

## The Impact of Stress Management among Dental Professionals

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### Abstract

In this information era of technological advancement and breakthroughs that promises unheard of conveniences to make life easier for all, stress has become a global psychological hazard and is clearly taking its toll on the health of the workforce with no profession proving to be exempt and the stark reality is that the workforce is experiencing an ever increasing level of accelerating stress and burnout. The organisational stressors and life stressors can lead to adverse consequences including stress, poor performance and low job satisfaction. The consequences of stress can be devastating and these stressors strip the body of energy and causes physical reactions. In addition to this, very high levels of stress can lead to dysfunctional behaviour in the form of alcoholism, smoking, drug addiction and can have a drastic effect on the individuals, their families and organisations. Individuals are likely to put too much of themselves into their profession by literally exhausting their aspirations and motivations much like a candle burning itself out. The dental professionals are constantly trying to meet their own agenda while simultaneously trying their best to fulfil the organizational expectations. This ultimately leads to loss of self-confidence, psychological withdrawal, mental and physical exhaustion and this will result in burnout. When persons become burned out, they become highly irritable, complain and attribute their errors to everyone around them. The three main dimensions of burnout are developing a critical and cynical attitude towards everyone known as depersonalization, emotional exhaustion and the tendency to evaluate oneself negatively by being unhappy and dissatisfied with their accomplishments. This study explores the profound impact of stress management strategies. These techniques will enable to significantly increase the productivity, creativity, mental clarity, work performance, job satisfaction, work place quality and effectiveness of the dental professionals.

**Key words:** *Stress, Stressors, Stress management, Burnout, Pranayama, Yoga, Meditation, Performance, Job satisfaction.*

### Introduction

The demands of work place are ever increasing and highly dynamic due to the advent of globalization and liberalization of the economy, competition among organisations has increased tremendously during the past few years. The psychological work environment of a dentist can be considered as a bit more superior to physical work environment because it controls the job satisfaction of a dentist. Stress is a pressure condition causing hardship and has a deleterious effect on the health and work performance of the dental practitioners. It is a mental reaction which results from the dentist's response to environmental pressures.

The word stress is derived from the Latin term 'Stringers' which means to draw tight. In the late 1960's Dr Walter B. Cannon a psychologist at Harvard Medical School first laid the foundation for the meaning of stress when he described the 'fight or flight response'. Endocrinologist Hans Selye (1976) was a pioneer in studying the body's response to stress. He was the first major researcher on stress who discovered the body's reaction during the fight or flight response. He coined

the term general adaptation syndrome (GAS), the body's response to intense and prolonged stress. The first stage the alarm reaction where the body prepares for stress by an inborn tendency to respond and the person experiencing an alarming situation either resolves to fight with the stressful situation or runs away from it. The second stage being resistance stage where the body attempts to withstand prolonged stress and the third stage is exhaustion and is characterised by physical deterioration.

Stress occurs when the psychological and physical demands around him exceeds his capability and adjustment resources available to cope with it. The more the demand of a situation outweighs the resources, the more stressful will become the situation. A dental professional spends nearly twelve to thirteen hours of his time for his profession. Instead of focussing his mind on money and fame, he treats each patient who approaches him with concern, consideration and sympathy. Exposure to blood borne pathogens, dealing with unrealistic patient's expectations, the constant pressure of having to make enough money to cover the overhead expenses, can lead to adverse consequences. The psychological hazards are in the form of uncomfortable feelings like worry, tension, fear and anxiety arousing conditions at work place or family life and cause stress beyond the tolerance limit and have different types of physical and emotional maladjustments. Diseases like high blood pressure, high cholesterol, ulcer, arthritis, diabetes, heart problems severe headaches, and even hair loss are the manifestation of stress, for the mind plays a vital role in maintaining good health. Studies suggest that negative emotions may suppress the immune response and positive feelings boost the immune system.

