Study reviews evidence for Vipassana meditation

A review by Chiesa (2010) published in *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* examined the empirical evidence from studies exploring the neurobiological and clinical findings associated with Vipassana Meditation (VM), which is a form of mindfulness meditation. Seven controlled and cross-sectional studies, which had controls, published in English were included in this review. The review identified multiple neuroimaging studies suggesting VM practice may be associated with activation in brain activity during meditation, and with actual structural change in the brain over time. Moreover, clinical studies using VM have shown its ability to reduce health-compromising behaviors such as substance abuse among high-risk populations. However, the author does emphasize the need for high-quality clinical trials to confirm these findings.

Reference:

Wellbeing increases in experienced meditators

Falkenström (2010) administered self-report measures to adult meditators to study the association between mindfulness and wellbeing using a quasi-experimental intervention. Participants, 48 of whom were on retreat and 28 not on retreat acting as controls, were recruited from two Vipassana meditation retreats, and had an average of 16.4 years of meditation experience. Self-reported mindfulness showed a strong correlation with wellbeing; however, findings diverged across mindfulness scales. Wellbeing also increased more in the retreat group than in the control group. Partial support was also found for mindfulness skills to increase during an intensive meditation retreat, and increases were positively associated with mindfulness.

Reference:

Mindfulness program treats irritable bowel syndrome

Ljótsson and colleagues (2010) tested the influence of a mindfulness program on Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) symptoms in a clinical context. Thirty-four adult...
patients, verified as having a valid IBS diagnosis by a physician, entered a 10-week CBT-treatment based on exposure and mindfulness exercises, and provided data at baseline, posttest, and six-month follow-up periods. Measures included a gastrointestinal symptom diary, self-report questionnaires covering quality of life, gastrointestinal specific anxiety, general functioning, and a psychiatric interview. At posttest, mean reduction in IBS symptoms indicated clinically significant improvement, and these treatment gains were maintained at six-month follow-up. Results also suggested improvements in social, familial and work-related functioning.

Reference:

Other new publications


The journal *Emotion* has dedicated its February issue to studies examining mindfulness in the context of emotions. This issue emphasized the importance of mindfulness practice on emotion. Richard Davidson opens the issue with a commentary that addresses several key methodological and conceptual issues in the empirical study of mindfulness. His commentary concludes with a consideration of aspects of emotion processing that are likely to be influenced by mindfulness, and he suggests that this journal issue is perhaps a harbinger of a promising area of future research. This commentary in *Emotion* introduces the following studies in the February issue:


**MBCT for people diagnosed with cancer**

Emotional distress is a common ailment for cancer patients, and it is important
that treatment consider the impact of these emotions. This study used a randomized controlled trial design and assigned 115 people diagnosed with cancer to either Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) treatment or a wait-list control condition. The MBCT treatment was an 8-week program that contained two-hour sessions conducted each week, which focused on mindfulness practices. Participants also attended a one-day session and were instructed to meditate one hour each day at home. Participants were assessed at baseline, 10 weeks later, and 3 months post treatment. The study found large and significant improvements in mindfulness, depression, anxiety, and distress for MBCT participants compared to those who had not received the training. A similar trend was also found for a quality of life measure. These findings suggest the importance of mindfulness practices to treat emotional distress among people diagnosed with cancer.

Reference:

Affective impact of mindfulness on minority children

Depression and anxiety are common ailments facing children and youth today. This study used an experimental design to compare children receiving a mindfulness intervention (MI) or a health education (HE) intervention on measures of depression and anxiety. Children (N=17) were recruited from a summer camp, and were from Caribbean and Central American countries. The MI used a program designed specifically for children by Mindful Schools, and consisted of 10 15-minute classes, one every day for two weeks. Results found that children in the MI showed reductions in depressive symptoms relative to children in the HE condition. Further, a trend (p=.07) indicated that anxiety showed greater decreases in the MI relative to the HE condition. Results suggest that mindfulness interventions tailored to children may decrease depressive symptoms in minority children. However, more studies are needed with a larger sample to determine the influence of MI treatment on anxiety.

Reference:

Emotion regulation, mindfulness and brain activity

Emotion regulation is an important part of handling distress in daily life. Mindfulness is considered as a self-regulatory process that can reduce negative affect. This study examined whether brain activity elicited during reappraisal would be modulated by differences in dispositional mindfulness in a sample of 80 participants who were new to meditation practice in a university setting. Functional MRI data were collected from participants who experienced three trials—viewing a neutral picture, viewing a negative picture, and reinterpretation of a negative picture. Results indicated that individual differences in mindfulness disposition modulated brain activity in cortical regions involved emotion regulation, and may suggest that more mindful individuals may be better at deploying top down appraisals that down-regulate amygdala activity.

