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Text Neck and its Management

Alok Kumar Asthana¹, Monika Asthana² and Dimple Aggarwal^{3*}

^{1,3}Kriya Sarir Department, Chaudhary Brahm Prakash Ayurved Charak Sansthan, Delhi, India

²Kaya Chikitsa Department, State Ayurvedic College and Hospital, Lucknow, UP, India

ABSTRACT

Lifestyle diseases mainly includes faulty way of living, addictions, lack of physical activities and faulty diet. But no-one is paying attention over the ill-effects of this Digital India. Regular and continuous use of electronic gadgets especially mobile phones create havoc in the quality of life of an individual. One of the lifestyle disorder is caused due to regular usage of cell phones that are the need of this trending era. It silently affects the anatomical posture of neck which further results in painful conditions called as text neck. Text neck is a modern term defined as repeated stress injury and pain in neck resulting from excessive watching or texting on hand held devices over a sustained period of time.

It can be better managed by *chakra* healing and *yoga* practice. *Chakra* healing mainly of *agya chakra*, also known as master *chakra* as it directs and control the other major *chakras* and causes them to light up which further energizes the whole body. It directly acts on the pituitary gland, endocrine gland and brain to a certain extent. As every bit of physical exercise needs energy which is activated by *agya chakra*. Followed by this, certain *yoga* postures should be done to alter the body posture and movement, relaxing and stretching of the muscles and related connective tissues. For example- *Bhujangasana* (strengthen the muscles supporting vertebral column), *Marjarasana* (improves flexibility of spine). Through this article, I would like to draw attention towards a new emerging disease called as text neck – *a modern cell phone disease*.

KEYWORDS

Text-neck, Chakra-healing, Agya.



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INTRODUCTION

Text neck¹ is a modern age term coined by Dr. DL Fisherman (US chiropractor) used to describe repeated stress injury and pain in the neck resulting from excessive watching or texting on hand held devices over a sustained period of time. It is also known as **turtle neck posture**. Nowadays cell phones become an integral part of our lifestyle. Every individual spends most of the time using electronic gadgets leading to an adverse effects on health, which is a matter of concern, especially for children due to their increased frequency of using gadgets. This condition is due to constant growth in mobile user population all over the world. It becomes one of the lifestyle disorder due to faulty way of living, lack of physical exercises and wrong body posture. It can be prevented and simply cured with slight changes in body posture and taking certain precautions.

The lower neck region and upper back supports the head and controls its movement too. Therefore, whenever it is inappropriate in its position it will cause heaviness and pain in these areas. The joints between atlas and axis vertebrae in the neck along with the upper back create a supportive structure for the head to sit on. If these joints are hampered, spasm of the muscles in the area takes place and leads to

stiffness and pain in neck. While using cell phones, the movements of head in forward direction i.e. flexion affects the spine in a following way: flexion up to 15 degree places about 12.2kg of force on neck. This increases to 18.14kg at 30 degrees, 22.22kg at 45 degree, 27.21kg at 60 degrees and like this more you flex your neck, the more weight it has to carry. Along with this, it also causes pain in whole region above the clavicle bone and disturbed thoracic curvature of spine.

SYMPTOMS

The common clinical features of text neck is neck pain, stiffness and soreness. It includes:-

1. **Stiff neck**- rigidity in the neck region and difficulty in its movement.
2. **Pain**- it can be dull, sharp or stabbing and may be localized or diffused. It can be radiated to shoulder and arms.
3. **Muscular weakness**- spasm of the muscles present in the area takes place.
4. **Headache**- in severe conditions due to stiffness in neck region, it may lead to severe headache.

Along with above symptoms, there may be flattening of thoracic kyphosis, early onset of arthritis, spinal degeneration, disc compression, loss of lung capacity. These all should be taken in to consideration as soon as possible to prevent further complications and to improve the posture,



strengthen the neck and create better habits for everyday life.

Yoga is a natural and holistic remedy for cervical spondylosis. A regular practice of this ancient science leads to a flexible body, calm mind and a positive attitude towards life. It offers us a path of life and lead us from the state of degeneration towards one of integration, health and harmony by harnessing our inherent healing potential to the fullest. As *yoga* hits the fundamental issue of control of mind reducing it to consciousness leading in turn to self-realisation. It is the only fundamental cure for all *naisthiki* (divine) and *laukiki* (worldly) ailments².

The yoga school describes five kinds of *yama* (restraints) and five kinds of *niyama* (observances) to render good life style for the man conducive for personal uplift as well as social uplift and social well-being³. These are the first step in promotive healthcare and psychotherapeutics.

PANCHA-KOSHA⁴ CONCEPT-

Pancha kosha is the concept in yogic philosophy that there are five layers, or sheaths, around the human soul. The path of yoga is said to heighten one's understanding and awareness of these sheaths and its aim is to move inward, taking a journey through these sheaths and uncovering one's true nature, or *Atma*. It comes from the *Taittirya Upanishad* and is

said to be one of the most ancient conceptualizations of the human being.

1. **Annamaya-kosha**⁵ – it is the physical body which needs food and nourishment to thrive. Any structural deformity comes under the pathology of *annamaya-kosha*. The practice of hatha *yoga asanas* work primarily with it.

