

News and Views

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NEWS

Yoga as a Modulator of Hematological Health and Menstrual Physiology

Yoga has evolved from an ancient spiritual discipline into a modern adjunct therapy with increasing scientific validation. Recent studies highlight the beneficial role of yoga and related practices on autonomic functions and hematological parameters, shedding light on its relevance in both preventive and therapeutic domains. A study by Kanojia et al. examined the impact of yoga training on autonomic functions among healthy volunteers.^[1] The findings demonstrated significant improvements in parasympathetic activity, as evidenced by reduced heart rate and blood pressure, alongside improved results in autonomic function tests including the deep breathing test and Valsalva ratio. This underscores yoga's potential in modulating autonomic tone and promoting cardiovascular resilience. Complementing this, another investigation explored the hematological effects of yoga practice. Results showed improved hemoglobin levels, total leukocyte count, and platelet count among participants who practiced yoga regularly. These findings support the hypothesis that yoga may enhance hematopoiesis and modulate immune function, likely through stress reduction and improved hormonal balance.^[2]

Further expanding on these effects, a study by Rani et al. evaluated the influence of Yoga Nidra on hematological parameters and Premenstrual Symptoms (PMS) in young women. The practice of Yoga Nidra led to a reduction in PMS-related complaints, accompanied by favorable shifts in hemoglobin concentration and total leukocyte count. The neurophysiological relaxation induced by Yoga Nidra likely plays a pivotal role in these changes, offering a non-pharmacological approach for menstrual health management.^[3] In alignment with these findings, a related study on anemia in menstruating women revealed phase-specific variations in hematological parameters. The study reported highest eosinophil counts during the menstrual phase and increased neutrophils in the secretory phase, while hemoglobin peaked during the proliferative phase. These variations may help

explain the dynamic symptomatology of PMS and menstrual fatigue, pointing to the necessity of phase-specific monitoring and interventions.^[4]

VIEWS

Yoga and the Future of Menstrual Health: Integrative Perspectives

The integrative potential of yoga in addressing menstrual health is becoming increasingly evident. The available data not only support its role in regulating autonomic balance but also highlight its physiological influence on blood parameters that are critical during menstruation. These physiological modulations may play a central role in alleviating common menstrual disorders, including anemia and PMS. The consistent improvements in hemoglobin and leukocyte counts among yoga practitioners point to better oxygen-carrying capacity and immune preparedness, which are crucial during the cyclic changes in a woman's body. Importantly, these effects are achieved without pharmacological interventions, making yoga an accessible and sustainable lifestyle option. Yoga Nidra, in particular, emerges as a valuable tool in managing premenstrual complaints. By promoting deep relaxation and reducing stress, it indirectly supports hormonal balance and improves overall well-being. These benefits can be especially useful for adolescent girls and young women who often face mood disturbances, fatigue, and discomfort during their cycles.

The recognition of menstrual phase-specific changes in blood parameters also opens a new avenue for tailoring interventions. Timing yoga practices in alignment with the menstrual cycle may further enhance their efficacy. For instance, incorporating restorative yoga during the menstrual phase and more dynamic sequences during the proliferative phase might better support the physiological demands of each stage. The evolving research encourages a paradigm shift, one where menstrual health is viewed not just through the lens of symptom management but as an opportunity for preventive care and holistic support. With more longitudinal and mechanistic studies, yoga could become a central pillar in integrative approaches to women's health.



DOI: 10.5530/ijcep.2025.12.1.6

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Publishing Partner : Manuscript Technomedia. [www.msttechnomedia.com]

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Received: 18-02-2025;

Revised: 12-03-2025;

Accepted: 27-03-2025.