Having chosen his career with passion and dedicating most of his time for his profession, a dental professional is unable to spend time for his family. After all his sacrifice for his family, if he is not treated with empathy by his family members there will be strained personal relationships and he undergoes stressful situations in every walk of his life which affects his mental work environment during his working hours, thereby affecting his treatment procedures.

When the consciousness is filled with problems and difficulties of family or profession, thoughts about unpleasant past events, anticipating future events, the negative thoughts, feelings and emotions relating to these can create a great amount of stress and this will bring down the energy levels hindering his concentration, tolerance and commitment during work and filling him with tiredness, agony, ill health and eventually burnout which makes him break down physically and emotionally due to fatigue, frustration, helplessness under the burden of overwhelming demands and continuously combating with stress over a long period of time.

Professional Burnout can cause detachment from their jobs and feelings of not being able to achieve goals in personal and professional life. It is a very slow process and goes through the different stages of job contentment, mental fatigue, excessive anger at workplace and towards family, low self-esteem and finally suicidal tendencies. Health care professionals like dentists, particularly those who are work addicts, workaholics and those with continuous high occupational stress are more susceptible to be burned out. When individuals are burned out, they may put in longer hours at work but accomplish less than before, may start dreading going to work in the morning and may generally display physical and mental exhaustion. This can lead to low levels of job satisfaction, poor performance, low productivity, defective work quality, low morale and eventually make them to leave their jobs and seek opportunities to be trained for new careers.

## **Stress factors affecting the mental work environment of a dental professional**

There are various factors that can cause stress and may be broadly categorised as organisational stressors and life stressors.

### **I. Organisational Stressors**

Organisational stressors are the various factors that can cause stress at the workplace. There are several potential stress factors that can have an impact and affect the mental work environment of a dentist and may be classified into four categories.

#### **I. Patient factors:**

The dental practitioner must be constantly aware of the risk of exposure to blood-borne infections during dental procedures with needles and drilling instruments and tools such as burs and drills. Efforts like operatory clean up, instrument reprocessing, appropriate management of exposure to needle stick injuries, by using one-handed scoop technique and mechanical recapping device, use of personal protection, proper sterilization or disinfection practices must be adhered to by the dentists. The dentist a pivotal personality in the dental sector organization performs his dental procedures within the context of his relevant environment. The dentist performing clinical procedures on fearful, uncooperative and apprehensive patients tend to experience anger, high blood pressure and increased heart rate making him feel fatigue, loss of energy and mentally exhausted. Amount of patients whether very few or too many that he can handle, anxious or demanding patients, increased effort in treating the patients and in return lack of appreciation or dissatisfied patients even after giving them the best care and treatment can increase stress dramatically.

#### **II. Professional practice factors:**

Most of the dentists having a private practice spend long hours in professional isolation and confinement in their small clinics with no colleagues to interact, share their problems and laugh with, unlike their counterparts in other professions working in large organisations. The multifaceted physical work environment of the dentist plays a quintessential role in the work life of the dentist. Exposure to serious infectious agents is a virtual risk and the dentist's hands can become contaminated by contact with the patient's mouth, saliva and gingival fluids. Amount of work either excessive workload or under workload, musculoskeletal fatigue, exposure to blood borne pathogens, constant time pressure and tight deadlines, inadequate income due to feeling uncomfortable in quoting and collecting the fees or due to increased competition. Fear of making mistakes and the constant drive for technical perfection, patients being late or missing their appointments can cause frustration, apathy, tension and stressful conditions.

#### **III. Dental procedure factors:**

The dentist is unable to provide an ideal and perfect treatment plan for his patients who don't accept the preferred treatment and demand just a fix and repair treatment due to their financial constraints leading to compromised treatment procedures. This causes frustration in the dentist's mind who is unable achieve the ideal treatment goals and having to accept compromised treatment results. Occupational exposure threats prevailing in the physical work environment of the dentist, repetition of work or boredom, having to perform beyond clinical abilities, keeping up with new developments, interruptions during work, dealing with unrealistic patients expectations can lead to adverse consequences including stress, poor performance and low job satisfaction.