Reference:
reappraisal of emotion. *Soc Cogn Affect Neurosci.* [link]

——

**Other new publications**


**Mindfulness Research Monthly**

provides monthly research updates in order to inform researchers and practitioners interested in the field of mindfulness, and is hosted by the:

Mindfulness Research Guide (MRG)

www.mindfulexperience.org
The April edition of the *Journal of Child and Family Studies* (JCFS) has dedicated a special issue to mindfulness research in the context of children and families. Guest editors Richard Hastings and Nirbhay Singh introduce the special issue, which contains 12 original articles and one book review. The articles are comprised of empirical reviews about the use of mindfulness-based interventions with children, adolescents and parents; data-driven papers providing outcome data from mindfulness-based interventions with youth and parents; and an interesting case report of the use of mindfulness with mothers in Palestine. The editors conclude that the field of mindfulness research appears to have “exploded and developed in sophistication over the course of the preparation of this special issue”. The following publications are included in the April issue of JCFS:


---

### Intervention and Application

The *Intervention and Application* section of Mindfulness Research Monthly (MRM) references studies that focus on the impact of mindfulness-based interventions and the feasibility of their application across diverse populations. Some key findings for this issue of MRM include: 1) Mindful Awareness Practices (MAPs) delivered in an 8-week 16 session format to children in second- and third-grade can improve executive functioning skills (Flook); (2) an 8-week randomized controlled trial of MBCT delivered to cancer patients showed medium effect size improvements in mindfulness, depression, anxiety, and distress (Foley); (3) an 8-week MBSR program including a 1-day retreat delivered to HIV positive adults living in Iran had positive effects on psychological status and CD4 count (Jam); and an 8-week MBSR program delivered to adults with various chronic pain conditions showed health-related quality of life (HRQoL) and psychological distress improvements, with effects varying by pain condition.


Mindfulness Research Monthly


---

Review and Meta-analysis

The Review and Meta-analysis section of MRM references publications that combine and synthesize studies, either statistically or theoretically, in an attempt to further knowledge in an area of mindfulness and related constructs. In this issue of MRM, one key study provides a review of meditation practices in medical settings (Fortney). The review provides a description of the SOLAR (stop, observe, let it be, and return) procedure, and provides a summary of some of the contents of consciousness and experiences involved while in mindfulness meditation. Further, the review provides resources and links to learn meditation and suggests some precautions and recommendations for meditation practice.


---

Etiology and Associations

Etiology and Associations references those studies that explore mindfulness as an empirical construct and examine its causes, outcomes and correlates in relation to biopsychosocial constructs. Some key findings in this issue of MRM include: (1) trait mindfulness was associated with diminished responses to laboratory stressors in clinically anxious and non-anxious samples (Arch); (2) mindfulness but not private self-consciousness was a positive predictor of vitality and stress resistance in a sample of Iranian university students (Ghorbani); and (3) a non-judgment component of mindfulness inversely related to PTSD avoidance symptoms (Thompson).


emotion regulation. *Neuroimage, 50*(2), 734-41. [link]


---

**Method and Measures**

*Method and Measures* references studies developing psychometric tools to measure mindfulness and those focusing on study design and methodology in mindfulness research. Some key findings in MRM this week include: (1) the development and psychometric testing of the mindfulness-based relapse prevention adherence and competence scale (Chawla); (2) an exploration of the psychometric properties of the French version of the Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Skills (Nicastro); (3) and the development of the new Nonattachment Scale (NAS; Sahdra).


2. Nicastro, R., Jermann, F., Bondolfi, G. et al. (2010). Assessment of mindfulness with the French version of the Kentucky inventory of mindfulness skills in community and
borderline personality disorder samples. 
*Assessment*, 1-9. [link]


Hot Topics: Special issue on mindfulness treatment in addiction recovery

The latest edition of Substance Abuse has devoted a special issue to mindfulness-related treatments in the context of addiction recovery. This Part 2 is a continuation of a special issue that began in Vol. 30(4), which was published in 2009. Editors Aleksandra Zgierska and Marianne Marcus open the 2010 special issue, which contains five original research articles. These articles present findings resulting from several different applications of mindfulness treatments for substance abuse and its associated sequelae. The following articles are included in this issue of Substance Abuse:


Intervention and Application

The Intervention and Application section of Mindfulness Research Monthly (MRM) references studies that focus on the use of mindfulness-based treatments and the feasibility of their application across diverse populations. Key articles identified in this area include:


---

**Review and Meta-analysis**

The Review and Meta-analysis section of MRM references publications that combine and synthesize studies, either statistically or theoretically, in an attempt to further knowledge in an area of mindfulness and related areas. Key articles identified in this area include:


Etiology and Associations

Etiology and Associations references those studies that explore mindfulness as an empirical construct and examine its causes, outcomes and correlates in relation to biopsychosocial constructs. Key articles identified in this area include:


Theory and Processes

Theory and Processes references studies examining the principles and mechanisms underlying how mindfulness is developed and how it functions in relation to human health, behavior, cognition, and emotion. Key articles identified in this area include:


Method and Measures

Method and Measures references studies developing psychometric and implementation tools to measure and implement mindfulness, and those focusing on study design and methodology in mindfulness research. Key articles identified in this area include:


Mindfulness Research Monthly provides monthly research updates in order to inform researchers and practitioners interested in the field of mindfulness, and is hosted by the:

Mindfulness Research Guide - MRG
www.mindfulexperience.org
Empirical interest in mindfulness by Western science continues to blossom; this science stems from a rich history based in Eastern psychology. As early as the 1930’s, and continuing into the 1960’s, Western philosophy and psychological science had suggested the utility of Eastern psychology constructs in developing health and wellbeing among humans (see Lesh, 1970). Beginning around 1970, well-recognized peer-reviewed journals initiated a new era of science dedicated to documenting the empirical investigation of these psychological constructs (Allison, 1970; Wallace, 1970). Currently, one specific construct deriving from this eastern tradition, mindfulness, has gained increasing empirical attention since 1970.

To illustrate the publishing history of mindfulness since 1970, I have developed a Figure that depicts the frequency of mindfulness citations published by year from 1970 until the end of 2009, thus referencing about a 40-year empirical history of the construct. The construct term “mindfulness” was searched for in 3 different databases including (1) ISI Web of Knowledge, (2) ProQuest, and (3) Illumina. Searches were refined to include only those citations in the English language. Magazine and newspaper citations were excluded.

Figure 1 indicates that initial empirical publications on mindfulness started in the 1970’s, remained relatively low through the 1980’s, and grew quickly after the 1990’s. The peak shown in the mid-80’s gives an initial indication that empirical interest in mindfulness was growing, and these studies began testing the association between mindfulness and health (Kabat-Zinn, 1982, 1985; Kratter & Hogan, 1982; Boorstein, 1983; Langer et al., 1984; Brown et al., 1984; Delmonte, 1985). During the first decade of the 21st century, trends showed an almost exponential increase in mindfulness publications. In the year 2009, the number of mindfulness publications ranged anywhere between 100-360, depending on the electronic search engine used. The slight negative slope at the end of 2009 for ISI and ProQuest most likely suggests that more recent publications had not been posted on the electronic servers.
Considering these trends, two main lines of evidence suggest that mindfulness publications will continue to blossom. First, several special journal issues have been dedicated to mindfulness over the past year, and the Mindfulness journal has recently been established. Second, mindfulness-based research is one core agenda for funding allotment on a national level. From 2008 to 2010, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) alone funded 102 grant proposals related to mindfulness-based research with awards ranging in size from $18,000 to $1.2 million each. This national underwriting and additional journal space will contribute to advancing mindfulness research publications.

References:


---

**Intervention and Application**

The *Intervention and Application* section of Mindfulness Research Monthly (MRM) references studies that focus on the use of mindfulness-based treatments and the feasibility of their application across diverse populations. Key articles identified in this area include:


---

**Review and Meta-analysis**

The *Review and Meta-analysis* section of MRM references publications that combine and synthesize studies, either statistically or theoretically, in an attempt to further knowledge in an area of mindfulness and related areas. Key articles identified in this area include:


---

**Etiology and Associations**

*Etiology and Associations* references those studies that explore mindfulness as an empirical construct and examine its causes, outcomes and correlates in relation to biopsychosocial constructs. Key articles identified in this area include:


---

**Theory and Processes**

*Theory and Processes* references studies examining the principles and mechanisms underlying how mindfulness is developed and how it functions in relation to human health, behavior, cognition, and emotion. Key articles identified in this area include:


---

**Method and Measures**

*Method and Measures* references studies developing psychometric and implementation tools to measure and implement mindfulness, and those focusing on study design and methodology in mindfulness research. Key articles identified in this area include:

