by researchers from Maharishi University of Management were not greater than those of studies from independent universities, consistent with previous findings [417, 200].

These results are corroborated by an earlier meta-analysis which examined 51 studies of the effects of different meditation techniques on measures of psychological health and well-being, comprising more than 9700 research subjects and 400 outcome findings. TM was found to be markedly more effective than other techniques in improving psychological variables; this result was maintained when only studies of highest validity and strongest experimental design were included [202].

### **Decreased Depression**

Depression, like anxiety, is a massive worldwide problem with far-reaching consequences for health, society, and the economy. Depression is an important risk factor for development and progression of cardiovascular disease and other chronic disorders. Two randomized controlled trials investigated depression levels in subjects aged over 55 who were at increased cardiovascular risk: respectively, Native Hawaiians with at least one other major cardiovascular risk factor; and African Americans with ultrasound evidence of carotid artery atherosclerosis. TM decreased depressive symptoms over a 9-12 month period compared to controls who received health education. The largest improvements were found in those with indications of clinically significant depression, with an average 48% reduction in depressive symptoms [242]. In a third randomized trial, TM reduced depression in patients with chronic heart failure, as well as improving functional capacity and quality of life, and reducing hospitalizations [21].

Depression and anxiety have a major impact on occupational health and performance. A random-assignment study of employees at a high-security government agency found that Transcendental Meditation reduced depression and anxiety, and improved self-concept, over a 3-year period in comparison to controls who participated in an educational corporate stress-management programme [319]. In another randomized controlled trial, conducted on secondary schoolteachers and support staff at a

residential therapeutic school for children with severe behavioural problems, TM was effective in reducing depression, perceived stress, and overall teacher burnout [423].

Transcendental Meditation has also been shown to reduce depression and anxiety in people with post-traumatic stress disorder [56], as described below.

### **Improvements in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder**

The comprehensive nature of Transcendental Meditation's benefits for mental health is illustrated in a randomized study of Vietnam War veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Over a three-month period, patients practising TM showed clear-cut improvements in all aspects of the syndrome studied, with significant decreases in depression, anxiety, insomnia, and alcohol consumption; improvement in family problems; reduced severity of delayed stress syndrome; decreased emotional numbness; and reduced difficulty in obtaining employment. In contrast, the control group who received standard treatment with psychotherapy showed no significant change on any measure [56].

These findings are corroborated by a study of US veterans with PTSD following exposure to moderate or heavy-moderate combat in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. After eight weeks' practice of Transcendental Meditation, subjects showed a 50% reduction in symptoms of PTSD, including decreased stress and depression, and marked improvements in relationships and overall quality of life [401].

Case studies have also indicated the feasibility of providing TM training to active duty soldiers with PTSD in defence department medical facilities, including those with traumatic brain injury, depression, or substance abuse. Practice of TM was associated with reduction in PTSD symptoms and distress, and improvement in social role performance [418].

These findings are supported by a survey of potential approaches to improving soldier resilience which concluded that Transcendental Meditation had the most supporting evidence across five domains of resilience: physical, emotional, spiritual, social, and family life [419].

Recent studies have examined effects of Transcendental Meditation on PTSD in civilian refugees of the devastating Congo war. Marked reductions in severe post-traumatic stress symptoms were found after 30 days practice of TM, with sustained

improvements after 135 days. In contrast, symptom scores for control subjects matched for age, sex, and baseline symptoms showed an upward trend [420]. A second study of Congolese war refugees found that striking reductions in PTSD symptoms were evident within ten days of learning TM, with further reductions after 30 days [421].

### **Reduced Smoking, Alcohol Consumption, and Drug Abuse**

Transcendental Meditation has consistently been found to reduce the use of tobacco, alcohol, and non-prescribed drugs in a wide variety of settings and populations [60, 56, 62-64, 246-265, 316, 318, 398]. A systematic review and meta-analysis of 198 studies (including 19 on TM) found that Transcendental Meditation produced marked, sustained, and highly significant reductions in smoking, alcohol consumption, and illicit drug use, with larger effects than other treatments including standard therapies, other forms of meditation, relaxation training, educational programmes, anxiety management, counselling to counteract peer pressure, biofeedback, hypnosis, acupuncture and sensory deprivation [60].

