



A Calming Effect

Study Shows Meditation Lowers Teens' Blood Pressure

Black adolescents at risk to be hypertensive adults can lower their blood pressure through daily transcendental meditation, according to research published in the April edition of *American Journal of Hypertension*.

A study of 156 inner-city black adolescents in Augusta, Ga., with high-normal pressure showed that teens who practiced 15 minutes of transcendental meditation twice daily steadily lowered their daytime blood pressures over four months and that their pressures tended to stay lower, according to Dr. Vernon A. Barnes, physiologist at the Medical College of Georgia and principal author of the paper.

“Allowing your mind to go to that state of inner quietness has an effect on the physiology by reducing stress hormone levels and reducing activation of the sympathetic nervous system which controls the fight-or-flight response,” says

Dr. Barnes. “In a short time, we can teach this standardized meditation method that has been taught all over the world. That technique can then be used throughout a lifetime without side effects or additional expense.”

Adolescents in the study who practiced transcendental meditation experienced an average 3.5 millimeter drop in their systolic pressure, the pressure inside blood vessels that the heart is pumping against, and a 3.4 millimeter decrease in diastolic pressure, the pressure while the heart is at rest.

Participants in health education classes, who served as control groups, experienced no significant change. Heart rate, probably one of the simplest measures of stress reduction, also dropped in meditating students and remained unchanged in the control groups, Dr. Barnes says.

“Even if your blood pressure comes down a few