#### **IV. Office management factors:**

Having one's solo practice requires well-developed business skills along with dentistry skills and also requires a large capital expenditure to build it, although the practice will become significant asset overtime. Financial pressures such as office overhead like rent, electricity bills, high cost of dental materials and laboratory charges often rises much higher than the income which the dentist earns in the dental clinic which leads to immense mental pressure forcing him to work without taking lunch breaks, holidays and even when he is sick and physically not fit. A dentist has the constant pressure of having to make enough money to cover the overhead expenses. Business management demands, management of auxiliary staff, long working hours and too little personal time can result in work place injuries, increased illness and poor mental performance. High competition due to the increasing number of dental clinics having been set up in the last few years, the dentist s have to resort to charging the patients lower charges without compromising on the quality of the costly materials used in the treatment. This puts the dentist in a very critical stress situation.

#### **2. Life stressors:**

The stressful situations that occur outside the organisation can also have an impact on the dentists inside the organisational settings. Life stressors may be generally categorised into life change and life trauma.

#### **Life change:**

A life change is any meaningful change in the dentist's personal or work situation. The notion of life change as a source of stress was first developed and popularised by Thomas Holmes and Richard Rahe University of Washington School of Medicine in 1967, to provide a standardized measure of the impact of a wide range of stressors. They developed the social readjustment rating scale by listing 43 common stressful or life events and named them as Life Change Units (LCU) to study whether or not stress contributed to illness. According to them and a person can handle only a certain threshold of life changes and beyond that problems can set in and major changes in an individual's life can lead to stress and eventually to disease.

#### **Life trauma:**

Life trauma is a more direct, narrower and shorter term focus than life change. A major upheaval that occurs in an individual's life and which alters his emotions, attitudes or behaviours is referred to as life trauma. Marital problems, health problems, family difficulties or divorce initially may be unrelated to stress but over the course of time this trauma in a dentist's life is a form of life trauma which will cause emotional turmoil and stress, and may spill over into the workplace which will eventually deplete him of his resources, affect his work performance and job satisfaction.

The concept that stress causes distress and ill health has been widely researched and concluded by many medical and psychological researchers and also accepted among the general public and in the mass media.

#### **Effects of stress:**

Long term stress can have both physiological as well as psychological consequences.

### **Physiological factors:**

Serious health problems are the outcome of long term exposure to stress which disrupts every system in the body. Individuals who are under stress have the tendency to perceive everyone around in negative terms, blame others, will be quick tempered and easy to anger. Frequent negative emotions like chronic anger is a risk factor in heart related problems causing the body to repeatedly pump out stress hormones from the adrenal glands which increase the heart rate, breathing rate and blood pressure, eventually damaging the lining of the arteries and blood vessels of the heart. It also increases the blood levels of cholesterol, the fatty substance that clogs the arteries increasing the risk of heart attacks.

Acute stress triggers migraine headaches. When headache occurs in the absence of other symptoms then it is said to be stress related. The misery of brutal migraine attacks leads to disturbances of sleep, mood, thinking process, and impairs the quality of life. Stress increases the susceptibility of asthmatic attacks, arthritis, fertility issues, premenstrual syndrome, speeds up the aging process, flu, cold, host of other ailments like allergies, skin problems, unexplained hair loss, teeth grinding, chest tightness, chronic fatigue, back pain, and cardiovascular problems.

Chronic stress wreaks havoc and weakens the immune system which is the body's system of defence against diseases and increases the susceptibility to many illnesses from the common cold and flu to the risk of developing chronic diseases including cancer although evidence linking stress to cancer requires further study and is still inconclusive and under research study. Hence chronic stress damages the health and has the capacity to make individuals vulnerable to a range of diseases and other physical health problems.

### **Psychological factors:**

Stress and burnout is the major cause of all mental illness and psychological problems. The psychological effects of prolonged stress and burnout is more subtle and leads to problems like insomnia, nervousness, fear, loss of sex drive, dejection, sense of loneliness, low morale, irritability, short temper, moodiness, feeling overwhelmed, agitation, inability to relax, general unhappiness, isolation and anxiety which may be either panic disorder or generalised anxiety disorder.