Over an 18-24 month period, abstinence ranged from 51% to 89% for people practising Transcendental Meditation, compared to 21% for good conventional substance abuse programmes. In contrast to high early relapse rates with standard programmes, reductions in smoking and alcohol consumption with TM increased gradually over time, while initial marked reductions in illicit drug use were sustained [60]. Overall, research in this area indicates that the longer individuals practise Transcendental Meditation, the more likely it is that they will stop or markedly reduce smoking, alcohol consumption, or drug abuse [60, 64].



## **Research on Transcendental Meditation in comparison to other types of meditation and relaxation**

Transcendental Meditation is unique in the range and depth of research into its effects: no other method of meditation or relaxation has been shown to reproduce the physiological changes observed during TM, or to replicate its wide-ranging benefits for mind, body, behaviour, and society [189, 119].

**Randomized controlled trials** have shown that, compared to various forms of relaxation and meditation, TM is more effective in reducing high blood pressure [10-13]; decreasing atherosclerosis [19]; decreasing cardiovascular and all-cause mortality in subjects with mild hypertension [15-17]; increasing cognitive flexibility, well-being, and longevity in the elderly [12, 17]; increasing general intelligence, practical intelligence, creativity and speed of cognitive processing [266]; improving perceptual awareness (increased field independence) [266, 299]; and decreasing anxiety [266]. In other randomized studies, TM was more effective than psychotherapy in decreasing multiple features of post-traumatic stress disorder [56], and superior to an educational corporate stress management programme in reducing anxiety and depression and improving self-concept [319].

**Systematic reviews and meta-analyses**, integrating data from multiple studies, have shown that TM is more effective than other methods of meditation and relaxation in reducing high blood pressure [32], enhancing overall psychological health (self-actualization) [201], decreasing anxiety [200], and improving psychological outcomes in general [202]. A recent, updated meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials found that TM was more effective in reducing trait anxiety than treatment as usual. Moreover, no alternative active treatment was more effective than TM, or produced the same wide range of associated beneficial effects. TM had a stronger effect in reducing anxiety than was observed with mindfulness-based therapy in a previous meta-analysis [417].

**Meta-analyses** have also shown that TM promotes deeper rest and decreases physiological indicators of stress more effectively than ordinary relaxation [114], and is strikingly more successful in combating smoking, alcohol consumption, and drug abuse than conventional substance abuse programmes or other forms of meditation or relaxation [60].

An **American Heart Association (AHA) Scientific Statement** from 2013 found that TM is the only type of meditation that has been shown to lower blood pressure, and recommended that TM may be considered in clinical practice for prevention and treatment of hypertension. The AHA report concluded that there is not enough scientific evidence to recommend other meditation or relaxation techniques [413-414].

**A review of EEG research** on different forms of meditation identified characteristic patterns of integrated brain functioning that clearly distinguish TM from other methods [119]. In addition, TM is the only technique for which EEG correlates have been documented in randomized controlled trials [119], and also the only practice for which specific physiological correlates have been identified both for experiences of Transcendental Consciousness during meditation, and for experiences of higher states of consciousness developed through regular practice of TM [416, 117, 155, 180-182].

## **Comprehensive Benefits for Education**

Transcendental Meditation is being increasingly employed in education as a technology to facilitate optimal cognitive, intellectual, social and emotional development.

