

Mental Balance, Emotional Balance, and Stress Management: The Role of Ancient Vedic Philosophy from India

Authors : Emily Schulz

Abstract : The ancient Vedic culture from India had traditions that supported all aspects of health, including psychological health, and are relevant in the current era. These traditions have been compiled by Professor Dr. Purna, a rare Himalayan Master, into the Purna Health Management System (PHMS). The PHMS is a unique, holistic, and integrated approach to health management. It is comprised of four key factors: Health, Fitness, and Nutrition (HF&N), Life Balance (Stress Management) (LB-SM), Spiritual Growth and Development (SG&D); and Living in Harmony with the Natural Environment (LHWNE). The purpose of the PHMS is to give people the tools to take responsibility for managing their own holistic health and wellbeing. A study using a cross-sectional mixed-methods anonymous online survey was conducted during 2017-2018. Adult students of Professor Dr. Purna were invited to participate through announcements made at various events He held throughout the globe. Follow-up emails were sent with consenting language for interested parties and provided them with a link to the survey. Participation in the study was completely voluntary and no incentives were given to respond to the survey. The overall aim of the study was to investigate the effectiveness of implementation of the PHMS on practitioners' emotional balance. However, given the holistic nature of the PHMS, survey questions also inquired about participants' physical health, stress level, ability to manage stress, and wellbeing using Likert scales. The survey also included some open-ended questions to gain an understanding of the participants' experiences with the PHMS relative to their emotional balance. In total, 52 people out of 253 potential respondents participated in the study. Data were analyzed using nonparametric Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient (r_s) since the data were not on a normal distribution. Statistical significance was set at $p < .05$. Results of the study suggested that there are moderate to strong statistically significant relationships ($p < .001$) between participants' frequent implementation of each of the four key factors of the PHMS and self-reported mental/emotional health (HF&N $r_s = 0.42$; LB-SM $r_s = 0.54$; SG&D $r_s = 0.49$; LHWNE $r_s = 0.45$) Results also demonstrated statistically significant relationships ($p < .001$) between participants' frequent implementation of each of the four key factors of the PHMS and their self-reported ability to manage stress (HF&N $r_s = 0.44$; LB-SM $r_s = 0.55$; SG&D $r_s = 0.39$; LHWNE $r_s = 0.55$). Additionally, those who reported experiencing better physical health also reported better mental/emotional health ($r_s = 0.49$, $p < .001$) and better ability to manage stress ($r_s = 0.46$, $p < .001$). The findings of this study suggest that wisdom from the ancient Vedic culture may be useful for those working in the field of psychology and related fields who would like to assist clients in calming their mind and emotions and managing their stress levels.

Keywords : balanced emotions, balanced mind, stress management, Vedic philosophy

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