Sometimes the effects of stress overload may even lead to cognitive symptoms like poor concentration, memory problems, seeing only the negative side of life, poor judgement, constant worrying, anxious or racing thoughts and reduced flexibility of thinking. Severe stress can lead individuals to feel emotionally numb, disoriented and difficulties in relating to friends, incapable of trusting anyone around and thus disrupting interpersonal relationships, low performance and job dissatisfaction.

Exacerbated stress and burnout can lead individuals to behavioural symptoms like sleeping more or less, over eating or eating less, nervous habits, procrastination, neglecting responsibilities and substance abuse like alcohol, cigarettes or drugs to relax and thereby disrupting the quality of personal and professional life.

### **Stress management strategies to cope with stress and burnout**

Stress management is a decision making process. Stress causes a negative impact on the dental professionals and given that it is widespread and so potentially disruptive of mind and body, it becomes vital that they must be concerned about managing stressful conditions more effectively. These situations

are imperative in the life of dentists and to overcome stress and burnout they have to cultivate some effective techniques like faith, self-control, discipline, daily regular exercise, developing positive attitudes and thereby take control of their mental work environment. It helps dental professionals to manage stress more effectively and decrease negative emotional arousal, cognitive decline, performance impairment, premature mortality and increased healthier, productive workforce.

### **Faith and Self Awareness**

Encouraging and exploring thoughts about problems, tensions, difficulties, worries repenting for past mistakes, worrying over the future, will only enhance stress and eventually burnout. Awareness of thoughts emotions and feeling of inevitable happenings in daily life and accepting every such situation as the will of God with humility can change the perspective of life. Studies suggest that self-awareness can successfully navigate health care professionals through potentially stressful encounters that arise throughout the day. Filling the mind with thoughts of God, surrendering wholeheartedly the past, present and future, letting God take control of all the decisions by continuously placing all the problems and difficulties each day at his feet can miraculously help individuals to overcome not only stress but also burnout. An emerging stress management technique known as mindfulness training involves training the mind to focus on the ability to concentrate and regulate the attention on rest, stillness, silence, qualities of relaxation and peace by focussing attention on the present moment and visualizing success. This technique reduces stress, enhances awareness, increases productivity and this leads to better job satisfaction.

### **Self Control**

Controlling negative thoughts, feelings, interpretation of situations and the different stressful events that happen in the day to day life of an individual is of vital importance, for controlling the emotional response. Self-control is a virtue and the dentist at home or at work place feels uncontrollable anger leading to temper outbursts. Negative feelings like anger suppress the immune response while sincere positive feelings like self-control and boost the immune system leading individuals to maximise their physical health, personal balance, work performance, job satisfaction, interpersonal communication and greater care for patients. Anger is a common response to stress and could become dangerous to everyone around if not kept under check. Controlling anger is a matter of choice and whatever may be the situation, maintaining inner calm and tranquillity through self-control and positive feeling states, the dental professional will be able to manage stress and also enable him to be firm and polite in his approach to everyone around maintaining good interpersonal relationships and improving communication effectiveness. This will in turn increase productivity, work performance and job satisfaction.

### **Discipline**

Leading a disciplined life by adhering to the use of proper good diet and nutrition rich in high protein with lots of vegetables, fruits, and a diet low in carbohydrates drinking plenty of water, avoiding consumption of alcohol and smoking of cigarettes can improve mind power, concentration, alertness and has a soothing effect on the nervous system and thereby helps in coping with stress effectively. When dental professionals are internally self-managed by adhering to a disciplined life, they operate at their greatest potential enabling maximised work place quality, productivity and enabling maximum mental clarity, effectiveness, flexibility, creativity, intelligence in the moment and improvements that profoundly impact and transform stressful reactions into healthy responses and effective solution.

