

Maharishi Foundation

Press contact: Charles Cunningham, info@maharishifoundation.org.uk
020 8894 9229, 07852 279176

Press release

Transcendental meditation reduces ADHD symptoms among students: Newly published study **Research recently published suggests that the simple mental technique of Transcendental Meditation may be a valuable adjunct in the treatment for Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).**

This would be consistent with the recommendation, in September 2008, of the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) that cognitive and behavioural programmes should be the first-line treatment for ADHD, both for pre-school and school age children.

Children taught Transcendental Meditation, according to the newly published research*, showed improvements in attention, working memory, organisation, and behaviour regulation. The well established efficacy of this technique for reducing stress and improving mental and physical health, supports the claim of many doctors and educators that Transcendental Meditation would benefit not only ADHD sufferers, but also their teachers and parents.

Derek Cassells, Head Teacher of a school in Lancashire that has used Transcendental Meditation as an integral part of the curriculum for 20 years, explains that the "profound physiological rest combined with inner awareness, which is easily and naturally achieved through Transcendental Meditation, is the basis of the neurological balance that helps pupils with ADHD benefit more from the specialist teaching that they receive."

Helen Evans is a qualified teacher with over twenty years' experience of teaching children with many types of learning difficulty, including ADHD. She is also a teacher of Transcendental Meditation and has taught the technique to many of her pupils. "Almost immediately, their confidence increases because they feel more settled within themselves," Helen says. "When they encounter difficult situations, they no longer over-react. This gives them more energy to concentrate on their work, which they can execute in a calmer, more relaxed way; and they achieve more academically. They start getting on better with their peers, teachers, and parents, thereby increasing their confidence even more. Some children present many learning difficulties concomitantly. Neurophysiological studies of these children often show a lack of synchrony between the left and right hemispheres of the brain. One of the characteristic results of Transcendental Meditation, according to EEG research, is an increase in inter-hemispheric synchrony – which speaks for itself."

Improving children's mental health

Recent studies, cited in the *Daily Mail* on 20 June 2007, reveal that one in ten youngsters in Britain between the ages of five and 16 has a "clinically recognisable" mental disorder, and that the number of teenagers with emotional and behavioural problems has doubled in a generation.

"Good mental health in childhood is essential to achieve resilience and maturity in adulthood," says Nicholas Argyle MB BS MRCPsych FRANZCP, a psychiatrist who worked in Cambridge, London, and New York before moving to New Zealand. "Transcendental Meditation is an effective training to support the growing nervous system, nurturing the heart and the mind of the child. Early learning of the natural skill of transcending is a most valuable intervention to ensure children remain on the positive track of healthy development."

In his recent review of scientific research on Transcendental Meditation**, Dr Roger Chalmers, GP in East Anglia, lists findings that support this view:

- Improved attention, perception, and mind-body co-ordination;
- Increased orderliness and integration of brain functioning;
- Reduced blood pressure in pre-hypertensive adolescents;
- Increased field independence (indicating greater ability to maintain broad comprehension while focusing sharply);
- Comprehensive benefits for mental health and well-being;
- Increased social maturity in college students;
- Reduced behaviour problems in school with decreased absenteeism, rule infractions, and suspension days;
- Settled, positive school atmosphere conducive to successful learning; and
- Increased harmony between students and teachers.

Jenny Bullen had been teaching children with learning difficulties for 15 years, and then started working with children who had learned Transcendental Meditation. She notes: "I began to see much quicker results than I had ever seen before. The special teaching strategies we had been using for years were really having a noticeable effect: the results were more marked and sustainable. Because Transcendental Meditation was reducing the distractibility in the children, not just on a temporary basis but actually within the child's physiology, it was possible to work productively with them and alleviate many of their difficulties. As Transcendental Meditation also helps increase *real* self esteem, children become more confident in their own abilities, and therefore more motivated through their own success."

The specialists Derek Cassells, Helen Evans, Nicholas Argyle, and Jenny Bullen quoted above are available for interview.

An announcement by the **American Association for the Advancement of Science** of the newly published research, key facts, and sources of further information are provided at the bottom of this message.

* <<http://cie.asu.edu/volume10/number2/index.html>>

** Available to download at <<http://www.t-m.org.uk/research.shtml>>.

Maharishi Foundation®, registered UK charity number 270157, is the only source of courses in Transcendental Meditation™, a programme for the Development of Consciousness founded by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi®.

FACT SHEET

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

- The latest figures seem to suggest that around 5% of school children in the UK – about 366,000 – show symptoms of ADHD, which affects concentration and causes disruptive behaviour.
- One of the most popular drugs, Ritalin, was virtually unknown in Britain at the beginning of the 1990s, but over the past five years the number of prescriptions for children has rocketed by 102 per cent to 254,000 (<<http://www.mind.org.uk/Information/Booklets/Understanding/Understanding+ADHD.htm>>)
- The commonly used drugs for ADHD are stimulants (amphetamines). These drugs can cause persistent and negative side effects, including sleep disturbances, reduced appetite, weight loss, suppressed growth, and mood disorders. The side effects are frequently treated with additional medications to manage insomnia or mood swings. Almost none of the medications prescribed for insomnia or mood disturbances are approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use with children.
- The long-term health effects of ADHD medications are not fully known, but evidence suggests risks of cardiac disorders and sudden death, liver damage, and psychiatric events. It has also been found that children on long-term medication

have significantly higher rates of delinquency, substance use, and stunted physical growth.

