



A Critical Review On Health Issues Among IT professionals and its Solutions through Ayurveda and Yoga

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Abstract - The Indian Information Technology (IT) field has gotten a tremendous boost due to globalization of the economy and favorable government policies of India. IT professionals are under constant pressure to deliver services efficiently and have to be cost effective. Very few people have good knowledge on health consequences, its causes, signs-symptoms and its management program. Sitting a long time in front of a computer leads to more health problems which include visual, musculoskeletal and stress problems. In terms of visual problem, study concluded that pain, irritation, redness of eye and blurring of vision, while musculoskeletal problems include pain or stiffness in lower back, pain/stiffness in wrist/hand/fingers, pain/stiffness in shoulder and pain/stiffness in neck and higher stress conditions of moody; short-temper;

accelerated speech; nail-biting; restlessness; getting confused easily; gain/loss of weight and nervousness are more common. Ayurveda and Yoga have a great strength to provide preventive and treatment solutions over health problems of IT professionals. Ayurveda and Yoga have proven effective in this area.

Keywords :- Ayurved, Yoga, IT professionals, Health Issues

Introduction -

Indian Technology has emerged as a main service provider in the world of information technology. More than 120 million people here are engaged with computer work and the number of people using computers has been progressively increasing every day. The Indian Information Technology (IT) field has gotten a tremendous boost due to globalization of

the economy and favorable government policies of India. IT and IT related professionals are under constant pressure to deliver services efficiently and have to be cost effective. The knowledge level of the professionals on health problems varied from one problem to others. Very few people have good knowledge on health consequences, its causes, signs-symptoms and its management program. It is remarkable that the number of years of experience, type of health problems and daily exposure to computers has a significant effect on the knowledge of computer related health problems¹. The common health problems observed among IT professionals include regional musculoskeletal disorder, cumulative trauma disorder, occupational overuse syndrome (or simply overuse syndrome) and repetitive motion injuries or disorder.⁴ IT professionals sitting a long time in front of a computer leads to more health problems which include visual, musculoskeletal and stress problems. In terms of visual problem, study concluded that pain, irritation, redness of eye and blurring of vision while musculoskeletal problems include pain or stiffness in lower back, pain/stiffness in wrist/hand/fingers, pain/stiffness in shoulder and pain/stiffness in neck and higher stress conditions of moody; short-temper; accelerated speech; nail-biting; restlessness; getting confused easily; gain/loss of weight and nervousness are more common. With respect to age and gender, male and the age of fewer than 25 years were predominantly affected by various health problems due to use of the computer for a long time¹².

These problems if ignored can prove debilitating and can cause crippling injuries forcing one to change one's profession.^{2,3} We have selected particularly IT employees because the level of workload and its health hazards what these employees face is comparatively higher than other employees. Any kind of a job has targets, and an employee becomes stressed when he or she is allotted with unachievable targets and are unable to manage a given situation. As technology advances, there is also increased stress that is associated with it called "technology stress. Increase in the number of IT professionals means an increase in health problems⁴.

Researchers said that Ayurveda and Yoga have proven effective in prevention and management of Health problems among IT professionals. Here an attempt has been made to study this topic critically.

Objective of the Study:

The present study has intended to explore the health problems among IT professionals and find some promising solutions from Ayurved and yoga over it.

What is wrong with computer use⁴?

There is nothing wrong with using a computer. But here are some important points to get into the topic which predominantly occurs in IT professionals.

- Posture – how you sit in front of your computer
- Distance - the distance between your computer and your eyes

- Level - eye level where the computer is mounted
- Lack of movement and repetition - body movements associated with using the computer all day
- Breath - the air you breathe
- Internet - intimacy with this fellow

Review on Health problems among IT professionals ^{4,5,6}:

1. Health issues due to posture:

- **Back Pain or Low Backache** – Almost 80% of the health professionals who spend more than 8 hours in front of the computer can lead to great stress on bony joints and cartilage of back leading to back pain. The problem becomes severe that you cannot bend forward. This is typically noticed when you get up from your seat after sitting for long hours. Your body feels stiffened and you take a few minutes to get back into your flexible movement.