Research findings include:

- Increased intelligence and creativity [266-268, 223, 270, 275, 277-280, 283, 101]
- Improved memory, learning ability, and cognitive flexibility [266, 12, 174-175, 279, 284-285]
- Improved academic achievement in school, university, and postgraduate students [271-273, 282, 397, 400]
- Higher graduation rates, lower school dropout, and higher college acceptance rates [422]
- Enhanced cognitive and self development [201, 203, 222, 224, 226, 231-238, 280, 287, 290, 334]
- Improved attention, perception, and mind-body co-ordination [266, 101, 179, 184-185, 270, 274-275, 289, 296-315, 397]
- Increased orderliness and integration of brain functioning [178, 110-113, 115-119, 130, 151-177, 179-188, 402-404]
- Improvement on both verbal-analytical and visual-spatial tasks (indicating improved functioning of both left and right cerebral hemispheres) [101, 185, 266-268, 274-279, 283-284, 305, 397, 404]
- Improved athletic performance [313-315]
- Increased field independence (indicating greater ability to maintain broad comprehension while focusing sharply) [266, 274-275, 298-300, 397]
- Comprehensive benefits for mental health and well-being (see above) [12, 25, 56, 61, 67, 71, 200-246, 266-267, 269, 280-282, 289-293, 316-321, 334-339, 347-348, 359]
- Greater moral maturity and higher moral reasoning [227-228, 235, 279, 173]
- Increased orientation towards positive values [226]
- Increased social maturity in college students [223]
- Decreased sleepiness in college students [178]
- Decreases in total psychological distress, anxiety, depression, anger/hostility, and blood pressure, and improved coping, in university students [25]
- Decreased general psychological distress and reduced anxiety in racial and ethnic minority secondary school students [410]
- Reduced blood pressure in pre-hypertensive adolescents and young adults [22-25, 34]
- Reduced alcohol consumption, drug abuse, and smoking (see above) [60, 62-64, 246-265, 316, 318, 398]
- Reduced perceived stress, depression, and burnout in secondary schoolteachers and support staff [423]

- **Benefits in special and remedial education:**
  - Improved academic achievement in at-risk urban middle school students [400]
  - Increased intelligence and improved self-concept among children from low income families [280]
  - Reduced behaviour problems in school—decreased absenteeism, rule infractions, and suspension days [288]
  - **Improvements in children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD): improved EEG (“brain wave”) patterns, cognitive performance, and behaviour [404]; reduced stress and anxiety, and improvements in ADHD symptoms and executive function [289]**
  - Increased independence and self-supportiveness, improved self-regard, and decreased dropout rate from school in economically-deprived adolescents with learning problems [290]
  - Decreased anxiety, examination anxiety, and school dislike in children with learning problems [291]
  - Benefits for learning disabled subjects: improvements in social behaviour, cognitive functioning, intelligence, physical health; and normalization of neuroendocrine measures [292, 87]
  - Improvement in autism: decreased echolalic behavior [293]
  - Decreased stuttering [294]
  - Improved social behaviour, increased self-regard, and decreased anxiety among juvenile offenders [351-352]

### **Holistic Cognitive Development and Increased Intelligence**

Three randomized controlled trials (RCTs) on high school students in Taiwan found that Transcendental Meditation produced greater improvements in speed of cognitive processing, cognitive flexibility, creativity, general intelligence, practical intelligence, and field independence, and also reduced anxiety, compared to a traditional Chinese meditation technique or napping [266]. The authors note that, as in earlier research on TM and intelligence, the technique produced unexpected improvements in basic cognitive abilities that do not usually develop beyond early adolescence [266-267, 270, 275].

In another RCT, Canadian secondary school students who practised TM over a 14-week period showed improvements in intellectual performance (problem-solving ability), creativity, tolerance, self-esteem, autonomy and independence, innovation, energy levels, and ability to deal with abstract and complex situations, as well as decreased anxiety, compared to control students [277].

In Cambodian students taking a one-year preparatory course before university, TM led to increased intelligence and self-esteem, improved physical health, and decreased depression and anxiety, compared to control students [268-269]

In a ten-year longitudinal study, American university students practising the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi programme increased significantly on a measure of self development (Loevinger's ego-development scale), in comparison to control students at three other universities [203]. Another study found that American university students practising TM rated important people in their lives (parents and spouse) significantly more positively than did control students [226].

