

Harvard Medical Symposium On Integrative Medicine And Role Of Yoga And Ayurveda

Source: http://www.lokvani.com/lokvani/article.php?article_id=12279
Anusha Sehgal 07/06/2016

A one-day Symposium on Integrative Medicine and Role of Yoga and Ayurveda was convened by multiple organizations spearheaded by the Indo-American Health Initiatives at the Gordon Hall of Harvard School of Medicine, Boston. Experts in the field of research, and integrative practice of Yoga and Ayurveda came together to deliberate on the current status, challenges and future growth of Integrative medicine.

Today the entire health and wellness industry faces challenges of access, rising cost, standardization and quality control. The purpose of this symposium was to address the solutions to these key issues by bringing in the experts that will contribute to transform the healthcare of the emerging world with integrative approach bringing ancient systems of Ayurveda and Yoga with conventional medicine via research and development, high level education and entrepreneurial business partnership.

Mr. Kanchan Banerjee, Vice President of Global Indian Business Council and Co-Convener of the Symposium, as a chair of the inaugural session provided the initial objective of the effort to serve the society. In his welcome address [Dr. Darshan H. Mehta, Medical Director, Benson-Henry Institute for Mind Body Medicine at Harvard Medical School](#), expressed his pleasant surprise on the fast pace rise of the use of Yoga and Ayurveda in the practice of medicine.

Mr. Shripad Yasso Naik, Minister of State, Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India could not attend the event due to last minute engagement in New Delhi sent a video message and promised full support to advance the knowledge and practice of Ayurveda and Yoga for healthcare worldwide. He called this event as a historic step forward for Integral Medicine.

This was followed by several keynote addresses. First was [Dr. H R Nagendra, Chancellor, S-VYASA University in Bangalore India](#) outlined a list of scientific research for the past 30 years, and requested scientists and physicians to join hands with Indians scientists and experts in Ayurveda and Yoga to place these practices on solid foundation.

[Dr. Greg Fricchione, Director, Benson-Henry Institute for Mind Body Medicine](#), suggested that resilience to stress, as practiced in yoga, has been verified at the systems biology level. He also added that traditional sciences approach and understanding of human dynamics is at a high level in relation to energy and function.

The session concluded with a detailed presentation by the state [Health Commissioner of Massachusetts Dr. Monica Bharel](#), who was emphatic in her support to Ayurveda and Yoga for providing holistic healthcare especially to underserved communities.

A session reviewing basic research in Yoga and Ayurveda was chaired by [Dr. Dinesh Patel, former Chairman of Board of Registration in Medicine, State of Massachusetts and Associate Clinical Professor Harvard Medical School](#) and a well-known Ortho surgeon at MGH. He noted that access, quality, safety and affordability in Health and welfare of millions should be the mission health care professionals and this event is significant towards this direction.

Several speakers spoke on various related subjects. [Dr Manjunath S K, Director International Affairs & Director R&D, S-VYASA](#), India: Research and funding status on Ayurveda & Yoga in India and worldwide. [Dr. Sara Lazar, Assistant Professor, Harvard Medical School](#): Impact of Meditation on

brain, body and mind. [Dr. Richard Fletcher, mobile technology group at MIT D-Lab: Mindfulness Research.](#) [Dr. Robert Saper, Chair of the Academic Consortium of Integrative Medicine and Healthcare at Boston University,](#) suggested that Ayurveda take cue from the success of Yoga to become popular by more research to ensure safe and effective use. [Dr. Ariana Vora, Harvard Medical, Spaulding Rehab and Mass General Hospital](#) spoke to the effect of continuous exchange and education between conventional medicine and traditional systems, integrating the best of the east with the best of the west.

Next session explored the current work in these areas in terms of prevention and therapy which was chaired by [Dr. David Mischoulon, Psychiatrist, Massachusetts General Hospital.](#)

Several experts presented in this session as follows:

[Dr. Lisa Conboy, Health Researcher, Osher Center for Integrative Medicine Brigham and Women's Hospital: Clinical research on Ayurveda/Yoga.](#) [Dr. John Denninger, Director of Research, Benson-Henry Institute for Mind Body Medicine, Massachusetts General Hospital: Conceptual and procedural hurdles for the acceptability of Ayurveda and Yoga.](#) [Dr. Pratibha Shah, Ayurveda Expert, Founder President Holistic Health Alliance: Ayurveda in the US, realities and potential.](#)

A panel Discussion on strategies and steps for advancing Ayurveda & Yoga for healthcare was chaired by [Dr. Bal Ram Singh, President, Institute of Advanced Sciences, Dartmouth, MA.](#)

Various expert panelists shared their knowledge and experience. [Dr. Bindiya Thakkar, Endocrinologist, Hallmark Health System: Nutrition and Community Health – Diabetes and Obesity.](#) [Dr. Sharmila Mudgal, Occupational and Environmental Medicine, Primary Care Orthopedics, & Parag Mehta, Co-Founder of Navitas International Corporation: Ayurveda 2016: Bedside to Bench to Bedside.](#)

[Dr. Margrit Mikulis, Secretary, Board of Director of National Ayurvedic Medical Association \(NAMA\): Legal status, educational standards and practice of Ayurveda in United States – ways to move forward, and Prof. Sat Bir Khalsa, Harvard Medical School: Yoga in Healthcare - The Science and the Research Evidence.](#)

In the Concluding session Jagat Guru Amrta Suryananda Maha Raja President of Yoga Portuguese Confederation from Portugal talked about how modern science is coming closer to the sciences of India – material and inner.

A video message from AOL founder and Spiritual Guru Sri Sri Ravishankar sent his greetings and congratulated the Organizers and said that it's the right time to bring the benefits of Yoga and Ayurveda which is the time tested ancient science to the millions. He also added that we should look at Ayurveda and Yoga with a modern scientific angle. Yoga has proven to be the best tool for prevention of many illnesses and Ayurveda has helped millions to recover from various ailments.

Pramit Maakoday, Co-Convener of the event gave the vote of thanks to distinguish faculty, visitors from overseas, sponsor Mr Vipul Amin, of Param, attendees and Harvard medical school for this wonderful opportunity for allowing this to happen in Gordon Hall.

Both the experts and participants of the event expressed that this symposium was truly a global exploration for finding solutions for healing the hurt. The ancient science and arts of healing from India has created an added avenue to heal the hurt with an Integrative approach. Experts in India and US need to work globally to facilitate full opportunities for researchers, practitioners and care

receivers alike to be part of a truly Integrative Health Care system and work with large network of health care providers, academics and research scientists and exploring further basic research, development and clinical trials globally.

The event was organized by the Indo-American Health Initiatives based in Boston who plans to promote collaboration between the two countries in the Healthcare sector - primary goal being bringing technology to India and bringing Indian healing systems to the US. The supportive organizations included S-VYASA India, Institute of Advanced Sciences in Dartmouth MA, The event was sponsored by PARAM, a Health care company based in New Jersey.

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