

**Methsaviya supported research conducted by final year undergraduates of the Faculty of Medicine(with ethical clearance), University of Colombo in 2007 at the Cancer Hospital, Maharagama**

## **Research Proposal**

# **Effect of meditation on cancer out patients in selected meditation institutions on stress reduction and symptoms of depression**

### **General objectives**

To study and evaluate meditation as a method of treatment in cancer outpatients in selected meditation institutions for stress reduction and control of symptoms of depression.

### **Specific objectives**

1. To determine types of meditation that are used in selected meditation institutions.
2. To assess meditation as a method of treatment in terms of,
  - a) reduction of symptoms of stress
  - b) features of moderate depression
3. To compare patients attitude towards meditation
4. To determine whether significant socio-demographical differences exists between meditators and non-meditators.

### **Brief justification**

Non-communicable disease morbidities have come up in a big way worldwide; with a threatening future. Sri Lanka is no exception as ischemic heart diseases and cancers are the two main killers at present. Incidence of cancer of various types in particular has been on the rise at catastrophic rates.

Existing treatment strategies despite being vastly improved of late has more or less failed to accomplish satisfaction among both clinicians and patients, especially in terms of side effects, ethical issues and feasibility .

This was the dawn of, a new era of research, dealing with spiritual psychological harmony as a treatment strategy complementary to standard practice. Though the meditation practice is more or less proved beyond doubt for heart ailments and hypertension, research on cancer patients undergoing meditation is just budding. So we thought why not, "that we see for ourselves whether it's truly effective." By the way," seeing is believing."

### **Literature review**

There have been only few researches on this topic of meditation for chronic diseases like cancer, ischemic heart diseases and hypertension.

We went through few researches of western world since no research was available in Asian setting and decided on a particular research, funded by University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada since; it shares most of our fields of interest.

This research was planned as a randomized wait-list controlled clinical trial where 90 patients were followed up for 7 weeks.

After the intervention patients in treatment group was founded to have significant reduction of total mood disturbance, depression and symptoms of stress, which included cardio pulmonary and gastrointestinal symptoms. After analyzing they have stated,

"According to our study, overall reduction in total mood disturbance was 65%, with a 31% reduction in symptoms of stress"(Specca,M,et al 2004).

### Methodology

We plan to achieve our objectives through a follow up study spanning 3 months.

#### Study setting.

Experimental group and control group will be recruited from clinic of National cancer institute, Maharagama. Then experimental group will be followed up at Meth Saviya institute, Colombo 6.

#### Study population

Cases and Controls – Patients who are followed up at National cancer institute as Outpatients.

#### Inclusion Criteria.

Age 20-60 years, both males and females, Patients between cancer stages 1 to 4.

#### Exclusion criteria.

Patients with other serious morbidities, diagnosed patients with severe psychiatric illnesses.

#### Sample size

Cases 30 and controls 30.

#### Selection of samples-Cases,

We are organizing a workshop on meditation for cancer outpatients. The awareness programme will be done in the presence of Dr.Chandana Jayarathne. After which we propose volunteers to participate at the “Meth Saviya” institution. From the patients who turn up at the institute we choose patients randomly (Numbered card of either 0 or 1 given) who fulfill our inclusion/Exclusion criteria.

Controls are selected from separate clinic days. Out of the patients who fulfill our criteria every other patient is registered and enrolled.

#### Study instruments.

Both groups will be assessed at the start, at mid stage and end of the 3 month intervention using,

- 1) Mood score-On a scale for Moderate depression (Oxford textbook of psychiatry by Geddes)
- 2) Symptoms of stress-SOSI (Symptoms of stress inventory) which is WHO recommended for cancer patients and used on similar kind of research on cancer patients)
- 3) Improvement of Clinical investigations (ESR, CRP) at mid stage.

**Ethical issues.**

- a) Patients may think that we are offering meditation as a method of treatment, since cancer is incurable and invariably progress to fatality.
- b) Patients may assume that we are doing such a study since it has been clearly proven of benefit for cancer patients though they may be unaware. This may cause undue stress and depression in them since they may think they were deprived till now.
- c) Permission from cancer institute, Maharagama.
- d) Freedom of patients in experimental group to withdraw at any stage.

How to overcome,

Patients should be well informed about the nature of our study and given a fair opportunity for questioning prior to obtaining consent for participation. Selection of the sample is also performed as for standard techniques of sample selection.

**References.**