EFFECf OF YOGA ON AEROBIC AND ANAEROBIC POWER OF MUSCLES

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Abstract: Aerobic Power (VO₂ max) and anaerobic power were estimated in medical students before and after six weeks of yogic training. A significant increase in aerobic power and a significant decrease in anaerobic power was observed. This may be due to conversion of some of the Fast Twitch (F.T.) muscle fibres into Slow Twitch fibres (S.T.) during yogic training.

Key words: aerobic power fast twitch fibres (F.T.)
anaerobic power slow twitch fibre (S.T.) yogic training

INTRODUCTION

It is well known that excellence in sports activities depends on the aerobic and the anaerobic metabolic capacities of an individual, which in turn depends on the percentage of Slow Twitch (S.T.) fibres and Fast Twitch (F.T.) fibres present in the skeletal muscles. Effects of yogasanas on cardio respiratory function have been amply demonstrated (1, 2, 3, 4 and 5). The present study was undertaken to observe the differences, if any, in the aerobic and anaerobic activities, as a result of certain yogasanas.

METHODS

Subjects consisted of 17 healthy medical students (both boys and girls) aged 16 to 18 years. Cardiovascular and respiratory disorders were clinically ruled out. Those having prior exposure to yoga, were also excluded. They were given Yogic training for one hour daily, from 5 to 6 p.m., for six weeks, the training consisting of relaxation, yogic postures, Shudhikriyas, Bandas and Pranayama.

The following investigations were carried out on the subjects, both before and after completing the 6 weeks training.

(1) VO₂ Max in litres/minute (Astrand Rhyming Test): Bench stepping test was conducted at the rate of 22 steps/min for 5 minutes, the height of the step being 33 cm for women and 40 cm for men. VO₂ max was predicted from Astrand-Rhyming Nomogram, from the pulse rate achieved immediately following the test and the subject’s body weight. All 17 subjects undertook this test.

(2) Anaerobic Power in kgmetre/sec (Margaria’s step test): The test consisted of climbing a stairway, as fast as possible, three steps at a time, each at a height of 15 cm. Time (t) taken to climb from the third to the ninth step was recorded in milliseecs. Anaerobic power was calculated as follows:

\[ \text{Anaerobic Power} = \frac{\text{Body weight in kg} \times \text{Distance in metres}}{\text{Time in secs}} \]

The result was expressed in kgmetre/sec.

Only 14 subjects undertook this test.
RESULTS

TABLE I: Effect of Yogic exercises on Aerobic Power (VO\textsubscript{2} Max. in Lt/Min) and Anaerobic Power (kg m/sec).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Before Yoga training</th>
<th>After Yoga training</th>
<th>t-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01.</td>
<td>VO\textsubscript{2} Max</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1.95 ±0.51</td>
<td>2.29 ±0.76</td>
<td>*P &lt; 0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02.</td>
<td>Margaria step Test</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>74.73 ±26.64</td>
<td>54.11 ±16.48</td>
<td>*P &lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = No. of subjects
* = Highly significant

OBSERVATION

After training there is a significant increase in Aerobic Power and a significant decrease in the Anaerobic Power.

DISCUSSION

A significant increase in the VO\textsubscript{2} max after Yogic Training indicates improved cardioregulatory efficiency (1, 2, 3, 4, 5).

Increase in VO\textsubscript{2} max is due to increased Oxygen consumption by the muscles as a result of Yogic practices (9), which in turn suggests increase in muscle blood flow. This may be due to a generalised decrease in vascular tone resulting from stimulation of parasympathetic activity during Yogic Training (10).

The Slow Twitch (ST) and Fast Twitch (FT) muscle fibres are classified further according to their metabolic activity into Slow Oxidative (SO), Fast Glycolytic (FG) and an intermediate type called Fast Oxidative Glycolytic (FOG) (8).

The SO fibres contribute to aerobic power, the FG fibres are responsible for anaerobic power (8), whereas the FOG fibres have the capacity for aerobic as well as anaerobic power. Percentage of SO fibres increases in endurance training (12). Conversion of FT fibres into ST fibres was observed in endurance training (11,14). It is suggested that this conversion takes place mainly in the intermediate fibre types (FOG), which by improving the Oxidative capacity contribute to increase in aerobic power (8). Perhaps a similar mechanism operates in present study leading to increase in aerobic power. Consequently, the total FT fibre activity decreases leading to a fall in anaerobic power.

REFERENCES