### **Improved Academic Performance and Higher Graduation Rates**

In a randomized controlled trial, British master's degree engineering students who learned Transcendental Meditation showed improved performance on standard examinations after six months, compared with controls [271].

Another investigation examined academic achievement in Californian middle school students who were below proficiency level in English and mathematics. All subjects were from the same school and continued with the standard curriculum and instruction; 97% of subjects were from ethnic minorities. Over a three-month period, students who learned Transcendental Meditation showed improved scores on both English and mathematics scales of the California Standard Tests, in contrast to non-meditating control subjects [400].

A study conducted at a US East Coast urban high school showed a 15% higher graduation rate among students practising TM compared to non-meditating controls, after taking into account student grade point average. When only students with low academic performance were compared, graduation rate was 25% higher for TM subjects than controls. Students practising TM were also less likely to drop out of school, or enter prison, and were more likely to be accepted at post-secondary educational institutions [422]. Consistent with these results, a four-month randomized trial found that adolescent African American children who learned Transcendental Meditation showed reductions in absenteeism, school rule infractions, and suspension days compared to a control group who participated in health education [288].

## **Increased Brain Integration in College Students**

By incorporating TM into the daily curriculum, Consciousness-Based Education progressively develops integration in brain functioning—the essential foundation for more effective learning, enhanced personal growth, and greater success in any field of life (see ‘Physiological Changes during TM’ above). A recent randomized controlled trial found that college students who practised TM over a three-month period showed increased scores on an electroencephalographic (EEG) index of brain integration compared to non-meditating control students. The TM group also showed reduced sleepiness and had no increase in physiological stress levels (measured by skin resistance responses) despite impending final examinations, in contrast to the expected increase seen in controls [178].

## **Improved Health and Reduced Stress for Students and Teachers**

A randomized controlled study of American university students found that TM reduced blood pressure; decreased total psychological distress, anxiety, depression, and anger/hostility; and improved coping [25]. A previous randomized trial of pre-hypertensive adolescents found that TM improved blood pressure at rest, and during both acute laboratory stress and normal daily activity [23].

Workplace stress and burnout are pervasive problems among teachers and staff in schools, with major deleterious impacts on mental and physical health, and on both individual and institutional performance. In a four-month randomized controlled study of 40 secondary schoolteachers and support staff at a residential therapeutic school for children with severe behavioural problems, Transcendental Meditation was effective in reducing perceived stress, depression, and overall teacher burnout [423].

## **Improvements in ADHD**

A random-assignment trial investigated effects of Transcendental Meditation in 18 students, aged 11-14 years, with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). After three-months, children practising TM showed improvements in brain integration, cognitive functioning, and behaviour compared to controls, as measured by: improvement in EEG (‘brain wave’) abnormalities associated with ADHD (decreased theta/beta ratios); increased EEG coherence, indicating increased integration between different areas of the brain; increased Letter Fluency; and positive changes in cognitive

and behavioural functioning reported by parents in five areas – ability to focus on schoolwork, organizational abilities, ability to work independently, happiness, and quality of sleep [404]. These findings are corroborated by an earlier study on children with ADHD which found that TM reduced stress and anxiety, and improved ADHD symptoms and executive function [289].

### **Consciousness-Based Education in Practice**

The Transcendental Meditation programme has been practically applied in over 400 schools, colleges, and universities around the world, with participation of more than 220,000 students. These include projects in highly diverse social and economic environments in 58 countries, including UK, USA, Canada, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Panama, Puerto Rico, Trinidad and Tobago, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guyana (Fr.), Guyana, Peru, Paraguay, Suriname, Venezuela, Spain, Portugal, Ireland, Netherlands, Denmark, Italy, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Hungary, Rumania, Ukraine, Cape Verde, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Ghana, Angola, Sao Tome and Principe, Kenya, Uganda, Mozambique, South Africa, Israel, Lebanon, Kyrgyzstan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Thailand, China, Mongolia, Philippines, Indonesia, Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji [[www.consciousnessbasededucation.org](http://www.consciousnessbasededucation.org)].

