

Transcendental Meditation helped heart disease patients lower cardiac disease risks by 50 percent

16 November 2009

Patients with coronary heart disease who practiced the stress-reducing Transcendental Meditation® technique had nearly 50 percent lower rates of heart attack, stroke, and death compared to nonmeditating controls, according to the results of a first-ever study presented during the annual meeting of the American Heart Association in Orlando, Fla., on Nov. 16, 2009.

The trial was sponsored by a \$3.8 million grant from the National Institutes of Health-National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, and was conducted at The Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee in collaboration with the Institute for Natural Medicine and Prevention at Maharishi University of Management in Fairfield, Iowa.

The nine-year, randomized control trial followed 201 African American men and women, average age 59 years, with narrowing of arteries in their hearts who were randomly assigned to either practice the stress-reducing Transcendental Meditation technique or to participate in a control group which received health education classes in traditional risk factors, including dietary modification and exercise.

All participants continued standard medications and other usual medical care.

The study found:

- A 47 percent reduction in the combination of death, heart attacks, and strokes in the participants
- Clinically significant (5 mm Hg average) reduction in blood pressure associated with decrease in clinical events

- Significant reductions in [psychological stress](#) in the high-stress subgroup

According to Robert Schneider, M.D., FACC, lead author and director of the Center for Natural Medicine and Prevention, "Previous research on Transcendental Meditation has shown reductions in blood pressure, psychological stress, and other risk factors for heart disease, irrespective of ethnicity. But this is the first controlled clinical trial to show that long-term practice of this particular [stress reduction](#) program reduces the incidence of clinical cardiovascular events, that is heart attacks, strokes and mortality."

"This study is an example of the contribution of a lifestyle intervention—stress management—to the prevention of cardiovascular disease in high-risk patients," said Theodore Kotchen, M.D., co-author of the study, professor of medicine, and associate dean for clinical research at the Medical College. Other investigators at the Milwaukee site included Drs. Jane Kotchen and Clarence Grim.

Dr. Schneider said that the effect of Transcendental Meditation in the trial was like adding a class of newly discovered medications for the prevention of [heart disease](#). "In this case, the new medications are derived from the body's own internal pharmacy stimulated by the [Transcendental Meditation](#) practice," he said.

Source: Medical College of Wisconsin ([news](#) : [web](#))

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