2. Screen Disturbance Distance:

- **Computer Eye Strain** - Eye strain, dark circles, redness - Your eyes are the most sensitive part of your body. If the distance between your eyes and the monitor is too short, the light emitted from the monitor will seriously affect your eyes.
- **Computer Vision Syndrome or Dry Eye Syndrome** - Red, itchy, and constantly inflamed eyes. The simple reason is the screen, its radiation and resolution. If the problem is serious, you can see very small particles when you move your eyes. It's

actually in your eyes, it's not really there.

3. Computer-related health problems due to monitor height

- **Cervical spondylitis (neck pain)** – This is caused by improper computer screen and eye height. Looking down at the monitor all the time causes this problem because the muscles in your neck tighten and stiffen.

4. Major Health Problems Due to Lack of Motion

- **Constipation and Hemorrhoids** – Simply put, hard stools. The intestine pushes food forward with its special movement, the so-called peristalsis. Sitting for long periods of time every day for years can slow down your bowel movements. It is also caused by improper meal timings observed by IT professionals. Then the gut either abandons its job or slows down too much. This also leads to indigestion, hard stools and the formation of hemorrhoids. Of course, the longer the stool stays in the bowel, the more infections the dirty stuff causes, and the risk of dying from cardiac arrest is 64% higher than for someone who does less than 11 hours a week. This is amazing. The IT professional's elevated cholesterol can be due to improper meal timing, junk food, and a sedentary lifestyle. Improper breathing, chronic constipation, and poor circulation can also cause this problem.
- **Obesity or Overweight** – This is a classic problem facing IT

professionals these days. The reason is still simple: lack of exercise, lack of activity, lack of exercise. Sitting in a chair in front of your computer all the time puts extra weight on your body.

- **Carpal Tunnel Syndrome** - Carpal tunnel syndrome is a condition where the nerve that runs through the wrist, known as the median nerve, is compressed due to constant but limited wrist movement. This tunnel consists of muscles, nerves, blood vessels, etc. This is because I use my keyboard and mouse all the time. His fingers and hands move in certain directions hundreds of times a day. Stiffness and pain in the wrist, numbness in the fingers, and tingling in the hands are some of the symptoms.

- **Thrombosis** - deep vein thrombosis; in other words, blood clots deep in the legs. This happens due to lack of leg movement. The feet carry a large amount of blood by gravity. This leading health problem among IT professionals is caused by sitting in front of the computer for long periods of time without physically moving their legs. In later stages, the veins harden and begin to ache, causing excruciating sprains and leg stiffness.

5. **Multiple Health Issues Due to Lack of Proper Breathing-** Due to lack of ventilation, While the dwelling is initially planned with central air conditioning, the scope of putting windows for ventilation is

always ignored. It then becomes a tough row to hoe when AC plants shuts abruptly and in the season of winter.

- **Poor Ventilation** - The level of carbon dioxide is raised when many people exhale in poorly ventilated halls. It is for this reason, the brain receives less oxygen and over the period of time, there could be mental health disorders including depression, anxiety, lack of concentration and any such issue that is mental health related. Poor breathing pattern also invites weakness of muscles, sleeplessness (insomnia), improper eye-to-hand coordination, decreased memory, strains and pains in the body, and poor blood circulation.

6. **Several Major Health Issues**

Because of Internet Addiction- Internet addiction brings a lot of health hazards due to over computer and handheld (internet enabled) devices. While enjoying the exemption from social stigmas, the internet users find themselves more comfortable on the imaginary World Wide Web than this vale of tears.

7. **Stress and Anxiety:** IT people are more prone to stress and anxiety which can greatly affect quality of life. The common health problem due to stress are acid peptic disease, alcoholism, asthma, diabetes, fatigue, tension headache, hypertension, insomnia, irritable bowel syndrome, psychoneurosis, sexual dysfunction and skin diseases such as psoriasis,

lichen planus, urticaria, pruritus, neurodermatitis etc.