The longest established educational institutions employing Maharishi's Consciousness-Based Education – Maharishi University of Management in Fairfield, Iowa, USA (founded in 1972) and Maharishi Schools in Fairfield and in Skelmersdale, Lancashire, UK – have consistently delivered outstanding educational outcomes, and their students have repeatedly won regional, national, and international awards in many fields, including science, mathematics, creative thinking, literature, and sport. These results are particularly notable since both schools have an open admissions policy and do not select pupils by ability or background.

At Maharishi School (now Maharishi Free School) in Lancashire since 1990, 88% of pupils have gained GCSE passes at grades A to C compared to the national average of 54%, with 42% of pupils achieving grades A or A\* (compared to under 20% nationally). In addition, 90% of Maharishi School pupils gained five or more passes at grade C or above, almost double the national figure of 46%. Maharishi School pupils have also won many top place medals in the UK Mathematics Challenge (out of over

200,000 entries), come first in the Salter's Festivals of Chemistry at Manchester University, and won numerous national poetry prizes. In its 2009 report on Maharishi School, Ofsted (the UK government inspectorate for schools), stated: 'The outstanding curriculum meets the needs of all pupils effectively by focusing closely on their individual needs and the development of the whole person.' Based on Maharishi School's consistent record of excellence, the UK Government granted the institution 'Free School' status, whereby all expenses of the school are fully funded by the state [[www.maharishifreeschool.com](http://www.maharishifreeschool.com)].

Maharishi School in Fairfield, Iowa, has had 95% of graduates accepted at four-year colleges, including Harvard, MIT, Stanford, Johns Hopkins, Wellesley, and University of California at Berkeley, with senior students consistently scoring in the nation's top 1% on standardized tests of educational development. The school has had 17 National Merit Scholars (the highest academic honour for the top 1% of national entrants), twice the national average over the past 30 years, as well as over 100 Finalists, Semifinalists, and Commended Scholars. Maharishi School students have won over 100 international, national, and state competitions for science, engineering, mathematics, sports, arts, poetry, and extracurricular activities. For example, in Destination ImagiNation, an international creative problem-solving competition, Maharishi School students have won the Global Finals three times, achieved 29 other top ten awards, and been state champions 50 times [[www.maharishischooliowa.org](http://www.maharishischooliowa.org), and [www.mum.edu](http://www.mum.edu)].

TM can also make a great contribution to calming the stress and violence that has become all too frequent in schools, especially in economically-deprived areas. Dr George Rutherford, a Washington D.C. educator and school principal for over four decades, served for twenty years as Principal of the Fletcher-Johnson Educational Centre in one of the city's most violent areas. There he introduced Transcendental Meditation to hundreds of students and teachers as part of a unique programme of 'quiet time'. 'We had amazing results,' Dr Rutherford has said. 'I used to have to be in the streets all the time to stop the fighting, but after we started the TM programme, I didn't have to go out there. You walk into the school and you feel it's tension-free: a stress-free school right in the heart of the inner city, where we had plenty of violence.'

Other American schools situated in troubled areas are experiencing similarly positive results, including reduced student suspensions, improved teacher attendance, improved

school environment, and fewer fights. Two recent studies have shown that Transcendental Meditation positively influences emotional development in early adolescent African American children in a school setting where its practice is supported by the administration [[www.tmeducation.org](http://www.tmeducation.org)].