Another area where discipline is of utmost importance is organising, planning, problem solving, decision making and managing time efficiently and this is highly recommended for managing stress. Deciding which task is most important and completing them first by prioritising and grouping tasks of the day into critical activities that must be performed immediately and trivial activities that can be delegated or postponed. The activities for the day may be written down or if used to typing and are computer savvy and comfortable around electronics then computer program or smart phone might be the best choice. This strategy will help dentists to get more of the important tasks done every day and delegating the less important task to others. Learning to construct specific, achievable and realistic goals to be achieved for the day with meaningful parameters is crucial to effective and disciplined time management.

### **Exercise**

Many researchers suggest that regular exercise alleviates stress and burnout. The individuals who exercise everyday are less likely to experience negative consequences, do not feel depressed, feel less tension, are less prone to heart attacks and are more self-confident and relaxed. There are many forms of exercises but some of the simplest, easy, and less time consuming types of exercises have been explained in this study. Spending fifteen minutes every morning is all that is needed for a dental professional to keep stress and burnout at bay and will enable them to face the day with a cool, calm and relaxed frame of mind. By practising pranayama, meditation and yoga techniques dental professionals will be able to maintain far greater peace and emotional balance, lessening the intensity and duration of distress which will eventually lead to substantial reduction in the physiological and psychological consequences of stress and enhancement of quality of life and job satisfaction.

### **Alternate Nostril breathing exercise**

The benefits of doing alternate nostril breathing exercise also known as NadiShodhanapranayama every day will increase the energy level and gives total relaxation and tranquillity to the mind and body.

Benefits:

This pranayama purifies the blood and strengthens the respiratory system. It clears and releases toxins, balances hormones, fosters mental clarity keeps the mind calm, enhances the ability to concentrate, rejuvenates the nervous system and helps in alleviating nervous tension, insomnia, asthma, stress, and chronic headaches. This can be done anytime of the day and anywhere but on an empty stomach.

Procedure:

Sit in a comfortable, upright position with eyes closed, lift the right hand, and place the index finger and middle finger at the eyebrow centre and mentally count with the breath. Gently close the right nostril with the right thumb and inhale the breath slowly and deeply through the left nostril to the count of five and then close both nostrils and retain the breath for a count of five. Open the right nostril and exhale slowly to the count of five and then close both nostrils and retain the breath to the count of five. Open the right nostril and inhale slowly to the count of five and then close both nostrils and retain the breath to the count of five. Open the left nostril and exhale slowly to the count of five and then close both nostrils and retain the breath to the count of five. This constitutes one round of pranayama. Five rounds of pranayama can be done for best results. It would be advisable to start the pranayama with the count of three and then proceed slowly to the count of five.

## **Meditation**

There are several types of meditation but the most suitable meditation for the lifestyle of a dentist is sound meditation. This involves placing the whole attention on every sound that surrounds the environment.

Benefits:

There are many physiological and psychological benefits from the daily practise of meditation. It lowers blood pressure, calms the mind and boosts the immune system. It helps in clearing the mind, eases many health concerns such as, anxiety, depression and is a powerful tool for handling symptoms of stress and burnout.

Procedure:

Sound meditation can be practised sitting down or lying down in a comfortable position. Close the eyes breathe normally and place the whole attention on every sound that surrounds the environment like birds chirping, people talking, sounds of different moving vehicles, etc. should become the object of meditation. Sound meditation can be practised in any position, anywhere, anytime of the day, even in a moving vehicle on the way to work.

## **Yoga**

Yoga is derived from the Sanskrit word yuj meaning yoke. It is a 5000 year old Indian body of knowledge and even if it is an ancient culture, it has become a modern day movement. Yoga is the practice of physical postures and is one of the oldest known systems for good health of mind and body.

Benefits:

The benefits of yoga are it lowers blood pressure, improves memory, alleviates pain, regulates the heart rate, retards the aging process, reduces the impact of exaggerated stress responses, improves the quality of sleep, reduced risks from migraines, improved immune function, freedom from anxiety, and depression and has many more advantages.