Data from some Research studies:

- A study was conducted in Jamnagar, India to determine if computer professionals suffered from computer vision syndrome. Of the 1205 professionals surveyed, nearly half suffered from computer vision syndrome due to computer use.¹⁰.
- It also showed that 70% of computer professionals working in big cities in India have CVS. In Chennai, we found that his prevalence of CVS among engineering students was 81.9% while his prevalence of CVS among medical students was 78.6% of his. Engineering students are more likely to use computers than medical students⁷.
- Among the 648 computer professionals from 21 companies assessed for Carpal Tunnel Syndrome in Chennai, 13.1% were diagnosed to have CTS⁸. Headache and eye strain were the most common symptoms of CVS among the studied population, approximately 93% of computer related morbidity in the subjects^{9,10}.
- Visual problems were 76% and musculoskeletal problems were 77.5%. Additionally, 35% were stressed. His 81.3% of subjects had poor lighting and 76.3% had significant vision problems and therefore did not use anti-glare glasses/lenses. Approximately 80.2%

of 152 subjects did not place their monitors at the proper distance and reported visual problems. Subjects with inadequate ergonomics complained of musculoskeletal disorders more frequently.¹¹

Domains of Ayurveda and Yoga used as a solution over Health problems among IT Professionals:

Majority of the health problems can be treated with holistic science called Ayurveda and yoga. Holistic approach towards patients which means treating patients as a whole not with the specific symptom or part of the body. Ayurvedic medicine not only helps in relieving suffering of the patient but also strengthens its immune system. Ayurveda and Yoga not only work on the body but also act on the level of mind. It helps the patient to adapt himself to the challenging situation in the workplace. Thus the Doshic balance has been maintained.^{23,24,25} -

1. **Pratimarsh Nasya** - Installation of one or two drops of oil in the nose. It prevents and treats pathogenesis in the urdhwajatrugath region of the body (upper body parts)^{13,16}.
2. **Abhyanga (messaging)**- It gives relief in Musculoskeletal, neurodegenerative and Psychosomatic Diseases. It smoothes the body parts and keeps Vata dosha in proper state. It delays aging, reduces stress as well as strengthens the body. Shiroabhyanga (Massage over head) and padabhyanga(massage over foot)

relaxes the mind and body and helps in reducing Stress and anxiety^{14,15,16}.

- **Vyayam (physical exercise)**- It is an important preventive, curative and rehabilitative measure. It produces lightness of the body and it does Shareera Upachaya. Individuals who daily practice Vyayama will have physical development, luster, compactness of body parts, stimulation of digestive power, firmness, lightness, cleanliness, tolerance to fatigue, cold, heat and provide optimum immunity. A person desirous of good health and longevity should do Vyayama in the right way and in the right amount^{16,17}.
- **Udvardana (Massaging)**- Massaging the body with soft, fragrant powders, produces stability of the body parts and excellence of the skin. It gives stability to the body. Doing Udvardana as a part of Dinacharya destroys Gurutva (heaviness), Tandra (drowsiness), Kandu (itching), Arochaka (anorexia) and Sweda (sweating)^{16,18}.
- **Snana (Bathing)**- Regular bathing as part of Dinacharya not only keeps us fresh but also helps keep us healthy and fit. Gently massage the muscles and internal organs. This is very effective in providing proper resistance training. Seka (Fomentation) acts as a method of injecting Roojahara, Sramaghna. Karnapoorana, a medicated oil or ghee into the ear, and appears mainly in his Manyagraha.^{19,20}

- **Anjana (collyrium)**- In ocular disorders; daily Use of Anjana (collyrium), helps to prevent and cures several eye diseases. It removes dirt from the eye, subsides burning sensation, itching and pain of eye^{16,21}. Rasanjana improves color and visual acuity; it is beneficial to the eye. Anjana is not a cosmetic kajal or the eye liner, it's herbal preparation from Daruharidra¹⁵

Sadvritta (Code and Conduct) for the prevention: Ergonomics, science of designing the workplace. This concept is explained in *Sadvritta* (codes of conduct) where things which should not be done are told.

- One should not hold natural urges.
- Your posture while sitting in front of your computer is important. Look at the curve it makes from the waist. Less bending means better posture. Sit up straight and do not lean forward to type or see the monitor clearly. Supports can also be used to fill gaps in curves to avoid such damage. Regular massage helps⁴.
- Ideally, the distance should be 18 to 24 inches to keep your eyes healthy. Move your keyboard away from your computer desk and place it closer to you. You can also use the mouse. If you have enough space on your desk, place your computer screens as far apart as possible. The CRV monitor had a safety film/screen, but the LED/LCD no longer has it. Screen radiation affects your eyes, no matter

how big the claims are from the seller. Provide adequate lighting in the room and avoid operating the computer in dark or poor lighting conditions. The light should hit the screen, not your eyes. That is, the window (if any) should be in the back, not in the front. It keeps flashing. Look at distant objects and landscapes every 30 minutes. Always carry eye lubricant and lubricate your eyes every 3-5 hours. Bhramari Pranayama and Tratak are very helpful in this⁴.

