



Invincible Defense Technology

A leading scientific journal in Pakistan, The Journal of Management & Social Science, recently published a paper titled "A New Role for the Military: Preventing Enemies from Arising-Reviving an Ancient Approach to Peace," indicating that the military application of the Transcendental Meditation technique has merit. The paper discusses how militaries worldwide could use the Transcendental Meditation® and TM-Sidhi® program, founded by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, as a non-religious and scientifically verified way to prevent war and terrorism. When used in a military context, these meditation practices are known as Invincible Defense Technology (IDT).

The paper describes the concept of a "Prevention Wing of the Military," a group of military personnel that practices the advanced TM-Sidhi program twice daily as a group. A group that reaches a critical threshold in size has been scientifically shown to reduce collective societal stress. The paper hypothesises that war, terrorism, and crime are caused by collective societal stress. The absence of collective stress translates into the absence of tension between countries, between religious groups, or even within individual terrorists. The paper proposes that, by applying this non-lethal and non-destructive technology, any military can reduce societal stress and prevent enemies from arising. If IDT prevents the emergence of enemies, the military has no one to fight, so the nation becomes invincible.

Over 50 scientific studies have found that

when 1% of a given population practices Transcendental Meditation, or when sufficiently large groups practice the TM-Sidhi program together twice daily, measurable positive changes take place throughout society as a whole. The studies show decreased violence, crime, car accidents, and suicides, and improved quality of life in society. The paper reviews IDT research, such as a study published in the Yale University-edited Journal of Conflict Resolution showing that an intervention by a civilian group in Israel resulted in a 76% reduction in war deaths in neighboring Lebanon. Seven subsequent, consecutive experiments over a two-year period during the peak of the Lebanon war found that war-related fatalities decreased by 71%, war-related injuries fell by 68% and the level of conflict dropped by 48%.

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A follow-up study published in the Journal of Social Behavior and Personality found that the likelihood that these combined results were due to chance is less than one in a quintillion. A global-scale study published in the Journal of Offender Rehabilitation documented a 72% drop in international terrorism when IDT groups were large enough to affect the global population. Terrorism returned to previous levels after the experiment. ■

**By David R. Leffler, Ph.D.
Acting Director, Invincible Defense Technology
Centre for Advanced Military Science**

EFT May Help Reduce Food Cravings

Psychological acupuncture has been shown to be successful in reducing food cravings for up to six months in people who are overweight or obese. Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) combines gentle tapping on pressure points while focusing on particular emotions and thoughts.

Psychologist Dr Peta Stapleton, an academic title holder in Griffith University's School of Medicine, said that EFT was painless and easy to learn. Her research also showed the impact on food cravings was almost immediate and long lasting. Food cravings significantly reduced after just four, two-hour sessions and were maintained at a six-month follow-up. "Participants in the trial were surprised by how quickly the technique works - that it doesn't take a lot of time to eliminate food cravings they may have had for many years," Dr Stapleton said. She explained that common cravings were for sweet carbohydrates such as cakes and chocolate or salty foods such as chips and savoury biscuits. "Food cravings play a big role in people's food consumption and ultimately their body weight. If we can beat the cravings without the need for willpower or conscious control of behaviour, then weight loss is also possible."

While the study did not show any significant impact on body weight or body mass index (BMI) after six months, the results of a 12-month follow-up are still being analysed. Dr Stapleton, who specialises in the management of eating disorders, said some participants had actually forgotten they had a previous problem with food cravings until they were reminded at the six-month follow-up. She said because the technique helps override emotional eating at a sub-conscious level, it was more likely to be effective in the long-term. Psychological acupuncture, also known as the emotional freedom technique (EFT), has also been used to manage clinical issues such as post traumatic stress disorder, phobias and addictions. ■

Tai Chi and Qigong Show Significant Health Benefits

An across-the-board review of the health effects of Qigong and Tai Chi finds these practices offer many physical and mental health advantages with benefits for the heart, immune system and overall quality of life. The review, which appeared in the July/August issue of the American Journal of Health Promotion, included 77 randomized controlled trials (RCTs) on Qigong or Tai Chi interventions published in peer-reviewed journals between 1993 and 2007. Taken together, there were 6,410 participants in the studies. "We see this as moving the understanding of the potential of Qigong and Tai Chi forward, with an emphasis on combining the evidence across these practices," said co-author Linda Larkey, Ph.D., of Arizona State University College of Nursing and Healthcare Innovation.

The authors say that the review provides a "stronger evidence base" for bone health, cardio-respiratory fitness, physical function, balance, quality of life, fall prevention and psychological benefits.

Qigong is a "very general term to describe exercises that will enhance qi flow or balance," said Shin Lin, Ph.D., a professor at the Centre for Integrative Medicine at the University of California, Irvine. Qigong combines "qi" for energy and "gong" for work or exercise. Tai Chi is much more specific, focusing on a series of 24 to 108 movements that have a long written history over 19 generations, said Lin, a member of the National Advisory Council for Complementary and Alternative Medicine.

