

Transcendental Meditation Gets High Marks for Reducing Blood Pressure

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Researchers from the Institute for Natural Medicine and Prevention at Maharishi University in Iowa reviewed previous meta-analyses of studies investigating the connection between stress reduction and high blood pressure and found them either outdated or methodologically limited. As a result they conducted an updated systematic review of the published literature and identified 107 studies on stress reduction and BP.

Seventeen trials with 23 treatment comparisons and 960 participants with elevated BP met criteria for well-designed randomized controlled trials and were replicated within intervention categories. Meta-analysis was used to calculate BP changes for biofeedback, -0.8/-2.0 mm Hg (P = NS); relaxation-assisted biofeedback, +4.3/+2.4 mm Hg (P = NS); progressive muscle relaxation, -1.9/-1.4 mm Hg (P = NS); stress management training, -2.3/-1.3 mm (P = NS); and the Transcendental Meditation program, -5.0/-2.8 mm Hg (P = 0.002/0.02). Available evidence indicates that among stress reduction approaches, the Transcendental Meditation program is associated with significant reductions in BP. Related data suggest improvements in other CVD risk factors and clinical outcomes.

Citation: Rainforth MV, Schneider RH, Nidich SI, Gaylord-King C, Salerno JW, Anderson JW. Stress reduction programs in patients with elevated blood pressure: a systematic review and meta-analysis. Current Hypertension Report. 2007 Dec; 9 (6): pages 520-8.