

Effect of yogic practices on vital capacity and total cholesterol

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■ ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to find out the effect of yogic practices on vital capacity and total cholesterol. For this purpose, thirty middle aged men around Kullanchavady town, Cuddalore district, Tamilnadu in the age group of 35 – 40 years were selected. They were divided into two equal groups, each group consisted of fifteen subjects, in which group – I underwent Yoga practices and group – II acted as control that did not participate in any special activities apart from their regular day-to-day activities. The training period for this study was five days in a week for thirteen weeks. Prior to and after the training period the subjects were tested on vital capacity and total cholesterol. It was concluded from the results of the study that the Yoga practice has increasing the vital capacity significantly. The result of the study also showed that there was no significant reduction in total cholesterol after the yogic practices. It was also found that there was a significant difference between the yogic practice group and control group only on vital capacity and not in the cholesterol level.

■ **Key Words** : Yogic practice, Vital capacity, Cholesterol

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The word Yoga is derived from the Sanskrit root 'yuj' meaning to bind, join, attach and yoke, to direct and concentrate one's attention on, to use and apply. It also means union or communion.

According to Swami Satyanand Saraswathi (1999) "Yoga is not an ancient myth buried in oblivion. It is the most valuable inheritance of the present. It is the essential need of today and the culture of tomorrow".

The Sanskrit term *Yoga* is most frequently interpreted as the "union" of the individual self (*jīva-ātma*) with the supreme self (*parama-ātman*). The ancient definition is at home in Vedānta, the dominant branch of Hindu philosophy, which also greatly influenced the majority of Yoga schools. Vedānta proper originated with the ancient esoteric scripture known as the *Upanishads*, which first taught the "inner ritual" of meditation upon, and absorption into, the unitary ground of all existence. However, nondual hymns of the *Vedas*.

Yoga is an ancient system of physical and psychic practice that originated during the Indus valley civilization in

South Asia. The fundamental purpose of Yoga is to foster harmony in the body, mind and environment (George Feuerstein, 2002).

One of the most useful measurements of lung volume is vital capacity: the maximal volume of air that can be forcefully exhaled after taking the deepest breath. Values vary from 3 litres to 6 litres. The actual value is not a very good indicator of fitness because it tends to vary for a number of reasons, including the size and sex of each individual. However, among individuals of the same size and sex, the vital capacity tends to be greater in those who exercise regularly. Usually, relatively fit and healthy individuals can exhale at least 83 per cent of their vital capacity in the first second of exhalation. At rest, only about half a litre of air is drawn into the lungs with each breath; this is known as the tidal volume. It increases with exercise until it reaches the vital capacity. The total amount of air inhaled each minute (ventilation rate) depends on both the depth and frequency of breathing.

Cholesterol is necessary to the normal permeability and