

Integrating Naturopathy and Yoga in Management of Musculoskeletal Disorders

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DEAR EDITOR

The prevalence of musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) in Northern India alone has been reported to be as high as 59.4%.^[1] Lack of regular exercise results in the reduction of muscular strength causing them to fatigue easily. The employees' working environment and occupation can affect muscles, tendons, ligaments, nerves and joints consequently resulting in MSD over a period of time.

Naturopathy when combined with Yoga can be an effective treatment modality for MSD. In India, Yoga and Naturopathy is grouped together as a separate system of medicine and the Government has constituted a Central Council for Research on Yoga and Naturopathy for its research.^[2] The use of naturopathic treatment has shown significant benefit in the management of rotator cuff tendonitis, with reduction in shoulder pain and disability index (SPADI) and increase in the shoulder range of motion and quality of life in general.^[3] Regular use of underwater massage, a hydrotherapy modality, improves neuromuscular coordination, and relieves muscle soreness. The probable mechanism suggested is that underwater massage increases the release of proteins from muscle tissue into the blood and enhances the maintenance of neuromuscular performance capacity.^[4]

Mud pack treatment improves the pain and functional status of patients with knee osteoarthritis, whether applied directly or coated with nylon. Direct application is considered superior, which implies that properties of the mud contribute to the buildup of therapeutic effect.^[5] Massage therapy has shown to be effective in the treatment of chronic back pain, with benefits reportedly lasting at least 6 months.^[6] Yoga also has potential in therapy especially so in rehabilitation, since it focuses on physical and mental wellbeing. Many studies show that Yoga is beneficial in the management of non-specific low back pain, relieving pain in carpal tunnel syndrome, rheumatoid arthritis, and improving balance and gait (in women with musculoskeletal problems).^[7–10]

Thus, a monitored treatment protocol of naturopathy and yoga can benefit a large number of musculoskeletal disorders. An ideal treatment protocol in naturopathy is correcting the lifestyle, implementing therapeutic fasting followed by diet modifications and using modalities like hydrotherapy, mud therapy, massage, physiotherapy, yoga and exercise therapy.

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