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Yoga: Holistic management of dementia & caregiving through the spiritual spine

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Aim: To improve quality of life, manage dementia and its care of those affected by dementia, their family and carers with practice of Yoga. Complementary therapies are practiced effectively for managing various diseases. However, today the ancient Science of Yoga is not just a disciplined way of life but a holistic approach to improving quality of life for all: including those affected by dementia, needing palliative care, their families and caregivers. Yoga, part of Integrative Medicine, is now being successfully used as Clinical therapy.

Method: Volunteering for more than a decade with seniors, persons affected by Alzheimer's, counselling families and caregivers, I find that practice of Yoga is actually a Master Key to the 'treasure box' of good health that makes life more manageable in challenging circumstances. Music, dance, pet therapy, prayer in groups etc. are all tools to make life more inclusive so that impact of psychological and social isolation is reduced. Asanas (body postures that are firm, but relaxed) or Kriyas (cleansing of internal organs) or breathing techniques in Yoga should be practiced without stressing

the body. Listening to or controlled recitation of AUM and Gayatri Mantra has impressionable, therapeutic effects.

Results: Yoga leaves an indelible mark of 'wholesome goodness' within the practitioner, on family life, social behavior and interpersonal relationships. It slowly leads to improving flexibility and balance, strengthening stability, and on the mental plane, focus and concentration. Mental stress reduction, improved physical fitness and better management of chronic conditions are 'perks'. Yoga actually is a gateway to mental, physical, social and spiritual wellbeing.

Conclusion: Clinical therapy of Yoga, a master package, plays an important and supportive role in management of dementia and dementia care that can catalyze spiritual wellbeing, balance body and mind leading to better immunity and improved self-confidence. Contentment on mental, social, physical and spiritual planes will gift an enriched, wholesome life leading to an inclusive and dementia friendly community in future.

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