

Transcendental Meditation: Research Overview

Research conducted at over 250 universities and research institutions in 33 countries

*380 original studies and reviews published in independent peer-reviewed journals
or other edited scientific publications*

- In a nine-year randomized controlled trial (RCT) of patients with coronary heart disease, TM led to a 48% reduction in the rate of major clinical events (all-cause mortality plus non-fatal myocardial infarction and stroke) compared to controls who received education on risk factor reduction.¹
- A systematic review and meta-analysis of RCTs from 107 studies on stress reduction and high blood pressure found that TM reduced both systolic and diastolic blood pressure while other methods of meditation and relaxation, biofeedback, and stress management did not produce significant effects.² Further independent meta-analyses also found that TM reduces blood pressure.^{3,4}
- In RCTs, TM reduced carotid artery atherosclerosis in hypertensive subjects,⁵ and decreased insulin resistance and blood pressure in patients with stable coronary heart disease.⁶
- A scientific statement from the American Heart Association (AHA) in 2013 found evidence that TM reduces blood pressure and states that ‘TM may be considered in clinical practice to lower BP’. In contrast, the AHA report found insufficient evidence to recommend other meditation techniques.⁷
- Pooled data from two RCTs on hypertensive older people showed that TM was associated with a 23% reduction in all-cause mortality and a 30% decrease in cardiovascular deaths.⁸
- An RCT conducted at Harvard found that elderly people who learned TM showed greater improvement in mental health, cognitive flexibility, blood pressure, and well-being, and lower mortality, than three comparison groups from the same residential institutions (who learned either a relaxation technique, an active mental exercise, or received no treatment).⁹
- In RCTs, TM improved quality of life and well-being for older women with breast cancer,¹⁰ and improved functional capacity and quality of life in patients with congestive heart failure.¹¹
- In meta-analyses, TM was more effective than other meditation and relaxation procedures in reducing anxiety and improving overall psychological health,¹²⁻¹⁴ and more effective in reducing smoking, alcohol consumption, and illicit drug use than conventional programmes, whether or not these were combined with relaxation techniques.¹⁵
- TM decreased multiple features of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in US war veterans, with reductions in depression, anxiety, insomnia, severity of delayed stress syndrome, emotional numbness, alcohol consumption, family problems, and difficulty in obtaining employment.^{16,17} Active duty military service members with PTSD or anxiety who learned TM showed reduced medication usage and an overall decrease in severity of psychological symptoms.¹⁸
- Civilian refugees of the Congo war with severe PTSD showed marked, rapid, and sustained reductions in symptom scores after commencing TM.^{19,20} Residents of two Japanese cities directly affected by the 2011 earthquake and tsunami showed a reduction in mental and physical stress symptoms with TM compared to controls.²¹
- A 14-year retrospective study of 2836 people enrolled in the Quebec provincial health insurance scheme found that, after beginning TM, subjects showed a progressive decline in payments to physicians compared to controls. The average annual difference was 13%, leading to a cumulative cost reduction of 55% after six years.^{22,23}
- TM has also been found to improve educational and cognitive performance,²⁴⁻²⁶ reduce stress, depression, and burnout among school teachers and support staff,²⁷ improve occupational health,^{27,28} and promote effective rehabilitation of offenders.^{29,30}

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