## **Types of exercises**

There are many types of exercises in yoga but some simple and easy to follow exercises are seen in this study which will enable the dental professional to prevent stress and burnout and increase job satisfaction and work performance. Persons of any age can perform these simple physical postures called asanas in empty stomach and preferably early in the morning before starting the day's work.

## **Paschimottasana**

Paschimottasana is pronounced as pash-ee-moh-tan-ahs-anna meaning intense dorsal stretch. This is derived from the Sanskrit word paschima which means west or back of the body stretch and asana meaning posture.

Benefits:

The many benefits of performing this asana are that it covers the entire body system. It helps massage the internal organs especially the digestive organs, it relieves problems such as constipation, stretches the hamstrings at the back of the legs, strengthens, stretches and lengthens the entire spine, aids in achieving slim figure. It relieves problems with sciatica, soothes headaches, fatigue, relieves menstrual discomfort and pain, relieves the symptoms of menopause in women and studies suggest that regular practice of Paschimottasana reduces obesity.



This asana is a therapeutic for high blood pressure, kidney problems, bronchitis, sluggish liver, insomnia, infertility, sinusitis, removes fat from the hips and beneficial for diabetics. Regularly performing Paschimottasana invigorates the nervous system, most importantly improves concentration, calms the mind and helps in relieving depression, irritation, anger, anxiety and stress.

Precautions or contraindications:

Paschimottasana should not be practised by individuals suffering from asthma, slip disc, severe back ache, during pregnancy and menstruation.

Procedure:

Sit straight on the floor or mat with legs together flat and stretched out straight in front. Inhale and stretch arms up over the head lengthening the entire spine upwards. Exhale and bend forward from the hips keeping the spine as elongated as possible and touch the toes without bending the legs and try to touch the knees with forehead. Stay in this position as long as possible preferably from ten seconds up to one minute. Breathe out and lower the arms.

### **Bhujangasana**

The name is derived from the Sanskrit word Bhujanga meaning 'snake' and asana means posture and it is pronounced as Bhu-JAN-GA-asana.

Benefits:

This is one of the very powerful backward bending asana and has huge benefits which cover all the body systems. It relieves discomfort in muscles of the back, neck, and abdomen, strengthens the spine and is very effective in dealing with pain in the spinal cord. Performing this asana strengthens the digestive organs, relieves constipation, increases body heat, destroys disease, tones the abdomen, kidneys, liver, strengthens the shoulders, relieves back pain and improves flexibility of the upper and middle back, soothes sciatica, activates pancreas, helps ease symptoms of asthma, improves circulation of blood and oxygen especially throughout the spinal and pelvic regions.

Bhujangasana is a rejuvenating exercise which done regularly maintains youth and vitality, helpful in treating loss of appetite, relieves insomnia, tones the ovaries, helps in alleviating menstrual irregularities and gynaecological disorders in women, soothes anger, violent temper, stimulates the endocrine glands, helps in strengthening of the adrenal glands which is responsible for the secretion of adrenaline, cortisol and stress hormones, relieves fatigue, anxiety, depression and stress.

Precautions or contraindications:

This asana should not be practised during pregnancy, during an asthma attack, individuals who are suffering from carpal tunnel syndrome, joint related issues and who have undergone abdominal surgeries, fractured wrist or ribs, or during menstruation.

Procedure:

Lie down on the stomach with legs straight and close together. Keep the toes flat on the floor with feet and heels lightly touching each other and forehead resting on the floor and bends both hands and keeps it under the shoulders with palm facing down. Lift the upper part of the body including the head, neck, shoulders, chest and the upper part of the abdomen with the support of the hands, until the arms are straight. Stretch as far as possible holding the breath and stay in this

position from ten seconds to one minute. Release the pose by relaxing the abdomen first on the floor and then the chest and finally the head.

### **Simhasana**

The name comes from the Sanskrit words simha meaning lion and asana meaning posture and is pronounced as sim-HAHS-anna. This asana resembles a lion seated and the practitioner's facial expressions are modified to resemble a lion.