## **Improved Occupational Health and Job Performance**

Studies conducted in occupational settings have shown that TM improves health and performance in the workplace [61-62, 287, 316-334]. Findings include:

- Improved job performance [317-318]
- Increased job satisfaction [316-317]
- Improved relationships at work [316-318]
- Increased productivity [317]
- Increased employee effectiveness [316]
- Increased contribution of managers to the organization [318]
- Improved leadership [321]
- Enhanced management development [287, 322-334]
- Improved health and well-being (physical and mental) [61-62, 316, 318-320, 423]
- Improved health-related behaviour in employees and managers [62, 316, 318]
- Reduced stress in employees and managers [61, 316, 318, 320, 423]
- Reduced job tension, anxiety, depression, and insomnia [61, 316, 319, 423]
- Increased energy and decreased fatigue [316, 318]
- Reduced perceived stress, depression, and burnout in secondary schoolteachers and support staff [423]
- Reduced difficulty in obtaining employment for people with post-traumatic stress disorder [56]

In a five-month study conducted by researchers from Japan's National Institute of Industrial Health (a branch of the Japanese Ministry of Labour), industrial employees practising Transcendental Meditation showed increased emotional stability and reductions in anxiety, tendency to neurosis, impulsiveness, physical complaints, insomnia and smoking compared to controls. Depression also decreased in the TM group, despite lower initial levels [61-62]. Overall, employees practising Transcendental Meditation improved significantly on 10 out of 14 dimensions, whereas controls improved on only one [61].

Another study examined stress, health, and employee development in two settings in the automotive industry: a large manufacturing plant of a Fortune 100 corporation and a



small sales distribution company. Employees who learned Transcendental Meditation showed significantly greater improvement than matched control subjects on a wide variety of measures, including improved general health and reductions in physiological arousal, anxiety, job tension, insomnia, fatigue, and consumption of cigarettes and hard liquor [316]. Practice of Transcendental Meditation also led to increased job satisfaction, improved employee effectiveness, and better work and personal relationships, confirming the findings of an earlier study [316-317].

Further analysis identified three factors underlying this wide range of improvements through TM: ‘occupational coherence’, ‘physiological settledness’, and ‘job and life satisfaction’. The effect size of TM in reducing physiological arousal, anxiety, and alcohol/cigarette use, and in enhancing personal development, was substantially larger than for other forms of meditation and relaxation reported in four previous meta-analyses [316].

A three-month prospective study at a medical equipment company compared managers who learned Transcendental Meditation to matched controls who were similar in age, education level, ethnicity, marital status, hours worked per week, job type and level of responsibility in the organization. Managers who practised TM made an increased ‘organizational contribution’ compared to controls, as measured by a combined index of productivity, leadership practices, work relationships, vitality, mental health, job satisfaction, and anger. TM also led to reduced alcohol consumption; healthier habits of exercise, diet, and sleep; decreased serum cholesterol; increased energy and less fatigue; improved mental health; reduced stress-related physical symptoms; and reduction in perceived stress (the degree to which situations were perceived as overloading, uncontrollable or unpredictable) [318].

In a randomized study of employees at a high-security government agency, subjects who learned Transcendental Meditation showed reductions in anxiety and depression after 12 weeks, in comparison to controls who participated in an educational corporate stress-management programme. When retested after three years, the TM group showed not only sustained reductions in anxiety and depression, but also improved self-concept compared to controls [319].

Consistent with these findings, a controlled prospective study of employees at a South African firm found that TM was effective in reducing psychological stress and decreasing both systolic and diastolic blood pressure over a five-month period [320]. In another study, employees at a food sales company who learned TM showed greater improvement on a composite measure of leadership behaviour over an eight-month period than non-meditating controls [321].

Work-related stress and occupational burnout are major problems in education. In a four-month randomized controlled study of secondary schoolteachers and support staff at a residential therapeutic school for children with severe behavioural problems, Transcendental Meditation was effective in reducing perceived stress, depression, and overall teacher burnout [423].

### **Effective Rehabilitation of Offenders**

Research spanning more than 35 years demonstrates that Transcendental Meditation is effective in correcting and preventing criminal behaviour. These studies have used some of the most sophisticated and widely validated measures of mental health and developmental maturity available in the social sciences [340-365, 424].