"The research studies reviewed here showed that simplified routines that are more practical for RCTs are in fact quite effective in health enhancement." With that in mind, individuals could "forego learning complicated routines except for cultural or artistic purposes," said Lin, who had no affiliation with the review.

Of the studies analysed 27 considered psychological symptoms, 23 looked at falls and related risk factors, 19 looked at cardiopulmonary effects and 17 evaluated quality of life. Other included studies looked at bone density, physical function and immune function. Participants' average age was 55, and for studies that looked at balance, 80 was the average age. Larkey said that there was not a way to "combine the studies statistically and determine effect sizes that is, how strong the evidence is for many of the outcomes reviewed since the interventions, study design quality and measures were so wide ranging." Nevertheless, she said, the authors found quite consistent evidence of several benefits from this particular category of exercise. "Tai Chi and Qigong have many health benefits and therefore should be considered a high priority when one is selecting an exercise to practice," Lin said. ■

Doctors Prescribe Meditation

As doctors increasingly prescribe meditation to patients for stress-related disorders, scientists are gaining a better understanding of how different techniques from Buddhist, Chinese, and Vedic traditions produce different results. A new paper published in Consciousness and Cognition discusses three categories to organize and better understand meditation; Focused attention - concentrating on an object or emotion; Open monitoring - being mindful of one's breath or thoughts; Automatic self-transcending - meditations that transcend their own activity - a new category introduced by the authors. Each category was assigned EEG bands, based on reported brain patterns during mental tasks, and meditations were categorized based on their reported EEG.

"The idea is that meditation is, in a sense, a 'cognitive task,' and EEG frequencies are known for different tasks," said Fred Travis, Ph.D., co-author, and Director of the Centre for Brain, Consciousness, and Cognition at Maharishi University of Management. Focused attention, characterized by beta/gamma activity, included meditations from Tibetan Buddhist (loving kindness and compassion), Buddhist (Zen and Diamond Way), and Chinese (Qigong) traditions.

Open monitoring, characterized by theta activity, included meditations from Buddhist (Mindfulness, and ZaZen), Chinese (Qigong), and Vedic (Sahaja Yoga) traditions. Automatic self-transcending, characterized by alpha1 activity, included meditations from Vedic (Transcendental Meditation) and Chinese (Qigong) traditions. Between categories, the included meditations differed in focus, subject/object relation, and procedures. These findings shed light on the common mistake of averaging meditations together to determine mechanisms or clinical effects.

"Meditations differ in both their ingredients and their effects, just as medicines do. Lumping them all together as "essentially the same" is simply a mistake," said Jonathan Shear, Ph.D., co-author, professor of philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, and the author of several books and publications on meditation.

"Explicit differences between meditation techniques need to be respected when researching physiological patterns or clinical outcomes of meditation practices," said Dr. Travis. "If they are averaged together, then the resulting phenomenological, physiological, and clinical profiles cannot be meaningfully interpreted." ■

Source: Ken Chawkin, Maharishi University of Management

Patients Missing Out on Spiritual Care

Patients are missing out on important spiritual care despite it being a nursing 'fundamental', according to nurses who responded to a new Royal College of Nursing (RCN) survey published recently. The survey of over 4,000 nurses found that only a small minority (5%) felt that they could always meet the spiritual needs of patients, and the vast majority (80%) felt that spirituality should be covered in nurse education as a core aspect of nursing. The most important spiritual need identified by nurses was having respect for privacy, dignity and religious and cultural beliefs (94%). Spending time with patients giving support and reassurance, especially in a time of need (90%) and showing kindness, concern and cheerfulness when giving care (83%) were also key concerns. The survey demonstrates how important nurses view meeting the spiritual needs of patients. Almost all (90%) feel that providing spiritual care improves the overall quality of nursing care, and the vast majority (83%) believe spirituality is a fundamental aspect of nursing, even for patients with no religious beliefs.

Dr Peter Carter, Chief Executive & General Secretary of the RCN, said: "Nurses are clearly recognising a need in their patients for care which addresses more than just their physical symptoms. Nurses of all ages and generations are telling us that spiritual care is fundamental to why they became a nurse. However, this is not about harking back to an age of daily prayers on wards - instead it is about personalised care and giving nurses guidance and time to get to know their patients as people rather than just their medical conditions."

The RCN believes that there should be clear guidance for nurses and other healthcare professionals to allow them to approach spiritual issues sensitively and with confidence while being able to meet the needs of patients. Nurses in this survey made it clear that spirituality is the joint responsibility of nurses, patients, chaplains, families and other health professions working together.

Peter Carter added: "Whether they are working in GP surgeries, intensive care wards, the military, prisons or hospices, nurses have made it clear that they can deliver spiritual care which is a comfort to people of any faith, and of no faith. What they need is clear guidance about where they stand, and above all there should be enough staff to enable nurses to listen to patients, get to know them and deliver holistic care." ■