Benefits:

This asana is very beneficial in curing bad breath, removes wrinkles, maintains firmness and lustre of the facial skin, relieves back pain, relaxes tensed up neck muscles, helps in digestion, aids in better functioning of the thyroid gland, improves circulation of blood to the face, keeps eyes healthy by stimulating the nerves, helps prevent asthma and other respiratory ailments. Practising simhasana stimulates the platysma, a flat, thin, rectangular shaped muscle on the front of the throat and keeps it firm with age meaning this will help to prevent the sagging of the throat with age.

Muscles of the eyes, tongue, neck and facial muscles are stretched and exercised refreshing the blood supply to these muscles and improving their efficiency. This asana is useful for women with menstrual disorders and reproductive problems. The lion pose is basically a stress reliever.

Precaution or contraindications:

It would be advisable for individuals suffering with weak knees or ankle joints to practise this asana standing or sitting on a chair. This asana should not be practised for more than three minutes.

Procedure:

Simhasana may be performed by either sitting or in standing position. Sit on the floor with knees bent. Place both hands on the knees and spread out the fingers keeping the arms straight. Pull the stomach in and force the tongue out as far as possible by opening the mouth and exhaling. Point the tip of the tongue down, widen the eyes and tense all the facial muscles breathing normally and gazing at the spot between the eyebrows or at the tip of the nose. Stay in this position from one second to one minute. Release the asana by taking the tongue in, release the tension, loosen the hands and resume the original position.

### **Shavasana**

Shavasana gets its name from the recumbent posture of a dead body, and it comes from a Sanskrit word shava meaning "corpse" and asana meaning "posture" and is pronounced as sha-VAHS-anna. It is a posture of letting go completely, rest and relaxation.

Procedure:

Lie flat on the floor with hands stretched out to the side away from the body with palms open and facing upwards. Keep the legs stretched comfortably and away from each other with feet and knees completely relaxed and toes facing to the sides. Keeping the head to one side, eyes closed, breathe normally and stay very still with thoughts blank or taking attention to different body parts starting from the toes and moving toward the head and slowly relaxing the entire body. The incoming breath energizes the body while the outgoing breath brings total relaxation. Stay in this position for five minutes or as long as comfortable and totally relaxed and rejuvenated to face the day. Release the asana by keeping the

eyes closed and slowly rolling over to the right side. Lie in this position for a second and taking support of the right hand, gently sit down gradually becoming aware of the environment and the body and slowly open the eyes.

Benefits:

Shavasana is very beneficial in reducing blood pressure, insomnia, anxiety, pressure, muscle tension and increasing energy levels, memory, focus, concentration and self-confidence. This asana helps stimulate blood circulation and exercises the inner organs, relaxes the body, reduces headache, fatigue, tension, mild depression and it helps to calm down the mind, refreshes and rejuvenates the mind and body. It is beneficial for people suffering with neurasthenia a general worn out feeling, nervousness, diabetes, asthma, and indigestion, constipation, lumbago, coupled with deeper and sounder sleep. Shavasana gives a deep, meditative state of rest which helps in the repair of cells and tissues and is a great reliever of stress.

Precautions or contraindications:

Shavasana is a very safe exercise and can be practised by everybody unless for medical reasons it has been advised to avoid lying on the floor.

A perfect sculptured body, a perfect functioning of the internal organs, to constantly be closer to good health and overall well-being are the benefits of doing breathing exercise, meditation and yoga every morning. Consistently feeling enthusiastic and energetic throughout the day, having sharpness of mind, having a sense of vitality, being able to fight off illness, shine and natural glow on the face that comes from inside can all be achieved by keeping the body healthy from within. Practising pranayama, meditation and yoga exercises has a deeper, more lasting effect and holistic approach to healthy body and mind and there will be no scope for experiencing stress and burnout and enabling a dental professional to have an exuberant and peaceful mental work environment.