A study conducted at Harvard University on maximum security inmates in Massachusetts showed that the criminal mindset can be altered by Transcendental Meditation. Prisoners who learned the technique significantly improved on measures of psychopathology, including decreased aggression, anxiety, and schizophrenic symptoms. Furthermore, Transcendental Meditation increased their self development by more than one level on Loevinger's ego (self) development scale—from the dependent, exploitative orientation that is commonly found in criminals to the more responsible, self-monitoring, self-respecting, and communicative orientation of law-abiding citizens. Such holistic effects on development in adults are remarkable, especially among people previously thought to be most resistant to change [347-348].

In another maximum security prison study, inmates who learned Transcendental Meditation showed reductions in anxiety, resentment, negativism, suspicion, verbal hostility, neuroticism, and tendency to assault, as well as decreased insomnia and improved quality of sleep compared to controls [343-344].

Transcendental Meditation can also facilitate rehabilitation of juvenile offenders: young people referred to juvenile court for a legal offence showed improved social behaviour and increased self-regard after learning TM. Anxiety levels were also reduced, a result corroborated by a later study [351-352].

Both previous and subsequent research strongly supports these findings [340-342, 345-346, 349-350, 353-365]. A narrative and quantitative review of the application of TM in eight correctional settings involving almost 1500 inmates found that the technique leads to positive changes in health, psychological development, and behaviour [341]. Another review examining changes in brain chemistry of criminals found that stress-related neuroendocrine abnormalities known to be associated with aggression and crime were alleviated by Transcendental Meditation [360; see also 403].

The ultimate test for any rehabilitation programme is whether it reduces the frequency with which former offenders commit new crimes and return to prison (recidivism). Two studies, one with a 15-year follow-up period after release, found that TM markedly decreased recidivism rates, with up to 47% reduction compared to controls participating in other treatment programmes [340, 342, 349]. In keeping with these results, a large scale study of 11,000 prisoners and 900 prison officers in Senegal found that Transcendental Meditation reduced recidivism rates to only 8%, as well as markedly decreasing prison violence and health problems [345].

In a pioneering, community-based rehabilitation programme, six Missouri judges sentenced over 100 probationers, whose offences range from drunken driving to manslaughter, to learn TM. The programme achieved remarkable success, with extremely low rates of re-offending based on promotion of more balanced, successful, and law-abiding lives for participants [346].

### **Improved Quality of Life for Society as a Whole**

Every individual continuously contributes to, and is influenced by, the quality of life in society as a whole. Based on this principle, Maharishi predicted in 1960 that if even a small fraction of the population were to practise Transcendental Meditation, positive changes would be observed not only in their own lives but also throughout the community.

This prediction was first investigated in 1974 in a number of American cities where 1% of the population had learned Transcendental Meditation. When the 1% threshold was reached, a substantial reduction in crime rate was observed, in contrast to previous crime trends in these cities and to the continuing rise of crime in matched control cities with far fewer meditators [366].

This result has subsequently been confirmed and extended by larger and increasingly more rigorous investigations, which have demonstrated that the percentage of the population practising Transcendental Meditation is a reliable predictor of decreases in crime, suicides, and accidents even after controlling for demographic factors that are known to influence these parameters. For example, scientists found that the observed improvements in quality of life could not be explained by changes in population size and density, residential stability, college population, ethnic distribution, unemployment rate, average income, percentage of the population living below the poverty level, age distribution, average level of education, police coverage, or previous crime trends. Further research found evidence of a direct causal relationship between numbers practising Transcendental Meditation and reduction of crime rate in two separate random samples, one of 160 cities and the other of 80 metropolitan areas in the United States [367, 372].

This phenomenon, representing a transition to a more orderly and harmonious state in society, was named the *Maharishi Effect* in recognition of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, who had both predicted it and made possible its practical implementation. More than 40 separate studies have now been conducted on this effect [366-395].

Scientific interest grew sharply when it was observed that the effect of coherence in society was greatly intensified when Transcendental Meditation and the advanced TM-Sidhi programme, including Yogic Flying, are practised together in a group. As a result, the number needed to generate the Maharishi Effect was found to be greatly reduced, to as little as the *square root of one percent of the population*. This figure is a very small proportion of any large social system: approximately 800 for the United Kingdom, 1800 for the United States, and 8500 for the world as a whole. These relatively small numbers have made it practically possible to test this formula repeatedly in cities, provinces, states, whole nations, and even the entire world [367-395].

