

Research Paper

## The Impact of Vipassana Meditation on Stress and Anxiety: My Clinical Experience

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### ABSTRACT

This article is about my clinical experience. On 30 November 2022, I met with a severe hit-and-run accident and got multiple facial fractures. The right eye turned reddish and had severe swelling around it and bleeding through the nostrils and multiple fractures on the top of the eyebrows corner of the orbit is fractured (orbital plate). The specific fractured locations are the anterior and lateral walls of the right maxillary sinus, lateral wall of the right orbit, zygomatic arch, and segmental fracture of the right zygomatic arch are noted, and dislocated of the upper jaw; right cheek numbness; drowsiness; and multi scratches over my body. I included my accident photos, medical records, X-ray, CT scan, and eye reports in this article. During diagnosis, doctors decided I needed plastic surgery after alleviating the swelling and pain. The case was referred to three departments for treatment: Ear Nose Throat (ENT) department, plastic surgery, and dental department. Medications included a course of antibiotics. I did not use external skin care ointments but I applied a natural Aloe vera for better skin condition. Furthermore, the pain, suffering, and tiredness associated with my injuries can make it harder to obtain enough rest and sleep. I recorded the data using the DASS-21 item scale on the fourth day following the accident. The results were severe for stress and moderate for anxiety. I was trained twice in the Vipassana meditation at S.N Goenka's 10 days residential course. I started the serious practice of vipassana meditation for ten hours a day during the bedrest period. Regardless of age and the degree of injuries, within six days miracle took place in which my facial cuts healed amazingly and the swelling and pain reduced. The aim of this article is to outline the impact of vipassana meditation in clinical settings.

**Keywords:** *Vipassana Meditation, Zygomatic, Maxillary Sinus, Orbital Plate*

### Vipassana Meditation

S.N. Goenka re-introduced Vipassana meditation in India in 1969 and later expanded it all over the world by constructing multiple Vipassana meditation centers. He founded a research institute in Igatpuri, Maharashtra province, India (Smolka, 2017, p. 2). Concentration or focused meditation and Vipassana meditation are two distinct styles of meditation practices that Buddha taught (Vimalaramsi, 1997, P.6). The word vipassana means to see things as they really are (Delgado-Pastor et al., 2013, P.207). The

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Received: June 15, 2023; Revision Received: June 27, 2023; Accepted: June 30, 2023

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three primary components of Vipassana meditation practice are Anapanasati, Vipassana, and Metta practice.

### **Anapanasati**

The term Anapanasati means “mindfulness of breathing” (Vimalaramsi, 1997, p.7). This is the first phase of the vipassana meditation. The following are the steps involved in completing this phase.

1. Step 1: While you inhale and exhale, pay special attention (but remain relaxed) to the top lip and the region below the nostrils (Braboszcz et al., 2010, p. 1911).
2. Step 2: Stay calm and make an effort to keep your focus on your natural breathing.
3. Step 3: When your mind wanders, be calm and gradually bring your focus back to your natural breathing. In doing so, the mind becomes calm and sharper (Braboszcz et al., 2010, p.1911).
4. Step 4: Work through those stages respectively until you have a tranquil mind. It is important to remind yourself to never attempt to regulate your breathing; instead, focus on the area of the nostril rings and learn the tactile awareness of breathing.

### **Vipassana**

The main Buddhist meditation practice on which mindfulness is founded is called Vipassana meditation, and the technique is applied from the top of the head and works your way down to your feet or vice versa (Szekeres & Wertheim, 2015, p.2). The entire body is systematically examined by observing with a balanced mind whether any pleasant, unpleasant physical gross or subtle physical sensations are noted (Singh, 2007, p. 9). It is a mind-training technique that involves paying close attention to bodily sensations, emotions, feelings, and thoughts without reacting mentally to what is happening right now. This method is also called scanning meditation. The aim is to purify the mind and this leads to the healing of many psychosomatic illnesses (Arning, 2009, p. 98).

