

Symposium on Transcendental Meditation as a Clinical Health Intervention

OCTOBER 20, 2021 · WASHINGTON, DC

SESSION 3

BLACK, INDIGENOUS AND PEOPLES OF COLOR Hypertension and Cardiovascular Disease

Symposium Abstracts

ABSTRACT 1

Addressing Healthcare Disparities in Heart Disease of Black, Indigenous & People of Color (BIPOC) Communities with Transcendental Meditation

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Even in the backdrop of a deadly pandemic, HEART DISEASE remains the NUMBER #1 KILLER of ALL AMERICANS in the year 2020 with nearly 700,000 victims compared to the nearly 350,000 COVID-19 deaths. According to the U.S Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, heart disease is likely to continue to overshadow the COVID-19 virus for years to come as the long-term impact of the novel coronavirus directly affects cardiovascular health (resulting in death from heart attack and stroke for some or life with valvular disease and/or hypertension for others). Of note, the Black community suffers from a disproportionate burden of cardiovascular disease (CVD), as well as many other chronic illnesses. According to the NIH Office of Minority Health, African Americans were 30% more likely to die from heart disease in 2018 than non-Hispanic whites. In fact, although African Americans are less than 14% of the population, we account for 23.5% of deaths from CVD, compared to non-Hispanic whites who make up more than 75% of the U.S. population but merely 23.7% of CVD deaths. Regarding Hypertension specifically, Black women, are 60% more likely to have high blood pressure, as compared to non-Hispanic white women, and in the general population, African American adults are 40% more likely to have hypertension but, in turn, less likely than non-Hispanic whites to have their blood pressure under control.

Unquestionably, social and economic conditions exist in marginalized populations that negatively impact our health status and can account for some of these differences like 1) lack of adequate access to healthcare, 2) poor treatment in healthcare driven by implicit or unconscious biases or explicit biases known as

racism, 3) lack of economic stability (often driven by structural racism) to maintain medical care or afford the cost of health insurance and medications that are shown to marginally work in many Black people, and 4) other social determinants that contribute to an environment that results in poor health outcomes and poor compliance. Furthermore, research has shown that continuous and repeated activation of hormones like adrenalin and cortisol are associated with trauma and toxic stress. When released too frequently into the body, the results are hypertension, chronic inflammation, high glucose levels, and low bone density.

Hence, the physiological effects of structural racism and the internalized trauma of microaggressions and unconscious biases that are repeatedly experienced by BIPOC populations have an enormous impact on both physical and mental health and it is imperative that we identify cost-effective ways to help mitigate the deadly effects. Recent studies have shown that Transcendental Meditation (TM) can significantly reduce hypertension and decrease other forms of CVD in all populations. Currently, the Center for Resilience is diligently working to help fund a Phase 3 trial studying hypertension in the BIPOC population that would allow us to obtain the scientific data necessary to continue advocating for vulnerable communities to have TM covered by medical insurance, which will make this treatment affordable, accessible and equitable and will help build resilience in communities who suffer excessive trauma.

ABSTRACT 2

Transcendental Meditation Reduces Blood Pressure and Cardiovascular Disease

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Heart disease is the number one cause of death for both men and women in the U.S. Death rates from heart disease are increasing especially among young adults. Hypertension is a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease (CVD); its prevalence is also increasing. Blacks have disproportionately high rates of CVD. Lowering blood pressure (BP) has been shown to significantly decrease the incidence of CVD. Prescription medications are effective in reducing BP, but they have limitations (cost, access, side effects, drug interactions). Non-pharmacological interventions: weight loss, healthy diet, low salt intake and physical activity are important but have proven difficult to sustain widescale. Twelve published randomized controlled trials and several meta-analyses have shown that transcendental meditation (TM) lowers BP. The American Heart Association stated that TM was the only meditation technique with sufficient data to merit a recommendation for BP lowering. The reduction in BP achieved (5-mmHg) was statistically significant. A 5-mmHg reduction in BP over a mean 4.15 years has been associated with a 13% reduction in stroke, 8% reduction in ischemic heart disease, 13% reduction in heart failure, and a 5% reduction in CV death. Evidence exists that TM can reduce other CV risk factors. TM has been shown to significantly improve smoking cessation, decrease insulin resistance, reduce circulating stress hormones and reduce anxiety. It also has been shown to decrease carotid artery atherosclerosis. A 5-year study showed that practitioners of TM had fewer heart attacks, strokes and death compared to non-practitioners.

ABSTRACT 3

Health, Effectiveness, and Happiness: The “H.E.H” effect with Transcendental Meditation

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You truly become the best version of yourself through Transcendental Meditation. When you take the time to meditate in the silence and listen to your still quiet voice within, you begin to become truly great. Great individuals maintain their composure when stressed, and meditation can be an invaluable tool to help facilitate focus, peace, and clarity of thought. Personally, Transcendental Meditation is my ultimate tool and weapon to combat the harmful effects of stress, and daily practice enhances my ability to perform under pressure. Through Transcendental Meditation, you also achieve what I call the “H.E.H. effect.” Daily meditation yields the following three benefits:

- Health
- Effectiveness
- Happiness

Meditation is proven to lower stress, high blood pressure, and depression, which can lead to improved health. With improved health, you become more effective in your relationships, at work, and in life. Personally, Transcendental Meditation also provides an enhanced self-awareness to bring a calm ability to manage the stress that impacts our daily lives. When you are healthy and effective in all the things you are meant to do, you move closer to realizing your real purpose in life, which ultimately leads to happiness.

