



Pilot study indicates breathing exercises are effective against depression & psychosis

Milan, July 16, 2009: Sudarshan Kriya Yoga (SKY), a modern breathing technique rooted in the ancient yogic tradition, is showing promising results as an adjunct therapy for depression, panic attack disorder and general anxiety.

In a pilot study conducted at the Department of Neurosciences, Fatebenefratelli Hospital (FH) in Milan, an innovative therapy based on the application of SKY to patients affected by depression, generalized anxiety and panic attacks yielded the following results after the first six months:

- Average reduction of 60% in the rate of depression (according to the standard tests)
- Average reduction of 40% in the rate of psychosis (according to the standard tests)
- Significant improvement in the cognitive functions, which became evident in clinical interviews
- Effect of SKY on the parasympathetic tone as evidenced by correlation between cardiological data and respiratory parameters (RSA)

The therapeutic effect of SKY is believed to be based mainly on the rebalancing of the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems, as a result of which there is a positive effect on the stress mechanisms, and on anxiety and mood related ailments. Its effect is being studied in depth in a series of questionnaire-based and laboratory tests at FH.

Commenting on the study, Dr. Claudio Mencacci, Director of the Department of Neurosciences at FH, said, "The task of modern neuroscience is to look for new evidence, but also to rediscover convincing methods of ancient treatments in a new setting."

Dr. Stefania Doria, the scientist responsible for the project, explained that the choice of SKY "was motivated by some key characteristics of the set of techniques: they are easy to learn and are based on both a modern and ancient system of yoga. They can be practised by patients independently at home, and with little investment of time... They give tangible results in a short period of time, encouraging the patient to become more independent and consequently have greater self-respect."

SKY was cognized by Indian spiritual leader and humanitarian H.H. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, in 1981, and is taught by trainers of the Art of Living Foundation in over 140 countries, to people from all backgrounds. Research published in international peer-reviewed journals document significant mental and physical health benefits of SKY.

"Our objective is to help the patients play a leading role in their therapy process and to discover their personal resources, which are the key to an authentic recovery from their illness, to regain their quality of life," states Dr. Roberto Sanlorenzo, SKY trainer and molecular biologist. "We are aware of the large increase in problems connected to anxiety and mood ailments in recent years," he continues, "and of the growing demand for an adjunct therapy like SKY, which brings together the holistic nature of ancient methods of treatment, with a rigorous medical and scientific context. By 2010, we intend to enrol over 200 patients at FH on the continuation of this study. Encouraged by these results, similar projects will start in various health institutes all over Italy."