### **Metta Practice**

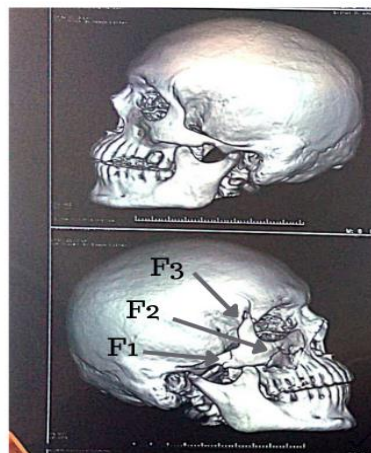
The Metta technique is the third level of Vipassana meditation that focuses on the development of mindfulness with love (Burgard & May 2010, p. 9). It is also called Metta-Karuna Bhavana and reduces stress and anxiety (Bhardwaj, 2021, p. 46). The aim of the Metta practice is to create a compassionate and positive outlook towards oneself and harmony in personal and interpersonal relationships. It boosts positive feelings, is emotionally balanced, and develops empathy and a sense of loving-kindness (Koli Prajakta & Rajesh, 2020, p. 861). During the exercise, practitioners will often repeat phrases like “May I be happy, peaceful, free from suffering” as well as “May all creatures be happy and peaceful.”

### **The Accident I Met**

On 30 November 2022, I met with a severe hit-and-run accident and got multiple fractures in my face area. Severe swelling around my right eye which turns blackish bowl in shape, and the eye turned reddish and kept bleeding through the nostrils in addition to this, I had a fracture on the top of my right eyebrow corner of the orbit (orbital right’s top/ orbital plate), with fractures in the eye bone, right temporal bone fractured, zygomatic arch, zygomatic bone and maxilla (infraorbital foramen) bone fractured and dislocated upper jaw, my right cheek was numb and got swelling, I was constantly drowsy, and I had a few minor scratches on my body. In this article, I included photos of my accident, as well as medical reports, X-rays, CT scanning, and medical reports of my eye. Doctors said I should undergo plastic

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surgery after recovering from the swelling and pain. The images below show my injured face in the accident and fractured areas in the X-ray.



**F1:** Segmental fracture of the right zygomatic arch.

**F2:** Fracture of anterior and lateral walls of right maxillary sinus and opacification of the right maxillary sinus.

**F3:** Lateral wall of right orbit.

### *Vipassana Meditation's Impacts on Stress, Anxiety, And Wound Healing*

**PHASE 1: IN THE FIRST SIX DAYS;** All the diagnostic tests had been completed by the evening of the day (30 November 2022). I was discharged from the hospital that evening since I had no bleeding wounds. Due to having multiple fractures on my face, as well as inside my mouth, I was advised to follow a liquid diet and rest for 2 months. My doctors prescribed painkillers, but I refused to take them because I was confident in vipassana meditation's basic concept which is "impermanence" (which means anicca in the pali language) this understanding leads to equanimity in mind (Novak, 1996, p. 269). We can understand the concept of impermanence in Vipassana meditation by observing the transient nature of experiences. It involves developing a non-reactive awareness of the present-moment reality. This practice helps to uproot deep-rooted attachments, cravings, and aversions. This form of meditation can reduce swelling and control pain more quickly. On the first day, I was suffering from severe pain. I recorded the data using the DASS-21 scale on the fourth day. The results were severe for stress and moderate for anxiety and normal for depression I observed those two suffering variables except depression. Although I could not sit for long hours, I began Vipassana meditation while lying on the bed. I observed decreasing stress, anxiety, and pain as a result of maintaining equanimity in my mind which was applied by engaging in extensive vipassana practice. The main aspect of vipassana is equanimity (upekkha) which is a psychological practice of mindfulness. Developing an attitude of equanimity towards the stimulus is one of the features of vipassana meditation. The development of equanimity can considerably improve overall health and assist with adjusting to the challenges one is facing (Jijina & Biswas, 2022). I had a clear awareness that everything that came my way was impermanent, which prevented me from harming my current state of health. Looking through the lens of impermanence, I recognized that suffering was only temporary as a result of the insight of impermanence (Carvalho, 2017, p. 212). I began practicing vipassana meditation for 10 hours a day, mostly while lying in bed. Fortunately, I had already completed two training courses at S.N Goenka's 10-day