2. **Pranamaya-kosha**⁶ – excessive exertion of the human body, working in wrong posture and excessive rest can lead to an imbalance in the flow and utilization of *prana*. This would lead to excess contraction of para-vertebral musculature and serious disorders of the spine. The word “*prana*” when roughly translated means energy. Every bit of physical exercise requires energy. The physiological system which gives us energy backup is the pranamaya-kosha. The diseases related to this can be well treated by following *chakras* therapy.

CHAKRA THEORY⁷ –

These are the energy points present in our body used for the meditation purposes to heal the body dysfunctions. It vitalize the physical, emotional and mental movements of the mind and body. They are considered to be the loci of life energy (known as *prana*, Shakti), which also flow through them along pathways called *nadis*. Its main function is to draw the *prana* by spinning around their own axes. *Agya chakra* or the



third eye is the source of intuitive or psychic knowledge and linked to the pineal gland. It represents time and awareness and related to the pineal gland which is light sensitive. It produces the hormone melatonin, which regulates the instincts of going to sleep and awakening. It also produce traces of psychedelic chemical dimethyltryptamine. Meditation upon *agya* chakra supposedly grants siddhi, or occult powers, to quickly enter another body at will and to become omniscient. The beholder of these powers realizes unity with Brahman, who has the ability to create, preserve and destroy the three worlds. Directly upon the *agya* chakra is a minor chakra known as *Manas*. It is responsible for sending sense perceptions to the higher chakras⁸.

YOGA-ASANA –

These are certain *yoga-asanas* to be performed by an individual in order to relax the stressed muscles of the neck and relieve pain and other associated symptoms by transforming the energies and creating the positive aura inside and outside the body. It will further enhance the healthy healing of the body tissues and calm the mind.

***Bhujang-asana* –**

It works on the whole back, both the deep and superficial muscles, thus re-establishes and harmonizes energy flow in all the muscles, from top to toe and automatically relax and rejuvenates them. It stimulates the

vital functions by exciting the nervous system and influences the sympathetic nerves of the dorsal and upper lumbar region, thus increasing dynamism.

Just as the serpent seeks release from the influence of gravity to find its balance between air and earth, many vital functions can also find a better balance through the practice of *bhujanga-asana*. The upper part of the body is forced to expand and break away from the stiffness and resistance that envelop the spine.

***Ardhamatsyendra-asana* –**

The vertebral muscles of the back and abdomen are twisted laterally, especially the upper back; shoulder region is twisted. It improves the function of spine as the blood flows to the spine is improved, especially the cervical and thoracic spine. It also tones the spinal nerves, reduces the stiffness to relieve the back ache.

***Ardhaustra-asana* –**

As a stretch, it opens the whole of the front of the body, including the hip flexors and pectoral muscles. Traditionally it is seen as opening the “heart center”. The asana improves core strength, spine, hip and shoulder flexibility and stamina. It increases blood circulation to the head and cardiac region.

***Marjara-asana* –**

It stretches, strengthens and adds flexibility to the spine.



- Physiological Benefits of Yoga-Asanas⁹ –
1. E.M.G. activity decreases.
 2. It increases the musculo-skeletal flexibility and joint range of movement.
 3. Increases strength and resiliency.
 4. Increases endurance and energy level.

DISCUSSION

Nowadays people are spending more and more time with electronic gadgets like smartphones, e-readers, tablets etc. due to the westernization of the country, which can adversely affects the health of individual and is a serious matter of concern. But ditching our devices isn't really an option. Instead we should make sure that we take certain preventive measures and precautions to avoid health hazards related to text neck and also we should exercise rightly in a proper way. The key is strengthening and changing the way we use our device. And also we have to educate the generation behind us because if they learn to do it early, it will become habit. So, it's must to ensure that we follow exact yoga practices to improve the posture, strengthen the neck and apply certain small changes in our lifestyle. It can be better managed by chakra healing and yoga practice. Chakra healing mainly of *agya* chakra, also known as master chakra as it directs and control the other major chakras

and causes them to light up which further energizes the whole body by the help of yoga asana to alter the body posture and movement, relaxing and stretching of the muscles and related connective tissues.

CONCLUSION

Yoga therapy is not “one pill for all ills”. We need to take in to consideration the whole history of the subject and is to be imparted through systemic counselling for practice of relevant aspects of yoga such as *yama*, *niyama*, relaxation and meditation. It helps in healing in a number of ways at a number of levels viz. by developing appropriate mind set, by inducing relaxative effect, by relieving anxiety and stress, by rehabilitating effect on different parts of the body besides cleansing effect, by promoting postural and improved body functions. As we raise the head backwards during *bhujangasana* and concentrate, it influences *agya* chakra and activates higher center. At each and every level of vertebra, chakra, the pressure mounts and finally the contraction gathers at the root of *mooladhara* chakra and locked here. Then, when the pose is released and spine is relaxed, the energy is launched back up to the spine to awaken the higher centers. This is the realization of the tradition stated in *Gherand Samhita*: By the practice of



bhujang-asana, kundalini is awakened. The complete set of yoga *asanas* covers the entire human anatomy (from top of head to the tip of toes). Regular practice of asanas corrects the structural and other imbalances to maintain body posture and it comes by concentrating the mind totally focused on a single object¹⁰.



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