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Mini Review

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Effect of Yoga on Pregnant Women & Lactating Mothers: Mini Review

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Abstract

Yoga, a physical activity with numerous health benefits is reported. The purpose of this review was to evaluate efficacy and safety of yoga interventions in pregnant and lactating mothers. This review supports the positive outcome of simple yoga techniques in pregnant & lactating mothers by reducing the risk factors involved in pregnancy complications, increasing the breast milk production and improving the overall physical and mental health of women. It is evident to strengthen yoga interventions in daily routine for stress free long productive life.

Keywords: Interventions; Breastfeeding; Prolactin; High-risk; Stress

Introduction

The term yoga is derived from Sanskrit word 'yuj' which means to combine, unite or to merge [1]. Yoga is combination of stretching, breathing, postural meditation that enhances the health and improves spiritual growth in people practicing this activity. Yoga recognized as exercise is practiced by almost 36 million people in US. This number is doubled previously in last 10 years and number is increasing on daily basis. Among the people practicing yoga 70% are women [1].

Effect of yoga on pregnant women

Reported survey indicates that almost half million women die due to complications during pregnancy. Complications in pregnancy are often termed as the problem arising during the time period and effecting the health of mother, fetus or in some cases both. This

kind of pregnancy is termed as high-risk pregnancy [2]. Pregnant women go through many challenges that include physical, mental, and social changes associated with body morphological changes leading to anxiety, stress and depression. Elongated mental changes may trigger obstetric compilations [3]. They may include pregnancy induced hypertension, preeclampsia, gestational diabetes, preterm labour and intrauterine growth restriction. Exact mechanism of action of all these complications are not clearly narrated but many studies indicated that oxidative maternal and physiological stress plays a vital role in triggering these medical conditions [4]. Increased stress in pregnant women may inhibit fetal growth and cause medical complications. Yoga a noninvasive, low impact, modifiable exercise with very fewer side effects may treat stress, anxiety, depression and improve mental wellbeing of pregnant



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women [5]. Studies revealed that yoga has great beneficial effect on pregnant women that are at higher risk of anxiety and depression. Almost 50% of women those who are pregnant suffer from anxiety and postpartum depression. Yoga plays an important role in pain relief, ease labour and improve physical and mental health. Women practicing yoga 20 minute each day from 7th week till time of delivery are with more power and improved health [6]. Increased level of cortisol is the main factor causing anxiety and depression in pregnant women, yoga helps in reducing the level of cortisol leading to lower stress and anxiety [7]. Pregnant women often complaining back pain in lumbosacral area that may be reduced to negligible by practicing yoga. Stretching and strengthening of muscles of back and abdomen relieve pregnancy induced pain in lumbosacral region. 30 minutes of yoga thrice a week for a period of almost 3 months plays a vital role in pain reduction during pregnancy [8]. Sleep disturbance may lead to preterm birth or preeclampsia so it should not be overlooked among pregnant women. Women are often reported with sleep issues because of pregnancy can be improved to maximum because of adopting yoga in daily routine. In California a study revealed that 15 healthy women reported with sleep issues practicing yoga for 7 weeks were with better sleep patterns throughout the pregnancy as compared to women non practicing yoga [9]. Studies also revealed that yoga aid in improving blood glucose level in women suffering from gestational diabetes. Mindful eating, portion control and consuming food with low glycemic index along with incorporating 15-20 minutes yoga 5 days a week over a period of 2 months improve diabetes [10].

Effect of yoga on lactating mothers

Yoga has great beneficial effect on lactating mothers. Breast milk is the complete nutritional meal for infants it not only fulfills the bodily requirements but also develop an emotional attachment between a mother and a child. There are number of factors that contribute in a failure of breastfeeding and almost 80% failure is because of psychological conditions of lactating mothers. Prolactin, the hormone responsible for breast milk production, stress lower hormone production hence lowering breast milk formation resulting in breastfeeding failure effecting infant health and development. Number of methods are adapted to increase breast milk yoga is one of them [11]. Yoga in lactating mothers is one of the best physical activity that is cost effective can easily be done at home relaxing mind and body. Specific yoga postures stimulate pituitary gland to stimulate prolactin hormone in increasing the production of breast milk to meet the infant nutritional requirement [12]. A study was conducted to evaluate the quantity of beast mil in lactating mothers before and after yoga and it was estimated that 84.2 ml was normal volume of breast milk in women who were not practicing yoga and for women those were incorporating yoga for 6 days a week were able to produce 195.17 ml of milk. This not only increase the milk production whereas boost the confidence in lactating mothers for fulfilling their infant nutritional requirements [11].

Conclusion

This study supports the benefit of yoga in pregnant and lactating mothers. Women incorporating yoga in their daily

routine while their pregnancy keep them healthy and happy. It is a mood stabilizer aid in smooth pregnancy and limit the high-risk pregnancy. Yoga also stimulates breast milk production and helps a mother to fulfill infant nutritional requirement that help him to fight against disease and infection. Yoga is not only cost effective but safest method to enhance mental and physical every individual and lessen the medical condition in pregnant and lactating mothers.

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Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest.

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