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residential Vipassana meditation, which was helpful and had therapeutic uses. Even though I was middle age, it doesn't matter of age factors, a miracle happened in just 6 days that amazingly restored my face cuts returned to normal and the swelling reduced, even though I still have facial fractures and a reddish inflamed right eye.

**PHASE 2: DURING 30 DAYS:** After having my liquid diet, I keep practicing meditation, either sometimes in a sitting posture or sometimes lying on the bed. Observing natural breathing leads to calming the mind, and as a result, the healing process speeds up. I administered the DASS-21 item scale following 30 days of consistent vipassana meditation practice. The outcomes were normal for stress and anxiety. I realized that when you are practicing meditation the healing period is the same for everyone regardless of their age. Regular meditation practice can help to reduce stress, anxiety and promote relaxation, which can support the body's natural healing processes.

It is also important to understand that meditation is not a replacement for medical care or other expert attention for bodily wounds. Meditation can help to support the immunity system and healing process by reducing stress, and anxiety and promoting relaxation, it should not be used as an exclusive or alternate method of treating physical wounds. Meditation is a healing tool to speed up the overall healing process and psychological well-being. The recovery time frame depends on the quality practice of vipassana meditation.

In four months, I got back to normal life and all my wounds and fractures disappeared without plastic surgery and I got my facial shape as it is without having surgery! Along with the regular practice of meditation, I took other steps to support boosting my body's natural healing process including having a nutritious diet, getting plenty of rest, and following medical advice from doctors. I emphasize that the healing process slows down even if we consume healthy food if we don't maintain mental peace, as demonstrated by plenty of scientific evidence in research. The photo below depicts my face's health-recovery expression.



### ***My Healing Strategy***

- Practicing Vipassana meditation for more than ten hours a day: Practicing Vipassana meditation for more than ten hours per day can be difficult but it is a rewarding

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experience. I had plenty of free time while on bedrest, and the situation (wounds and fractures) demanded that I practice meditation. I used the vipassana technique, which involves non-judgmental observation of bodily sensations and thoughts with the goal of gaining insight into the nature of reality. In my case, while observing bodily sensations such as pain and suffering, I experience cell repair mechanisms in my body, and the nature of reality in this context is the impermanence of pain and suffering.

- Took both physical and mental rest: Taking both physical and mental rest is essential for maintaining overall health and psychological well-being. Physical rest allows the body to recover and recharge whereas mental rest allows the mind to relax and calm down.
- The law of the subconscious mind's energy: This law states that the subconscious mind is a powerful source of energy with creativity. We can access the subconscious mind's energy by applying the following techniques such as hopeful visualization, positive affirmations, the law of attraction, and meditation. By focusing on positive outcomes, we can begin to attract these experiences into our lives and overcome limiting self-beliefs and negative thought patterns.
- My challenging behavior enabled me to fully recover: It is possible that the challenging nature makes us have a resilient mindset and adopt determination which helps to fully recover from a difficult situation or health issue.
- My family members supported me: It is a big boon for me to have supportive family members - spouse, and children. Family support can be an essential factor during difficult times in promoting psychological well-being and recovery from challenging circumstances, such as health issues, and relationship problems, providing emotional comfort, and other life stressors. It might help to create a sense of optimism.
- Medication is a healing guide: Medication can help to manage symptoms, pain relief, and inflammation reduction, and prevent further damage or complications from a health issue consequence. And yet, it is vital to keep in mind that medication is not always necessary or appropriate for treating all medical conditions, and using medicines might have potential side effects and risks. Furthermore, medication often works the best when combined with other healing approaches, such as lifestyle changes like a nutritious diet, workouts, stress management, meditation, and support from family members, relatives, and friends.