- Adjust the height of your computer monitor to maintain the viewing angle. If this is not possible, adjust your chair. Adjust your chair higher or shorter using the levels provided. Move your neck up and down a few times every hour. Rotate your head end to end 10 times every 3 hours⁴.
- Eat your meals on time. Take walking breaks, not coffee breaks. Practice short spans of Anulom-Vilom Pranayam. Include fiber in your diet (dark, green and leafy vegetables) and avoid fatty and unhealthy foods. After each class, simply stand up, straighten your body, gently press your stomach and sit down⁴.
- Use anti-glare lens/eyeglasses.
- Staying active and aerobic is the best way to prevent this problem, so jog regularly. Practice pranayama and do yoga asanas. Prefer stairs to elevators and park your car far enough away from the parking lot that you can walk to the office⁴.

- Avoid unhealthy foods. Stop chewing every time, and if you can't, stick to sprouts, salads (carrots and cucumbers are great for this), or anything high in fiber. Perfect for this. If you care about your figure, you prefer manual mesotherapy (liposuction). This instantly reduces a specific area of the body by a few centimeters⁴.
- Rotate your wrist every hour. Bend and loosen your fingers several times. Place the sponge-like object under your wrist. Get a thin mouse pad so that the thickness of the pad doesn't hurt your wrist when moving the mouse. Adjust the seat height. The wrist should be parallel to the desk to avoid forming an angle when typing or moving the mouse.
- Get up regularly, take a short walk, and come back. Jogging, cardio, sports, aerobics, etc. We are usually breathing a quarter of our actual capacity. Always try to breathe deeper (some people get dizzy after a few days - then stop this exercise). If possible, ventilate your home or go outside for fresh air. Any kind of pranayam can help solve this problem.⁴

Aachar Rasayan -

- It is a good idea to base your work relationships on the Vedic principle of ahimsa, or nonviolence. It comes under Behavioral Rasayana called achara rasayana because it will not only improve your relationships, it

will improve your health and act as an elixir to your mind and body. Recent research shows that positive behavior is linked with longevity. If you cultivate positive, nourishing behaviors in your workplace, you'll find those behaviors reflected back to you^{26,27}.

- Man with man in a working environment is also explained in Achara Rasayana, where a person should speak calmly and pleasantly²⁸.

Yoga:

- As Yoga increases one's Mental and physical strength, it can definitely prove effective in the successful cure for stress and anxiety^{28,28,29}. Yogic relaxation techniques i) Asanas (Physical postures) – Vajrasana, Padmasana, Savasana ii) Pranayama (Breath control) Nadi shodhana & Ujjayi pranayama iii) Yoga nidra (Technique of yogic relaxation)iv) Dhyana (Meditation). Long-term yoga practitioners have reported musculoskeletal and mental health improvements. Get up regularly, take a short walk, and come back. We are usually breathing a quarter of our actual capacity. Always try to breathe deeper (some people get dizzy after a few days - then stop this exercise). If possible, ventilate your home or go outside for fresh air. Any kind of pranayama can help solve this problem^{30,31,32,33}.
- The set of asanas which has proven effect on management of depression

are Bhramaripranayama, Nadi Shodhana pranayama, Navasana, Bhujangasana, Urdhvaprasaritapadasana, Makarasana, Adhomukhasavasana, Ardamerudandasana, Tadasana, Ardakatichakrasana, Vrikshasana, Shalabhasana, Gomukhasana, Vajrasana, Mulabanda/mahamudra, Savasana, and Ardapavanamukthasana.³⁴

- Regular practice of yoga can encourage mental and physical relaxation. This may help reduce stress and anxiety levels. Physical aspects of yoga can help increase flexibility, release physical stress from several points in the body, and ease down blockages such as muscle knots, eventually relieving tension. You can practice the following yoga postures for relief from stress and Anxiety³⁴.

Conclusion: It would shed light on the above problems and associated factors with their working environment conditions and pave the way for pursuing further research in this area and bringing policy level changes for their health betterment. Employees should be motivated to put their knowledge of ergonomic principles into practice. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of employee health is critical to addressing these issues at their roots. Thus by adopting techniques from Ayurved and yoga will contribute effectively in improving the quality of health and standards of living in Informational Technology Professional.

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