Transcendental Meditation

- Transcendental Meditation is an effortless technique practised 10-20 minutes twice a day sitting comfortably with the eyes closed.
- Transcendental Meditation is not a religion or philosophy and does not involve any belief or change in lifestyle.
- Over 350 peer-reviewed research studies on Transcendental Meditation confirm a range of benefits for mind, body, and behaviour. For a printable research review, see <<http://www.t-m.org.uk/research.shtml>>.
- Several studies have compared the effects of different meditation practices and found that Transcendental Meditation provides deeper relaxation and is more effective at reducing anxiety, depression, and hypertension than other forms of meditation and relaxation. In addition, no other meditation practice shows the widespread coherence throughout all areas the brain that is seen with Transcendental Meditation.
- Transcendental Meditation as founded by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi is taught in Great Britain only by the registered educational charity Maharishi Foundation: charity number 270157.
- More information on Transcendental Meditation can be obtained by calling 01695 51213 or visiting the links below.

Links:

<<http://knol.google.com/k/jeanne-ball/adhd-medicate-or-meditate/2jcmu5j6auz6m/3#>>

<<http://www.ADHD-TM.org>>

<<http://www.AskTheDoctors.com>>

<<http://www.ConsciousnessBasedEducation.org.uk>>

<<http://t-m.org.uk>>

Announcement
from the official website of the
American Association for the Advancement of Science
<http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2008-12/muom-tmr122408.php>

Transcendental meditation reduces ADHD symptoms among students: Newly published study

Dissatisfaction with medication spurs interest in meditation

Transcendental Meditation may be an effective and safe non-pharmaceutical aid for treating ADHD, according to a promising new study published this month in the peer-reviewed online journal *Current Issues in Education*
<<http://cie.asu.edu/volume10/number2/index.html>> .

The pilot study followed a group of middle school students with ADHD who were meditating twice a day in school. After three months, researchers found over 50 percent reduction in stress and anxiety and improvements in ADHD symptoms.

Effect exceeds expectations

"The effect was much greater than we expected," said Sarina J. Grosswald, EdD, a George Washington University-trained cognitive learning specialist and lead researcher on the study. "The children also showed improvements in attention, working memory, organisation, and behaviour regulation."

Grosswald said that after the in-school meditation routine began, "Teachers reported they were able to teach more, and students were able to learn more because they were

less stressed and anxious."

Stress interferes with the ability to learn

Prior research shows ADHD children have slower brain development and a reduced ability to cope with stress. "Stress interferes with the ability to learn – it shuts down the brain," said William Stixrud, PhD, a Silver Spring, Maryland, clinical neuropsychologist and co-author of the study.

VIDEO: <<http://www.eurekalert.org/multimedia/pub/11506.php?from=128053>>
Four middle school students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder were interviewed prior to learning the Transcendental Meditation technique, and again 3 months later. They first describe...

"Medication for ADHD is very effective for some children, but it is marginally or not effective for others. Even for those children who show improved symptoms with the medication, the improvement is often insufficient or accompanied by troubling side effects," Stixrud said. "Virtually everyone finds it difficult to pay attention, organize themselves and get things done when they're under stress. So it stands to reason that the TM technique which reduces stress and organizes brain function would reduce ADHD symptoms."

While in some cases a child cannot function without medication, there is growing concern about the health risks and side effects associated with the common ADHD medications, including mood swings, insomnia, tics, slowed growth, and heart problems. In 2006 the FDA required manufacturers to place warning labels on ADHD medications, listing the potential serious health risks.

These high risks and growing concerns are fuelling parents' search for alternatives that may be safer for their children.

The study was conducted in a private primary school for children with language-based learning disabilities. Participation was restricted to 10 students, ages 11-14, who had pre-existing diagnoses of ADHD. About half of the students were on medication. The students meditated at school in a group for 10 minutes, morning and afternoon.

To determine the influence of the TM technique, at the beginning and end of the three-month period, parents, teachers and students completed standard ADHD assessment inventories measuring stress and anxiety, behaviour and social competency, and executive function. Students were also given a battery of performance tests to measure cognitive functioning.

"The results were quite remarkable"

Andy and Daryl Schoenbach's daughter was diagnosed with ADHD in second grade. Like most ADHD children she was taking medication. "The medication helped but had mixed results – she still lost focus, had meltdowns, and the medications affected her sleep and appetite," said Andy, who lives with Daryl in Washington D.C. "She was not performing close to her potential and we didn't see the situation improving. So at the end of seventh

grade when her doctor recommended increasing the medication, we decided it was time to take a different course – stopping the medication and using Transcendental Meditation."

"The results were quite remarkable," Daryl said. "The twice daily meditations smoothed things out, gave her perspective, and enabled her to be in greater control of her own life when things started falling apart. It took some time, but it gradually changed the way she handled crises and enabled her to feel confident that she could take on greater challenges – in her own words, 'climb a mountain.'"

"Everyone noticed the change," Andy added.

Grosswald explained that there is substantial research showing the effectiveness of Transcendental Meditation for reducing stress and anxiety, and improving cognitive functioning among the general population. "What's significant about these new findings is that among children who have difficulty with focus and attention, we see the same results. Transcendental Meditation doesn't require concentration, controlling the mind or disciplined focus. The fact that these children are able to do Transcendental Meditation, and do it easily shows us that this technique may be particularly well suited for children with ADHD," she said.

This study was funded by the Abramson Family Foundation and the Institute for Community Enrichment.

A second, recently completed TM-ADHD study with a control group measured brain function using electroencephalography (EEG). Preliminary data shows that three months practice of the technique resulted in significant positive changes in brain functioning during visual-motor skills. Changes were specifically seen in the circuitry of the brain associated with attention and distractibility. After six months practice of Transcendental Meditation, measurements of distractibility moved into the normal range.

A third TM-ADHD study, to be funded by a \$2 million grant from the David Lynch Foundation <<http://www.DavidLynchFoundation.org>>, will more fully investigate the effects of the technique on ADHD and other learning disorders.