### **Attitude**

In this era of countless technological breakthroughs which promise unheard of conveniences to make life easier for all, the problem of accelerating occupational stress and burnout has become a psychological hazard and it is clearly taking its toll on the health of the workforce. A dental professional's hectic life style can be filled with negative feelings like impatience, anger, ill temper, irritability, fear of failure, discouragement, being critical of everyone around. This can hamper positive attitude and result in feelings of ill health and deterioration of general body condition. Unmanaged emotions and long term effects of stress will lead to compromising on the quality of day-to-day life, productivity, limiting the dental professional's clarity and adaptability to life's challenges. According to scientific research studies chronic and unmanaged emotional stress is supposed to be as much as six times more predictive of cancer and heart disease than cholesterol or blood pressure. To be successful a dentist has to build up slowly and steadily positive feelings and to achieve this, mental attitude has to change. As professionals, dentists have the responsibility to be more hopeful and make life look better and for this it is imperative to employ elements of caring, protective and supportive nurturance and strive towards inner wellbeing. To enjoy inner peace and tranquillity thought conditioning is important on a regular basis. Practising persistently to empty the mind of all negative thoughts and feelings and filling the mind with healthy thoughts and peaceful experiences will result in relaxed attitude.

To attain control over emotions, positive affirmations and believing continuously that the day is going to be happy is the most astonishing method to

reassuring quietude. Replacing doubts with positive expectations will change sceptical thoughts and give way to courage, belief and deeper self-confidence and emotional management. The word spoken has profound power to spontaneously affect the thoughts and feelings which in turn influence the situations to be positive or negative. Hence constantly speaking positive words and making it a habit can help remove the obstacles in the mental work environment.

When the mind is filled with negative thoughts, imaginations and feelings it can sap the inner energy. Habitually occupying the mind with faith, goodwill, kindness, and creative, nourishing, health laden thoughts like achievement, prosperity and attainment can alter the attitudes of mind and in turn the outward conditions, circumstances and atmosphere in which positive developments will thrive. (It helps dental professionals to manage stress more effectively and decrease negative emotional arousal, cognitive decline, performance impairment, premature mortality and increased healthier, productive workforce.) A dentist in order to enjoy a healthy mental work environment must cultivate the quality of being a kind, pleasant and comfortable personality employing successful and pleasing personal relationships with everyone.

Replacing the unattractive habit of criticism with a the virtue of humility, learning and practicing to take an optimistic positive attitude towards life by believing and expecting with faith, hard work and giving the very best of efforts during treatment procedures is vitally important to happy and successful professional life.

### **Conclusion**

Stress reduction approaches can cause favourable changes in a number of key indicators of physiological and psychological well-being and improvements in performance related parameters. Stress management enables to transmute stress and negative emotions of the moment, improves the quality of life, increases work performance and job satisfaction. Faith and awareness helps to disengage the mind from draining mental and emotional feelings of the moment by shifting the attention to positive feelings. It reverses the body's normal destructive stress responses and transforms emotionally draining feelings to efficient emotional stability and physiological efficiency by reinforcing more positive perceptions. Positive feelings like self-control boost the immune system leading individuals to maximise their physical health, personal balance, interpersonal communication and greater care for patients. By adhering to a disciplined life dental professionals are internally self-managed and they operate at their greatest potential enabling maximised work place quality and productivity. Positive attitude enables the dentist to face each day with maximum mental clarity, effectiveness, flexibility, creativity, intelligence in the moment and improvements that profoundly impact and transform stressful reactions into healthy responses and effective solution. By adopting intentional shifts to positive feelings in the day-to-day life dentists will experience key physiological and psychological parameters which are vital building blocks to a healthier lifestyle. By practising pranayama, meditation and yoga techniques dental professionals will be able to maintain far greater peace and emotional balance, lessening the intensity and duration of distress. This will eventually leads to substantial reduction in the physiological and psychological consequences of stress and enhancement of quality of life and job satisfaction. This study has illustrated the direct and profound impact of stress management strategies among dental professionals for achieving overall good health and there may be many more such stress interventions and strategies that need to be further studied.

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