### CONCLUSION

According to Albert Einstein, Energy cannot be generated or destroyed; it can only be transformed from one form to another. Energy is a fundamental concept in physics and every system needs the energy to function. The universe contains a wide variety of energy types, such as solar, mechanical, electrical, thermal, chemical, and nuclear energy. These various forms of energy can be converted into one another and stored inside objects and systems. Similar to this, our mind is a source of limitless energy; it holds our thoughts, emotions, and feelings. It responds and comes into action if you feel it. If you are feeling optimistic, your healing will accelerate; while if you are feeling pessimistic, the healing process will slow down. We engage in psychological exercises like meditation, yoga, and pranayama to maintain our positive mental state.

When we experience wounds or bone fractures, our body goes through a healing process that demands a lot of energy and resources, including physical and mental setups. Dizziness and fatigue can result from a lack of energy when our bodies attempt to repair damaged tissues and cells and resume normal function. Meditation practice on a regular basis makes supplying energy to speed up the healing process more effective and increases confidence.

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## Acknowledgement

To a pedestrian who took me to the hospital: I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the pedestrian who took me to the hospital after I fell unconscious condition on the road. I was delighted to meet such a kind and selfless individual. I am deeply touched and grateful for everything he did for me. I'm so grateful for the tremendous generosity he displayed towards me. His bravery and kindness will never be forgotten. He truly saved my life and the service was an inspiration. To Medical departments: I want to sincerely thank the all-medical professionals who were involved to take care of my injuries and fractures. I truly admire the care I received from the dental physicians' team. From the moment I arrived at the clinic, they immediately put me at ease and gave me confidence by going over the course of the treatment and answering any concerns I had. I was impressed by their ability and attention to detail during the procedure, and I had every reason to believe that I am getting the best care available. I appreciate their expertise and care. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the ophthalmologists who cared for my right eye, which had gone reddish. I will always be appreciative of their treatment because their expertise, kindness, and dedication were significant to my recovery. However, plastic surgery professionals should always be approached with caution and done for the right reasons.

## Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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**How to cite this article:** Ranzithkumar, N. (2023). The Impact of Vipassana Meditation on Stress and Anxiety: My Clinical Experience. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 11(2), 2733-2740. DIP:18.01.264.20231102, DOI:10.25215/1102.264

### APPENDIX



#### GOVERNMENT GENERAL HOSPITAL

Department of Radiology & Imageology

#### WHOLE BODY CT SCAN (16 Slice)

(A Unit of RK Diagnostic Services Pvt. Ltd.,)

Gunadala, VIJAYAWADA, Tel : 0866 - 2455049, Cell : 80965 91097

Patient ID:	29621	Patient Name:	RANJITH KUMAR.N M.35Yr
Age:	35 Years	Sex:	M
Ref.Physician:		Modality:	CT
Study Date:	30-Nov-2022	Study:	ORBITS

#### C.T. ORBITS PLAIN STUDY

Bilateral optic nerves and extra ocular muscles are normal in size, density and attenuation.

Bilateral eye balls (Globes) are normal in size and contour.

Retro orbital fat planes are normal.

*Fractures anterior and lateral walls of right maxillary sinus, lateral wall of right orbit, left zygomatic arch and segmental fracture of right zygomatic arch are noted.*

*Opacification of right maxillary sinus is noted. – S/o. Hemosinus.*

*Soft tissue swelling is noted over right cheek and orbital region.  
– S/o. Pre septal & Soft tissue hematoma.*

**IMPRESSION:** \* FRACTURES AS MENTIONED ABOVE.

For clinical correlation.

Dr K Ramana Kumar , MD  
Consultant Radiologist

Date: 30-Nov-2022 15:51:14

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