INTERVENTIONS
Articles testing the applied science and implementation of mindfulness-based interventions


Baker, V., Young, K., Wolfe, S. (2015). Incorporating and adapting shared experience of mindfulness into a service for men who have committed serious offences and who have significant personality difficulties. Probation Journal. [link]


Medvedev, O. N., Siegert, R. J., Kersten, P., Krägeloh, C. U. (2016). Rasch analysis of the Kentucky inventory of mindfulness skills. Mindfulness. [link]


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**METHODS**

Articles developing empirical procedures to advance the measurement and methodology of mindfulness

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**REVIEWS**

Articles reviewing content areas of mindfulness or conducting meta-analyses of published research

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**TRIALS**

Research studies newly funded by the National Institutes of Health (JAN 2016)

University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center (C. Vinci, PI). Applying mHealth to tobacco-related health disparities: Enhancing aspects of resiliency to aid cessation efforts. NIH/NIMHHD project #1K99MD010468-01. [link]

When women were confronted with partner attempts at control, coercion, and negativity/conflict, their cortisol levels took significantly longer to return to normal if they reported low levels of Curiosity. The less they adopted a stance of friendly curiosity towards their experience, the longer their bodies continued to register signs of stress. When men were confronted with partner emotional withdrawal, their cortisol levels took significantly longer to return to normal if they reported low levels of Decentering. Their bodies took longer to recover from stress when they failed to gain distance from their thoughts and feelings.

Mindfulness had no effect on cortisol recovery from verbal aggression, the most severe negative behavior measured for either men or women. Findings suggest that while mindfulness may help cope with mild negative behaviors, it is less protective against more severe forms of relationship conflict. Mindfulness didn’t moderate the overall intensity of stress response to these milder negative behaviors, but it did speed up the rate of recovery from them.

The study supports a role for heightened state mindfulness in helping couples recover from stress hormone reactivity during romantic conflict. The results may be of use in teaching couples mindfulness skills to better cope with mild-to-moderate relationship conflict in a manner that could have biological significance. Caution should be taken in generalizing these results to more severe relationship problems as this was a normal healthy cohort. In addition, a very large number of significance tests were performed in the course of this analysis, raising the possibility of spurious findings and the need for replication.

All romantic relationships have conflicts, and resolving them requires couples to remain calm and open as they explore their differences. This is easier said than done when couples are stressed and not always on their best behavior. Can mindfulness protect us from the stress resulting from negative behaviors during disagreements? Laurent, et al [Hormones and Behavior] investigated the relationship between state mindfulness, the stress hormone cortisol, and negative conflict behavior in couples who were discussing their differences.

The researchers recruited 88 heterosexual couples (predominantly Caucasian, average age = 21) who were in a relationship for at least 2 months, and had them engage in a 1 hour 45 minute long discussion of an unresolved relationship conflict. The researchers wanted a sample of the couples’ behaviors so that the hormonal and attitudinal correlates of those behaviors could be studied. The discussions were taped and coded for control, coerciveness, anger, negativity/conflict, verbal aggression, and emotional withdrawal.

After the discussion, partners completed the Toronto Mindfulness Scale, a measure of state mindfulness comprised of Curiosity (an attitude of openness towards experience) and Decentering (dis-identifying with experience). The researchers also drew five salivary cortisol samples at fixed time intervals before and after the relationship conflict discussions. Cortisol data was analyzed in terms of overall reactivity (a measure of stress intensity) and slope of recovery (a measure of how long it takes to return to normal after stress).
As we mature into old age, our ability to remain focused and quickly choose the correct response from a set of competing responses tends to diminish. Can mindfulness training help us retain our attention, executive control and emotional regulation as we age? Malinowski, et al [Mindfulness] randomly assigned mature adults to either mindfulness training or an active comparison group, and assessed the changes in their ability to perform a task that demanded focused attention, executive control, and emotional regulation while their brain activity was measured.

The researchers assigned a predominantly female cohort of 56 British older adults (average age = 64) to either mindfulness training or a “brain training” comparison condition. Mindfulness training entailed four 90-minute group-training sessions in breath-focused concentration meditation with instructions for maintaining a non-judgmental, non-elaborative attitude. Mindfulness trainees practiced meditation at home at least 10 minutes a day, five days a week, over 8 weeks.

The comparison condition met as a group for an equivalent amount of time. Both groups entailed psychoeducation, group discussion, and skills practice, but the “brain training” group practiced mental arithmetic instead of meditation, both in the groups and at home.

All participants completed the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) and a Stroop task, before and after training. The Stroop task required participants to count the number of words they saw that were presented on a computer screen. Sometimes the words’ meanings interfered with their counting (e.g., when the word “two” appeared three times) or had emotional connotations that could slow their processing speed. Participants needed to ignore the meanings and stay focused on the task.

Electroencephalography (EEG) concurrently measured the participants’ evoked response potentials (ERPs), which are brain waveforms generated specifically in response to the task.

Mindfulness trainees showed significant improvement on both their FFMQ Observing scores and their Stroop reaction times as compared to brain training trainees. Better Stroop reaction times were significantly correlated with larger fronto-central N2 ERP amplitudes (an electrical wave occurring approximately 200 milliseconds after words were presented), and mindfulness trainees showed significantly greater increases in N2 amplitudes than controls. These N2 ERPs originated in brain regions associated with attentional regulation, but not in regions associated with executive control or emotional processing.

While mindfulness improved reaction times generally, it didn’t specifically do so for incongruent or emotional word presentations. In other words, mindfulness training strengthened generic attention rather than specific executive functions involved in conflict resolution and emotional regulation.

This study shows significant improvements in attention and associated brain regions resulting from breath-focused mindfulness practice as compared to brain training in an older age group. These findings support mindfulness training as a means of improving attention in older adults; the study’s brevity of training and reliance on only a single training modality of breath concentration may account for the lack of any executive functioning/emotional regulation effects.
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Events & Conferences

Anxiety Study Group
Our center's professional staff is dedicated to the insights and meditative practices that dramatically reduce anxiety. We focus on three groups who are in transition stages of life: young adults; people in recovery; aging adults. We provide personal guidance to individuals and organizations and train and certify health professionals in our methods.

INFO: Go to: http://www.huntingtonmeditation.com or contact Dr. Richard Schaub at drrichardschaub@gmail.com

Research & Education

Seeking Mindfulness Practitioners for Survey
We are seeking mindfulness practitioners to complete online survey for mindfulness research. Please consider participating if you are currently taking or have ever completed a mindfulness meditation course, such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction. The purpose of this study is to help develop a new survey for mindfulness research. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to complete survey questions online now and again in two weeks. If you are interested in participating, please copy or click on the link provided below:

INFO: Survey link: https://redcap.vanderbilt.edu/surveys/?s=YM87WL844Y

Books & Media

NEW! The Science of Happiness
Drawing on the latest scientific research on happiness, resilience, willpower, compassion, and mindfulness, Stanford researcher Emma Seppala demonstrates that being happy is the most productive thing we can do for our personal and professional success, and shares practical strategies for increasing happiness in our daily lives. Her new book, THE HAPPINESS TRACK, is out now.


New Edited Mindfulness Volume
Mindfulness and Buddhist-Derived Approaches in Mental Health and Addiction: Edited by Edo Shonin, William Van Gordon and Mark D Griffiths, the volume provides a timely synthesis and discussion of recent developments in mindfulness research and practice within mental health and addiction domains.


Employment & Volunteer

No posts