The rise in coherence and harmony in society created by groups utilizing this technology has been repeatedly verified through increasingly well-controlled studies, including prospective projects, employing the most rigorous experimental designs and statistical methods available in the social sciences. Many have appeared in leading journals, including *Journal of Conflict Resolution; Social Indicators Research; Psychology, Crime and Law; The Journal of Mind and Behavior; Psychological Reports; Journal of Offender Rehabilitation; and Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*. The results of these investigations, summarized in Table 4 (page 38), reach exceptionally high levels of statistical significance: taken together, they establish the Maharishi Effect on a level of proof unprecedented in sociological research.

#### **TABLE 4**

A fascinating feature of these investigations is that diverse and apparently unrelated social parameters are found to improve simultaneously, consistent with the conclusion that this technology enlivens a source of orderliness and integration that is common to all aspects of life [376, 385-386, 390].

With the discovery of the Maharishi Effect, world peace and prosperity become, for the first time, achievable goals. Permanent maintenance of several groups of 8500 individuals collectively practising Transcendental Meditation and Yogic Flying – more than enough to sustain a continuous powerful influence of coherence and positivity for the entire world – would cost no more than a few advanced military aircraft [391-393, 405].

## **TABLE 4**

### **Research Findings on Groups Practising the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi Programme**

- Decreased crime (research on: Merseyside, UK 1988-1991; Netherlands 1979, 1981; Washington DC, USA 1981-83, 1993; Puerto Rico, USA 1984; Metro Manila, Philippines 1984; Union Territory of Delhi, India 1980-81; Israel 1983; Jerusalem, Israel 1983) [367-372, 375, 385-386]
- Decreased violent crime (Washington DC 1993) [369]
- Decreased violent fatalities (homicide, suicide, and motor vehicle accidents) (USA 1982-1985) [371]
- Decreased motor vehicle and/or aircraft accidents and fatalities (Netherlands 1979, 1981; USA 1979; Jerusalem, Israel 1983; Worldwide 1983-84) [375-376, 385-387]
- Reduction of notifiable infectious diseases (USA and Australia 1983-84) [387]
- Increased economic prosperity and confidence:
  - decrease in an index of unemployment and inflation (USA 1979-1988; Canada 1979-1988) [378-381]
  - increases in stock market indices (USA 1979; UK 1982-83; Israel 1983; Worldwide 1983-84) [376, 382, 385-387]
  - increased patent applications (indicating increased creativity) (USA, UK, South Africa and Australia 1983-84) [387]
- Improvements in overall quality of state and national life (as measured by composite indices including data on crime, suicides, accidents, fetal deaths, infant mortality, infectious diseases, pollution, alcohol and cigarette consumption, gross national product, days lost through strikes, patent applications, higher educational attainment, and divorce rates) (USA 1976-1983; Canada 1972-1986; Israel 1983; Philippines 1979-81; Metro Manila, Philippines 1984-85; Rhode Island, USA 1978; Iowa, USA 1979-1986 ) [370, 373-374, 376-377, 383, 385-386]
- Reduced conflict and increased progress towards peace in major world trouble-spots:
  - decreased war deaths, war injuries, and intensity of conflict (Lebanon 1983-85) [385-386, 388]
  - decreased international conflict (Worldwide 1978 and 1983-84) [387, 389]
  - increased progress towards peaceful resolution of conflict (Lebanon 1983-1985) [388]
- Reduced casualties and injuries from international terrorism (Worldwide 1983-85) [389]
- More positive interactions between the superpowers (USA and Soviet Union 1979-86) and increased friendliness in statements of US Head of State (USA and Soviet Union 1985-1987) [390-391]
- Increased harmony in international affairs (Worldwide 1983-84) [387]

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