1. No studies identified for this issue; *researchers are urged to publish in this area.*

---

_Mindfulness Research Monthly_ provides monthly research updates in order to inform researchers and practitioners interested in the field of mindfulness, and is hosted by the:

Mindfulness Research Guide
www.mindfulexperience.org
Issue content:

40 new studies provided in this issue, including:

19 Intervention and Application studies
9 Review and Meta-analysis studies
9 Etiology and Associations studies
2 Theory and Processes studies
1 Method and Measures study

Intervention and Application

The Intervention and Application section of Mindfulness Research Monthly (MRM) references studies that focus on the use of mindfulness-based treatments and the feasibility of their application across diverse populations. Key articles identified in this area include:


physiological mechanisms implicated in alcohol dependence: Results of a randomized controlled pilot trial. *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs, 42*(2). [link]


---

**Review and Meta-analysis**

The *Review and Meta-analysis* section of MRM references publications that combine and synthesize studies, either statistically or theoretically, in an attempt to further knowledge in an area of mindfulness and related areas. Key articles identified in this area include:


---

**Etiology and Associations**

*Etiology and Associations* references those studies that explore mindfulness as an empirical construct and examine its causes, outcomes and correlates in relation to biopsychosocial constructs. Key articles identified in this area include:


**Theory and Processes**

*Theory and Processes* references studies examining the principles and mechanisms underlying how mindfulness is developed and how it functions in relation to human health, behavior, cognition, and emotion. Key articles identified in this area include:


---

**Method and Measures**

*Method and Measures* references studies developing psychometric and implementation tools to measure and implement mindfulness, and those focusing on study design and methodology in mindfulness research. Key articles identified in this area include:

Issue content:

31 new studies provided in this issue, including:

8 Intervention and Application studies
2 Review and Meta-analysis studies
13 Etiology and Associations studies
7 Theory and Processes studies
1 Method and Measures study

---

**Intervention and Application**

The Intervention and Application section of Mindfulness Research Monthly (MRM) references studies that focus on the use of mindfulness-based treatments and the feasibility of their application across diverse populations. Key articles identified in this area include:


---

**Review and Meta-analysis**

The *Review and Meta-analysis* section of MRM references publications that combine and synthesize studies, either statistically or theoretically, in an attempt to further knowledge in mindfulness and related areas. Key articles identified in this area include:


---

**Etiology and Associations**

*Etiology and Associations* references those studies that explore mindfulness as an empirical construct and examine its causes, outcomes and correlates in relation to biopsychosocial constructs. Key articles identified in this area include:


Sleep and Biological Rhythms, 8(1), 34-41. [link]


---

**Theory and Processes**

*Theory and Processes* references studies examining the principles and mechanisms underlying how mindfulness is developed and how it functions in relation to human health, behavior, cognition, and emotion. Key articles identified in this area include:


7. Stelter, R. (2010). Experience-Based, body-anchored qualitative research interviewing. *Qualitative Health Research, 20(6), 859-67. [link]*

---

**Method and Measures**

*Method and Measures* references studies developing psychometric and implementation tools to measure and implement mindfulness, and those focusing on study design and methodology in mindfulness research. Key articles identified in this area include:

Mindfulness Research Monthly provides monthly research updates in order to inform researchers and practitioners interested in the field of mindfulness, and is hosted by the:

Mindfulness Research Guide
www.mindfulexperience.org
MINDFULNESS RESEARCH MONTHLY

Vol. 1 ♦ Num. 8

September 2010

David S. Black, M.P.H.

Issue content:

35 new studies provided in this issue, including:

14 Intervention and Application studies

12 Review and Meta-analysis studies

5 Etiology and Associations studies

2 Theory and Processes studies

2 Method and Measures study

Intervention and Application

The Intervention and Application section of Mindfulness Research Monthly (MRM) references studies that focus on the use of mindfulness-based treatments and the feasibility of their application across diverse populations. Key articles identified in this area include:


**Review and Meta-analysis**

The Review and Meta-analysis section of MRM references publications that combine and synthesize studies, either statistically or theoretically, in an attempt to further knowledge in mindfulness and related areas. Key articles identified in this area include:


health indications. *Primary Care*, 37(2), 213-236. [link]


---

**Etiology and Associations**

*Etiology and Associations* references those studies that explore mindfulness as an empirical construct and examine its causes, outcomes and correlates in relation to biopsychosocial constructs. Key articles identified in this area include:


---

**Theory and Processes**

Theory and Processes references studies examining the principles and mechanisms underlying how mindfulness is developed and how it functions in relation to human health, behavior, cognition, and emotion. Key articles identified in this area include:


---

**Method and Measures**

Method and Measures references studies developing psychometric and implementation tools to measure and implement mindfulness, and those focusing on study design and methodology in mindfulness.
research. Key articles identified in this area include:


**Mindfulness Research Monthly**

provides monthly research updates in order to inform researchers and practitioners interested in the field of mindfulness, and is hosted by the:

Mindfulness Research Guide
www.mindfulexperience.org

--

**Notice of Upcoming Special Event**

The Susan G. Komen for the Cure presents

The Lynn Lectures:
Mindfulness & Integrative Medicine Lecture Series featuring

Jon Kabat-Zinn, Ph.D.

Letting Everything Become Your Teacher:
The Healing Power of Mindfulness

Date: Wednesday, October 6, 2010
Location: University of California Los Angeles

For more information go to:

http://www.komenlacounty.org/about-us/affiliate-spotlight/lynn-lectures.html
**Issue content:**

- **40** new studies provided in this issue, including:
  - **15** Intervention and Application studies
  - **10** Review and Meta-analysis studies
  - **8** Etiology and Associations studies
  - **3** Theory and Processes studies
  - **4** Method and Measures studies

---

**Intervention and Application**

The Intervention and Application section of Mindfulness Research Monthly (MRM) references studies that focus on the use of mindfulness-based treatments and the feasibility of their application across diverse populations.


5. Garretson, K. (2010). Being allowing and yet directive: Mindfulness meditation in the teaching of developmental reading and writing. *New Directions for Community Colleges, Fall*(151), 51-64. [link]


---

**Review and Meta-analysis**

*Review and Meta-analysis* references publications that combine and synthesize studies, either statistically or theoretically, in an attempt to further knowledge in mindfulness and related areas.


---

### Etiology and Associations

_Etiology and Associations_ references studies that explore mindfulness as an empirical construct and examine its causes, outcomes and correlates in relation to biopsychosocial constructs.


---

### Theory and Processes

_Theory and Processes_ references studies examining the principles and mechanisms underlying how mindfulness is developed and how it functions in relation to human health, behavior, cognition, and emotion.


**Method and Measures**

*Method and Measures* references studies developing psychometric and implementation tools to measure and implement mindfulness, and those focusing on study design and methodology in mindfulness research.


**Mindfulness Research Monthly** provides monthly research updates in order to inform researchers and practitioners interested in the field of mindfulness. MRM is hosted by the:

Mindfulness Research Guide
www.mindfulexperience.org
Issue content:

32 new studies provided in this issue, including:

14 Intervention and Application studies
6 Review and Meta-analysis studies
6 Etiology and Associations studies
5 Theory and Processes studies
1 Method and Measures study

Intervention and Application

The Intervention and Application section of Mindfulness Research Monthly (MRM) references studies that focus on the use of mindfulness-based treatments and the feasibility of their application across diverse populations. Key articles identified in this area include:


vs cognitive behaviour therapy as a treatment for non-melancholic depression. *Journal of Affective Disorders.* [link]


---

### Review and Meta-analysis

The *Review and Meta-analysis* section of MRM references publications that combine and synthesize studies, either statistically or theoretically, in an attempt to further knowledge in mindfulness and related areas. Key articles identified in this area include:


---

### Etiology and Associations

*Etiology and Associations* references those studies that explore mindfulness as an empirical construct and examine its causes, outcomes and correlates in relation to biopsychosocial constructs. Key articles identified in this area include:


---

### Theory and Processes

*Theory and Processes* references studies examining the principles and mechanisms underlying how mindfulness is developed and how it functions in relation to human health, behavior, cognition, and emotion. Key articles identified in this area include:


---


---

### Method and Measures

*Method and Measures* references studies developing psychometric and implementation tools to measure and implement mindfulness, and those focusing on study design and methodology in mindfulness research. Key articles identified in this area include:


Mindfulness Research Guide

www.mindfulexperience.org
Issue content:

27 new studies provided in this issue, including:

12 Intervention and Application studies
5 Review and Meta-analysis studies
5 Etiology and Associations studies
5 Theory and Processes studies
0 Method and Measures study

Intervention and Application

The Intervention and Application section of Mindfulness Research Monthly (MRM) references studies that focus on the use of mindfulness-based treatments and the feasibility of their application across diverse populations. Key articles identified in this area include:


Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 38, 985-94. [link]


**Review and Meta-analysis**

The **Review and Meta-analysis** section of MRM references publications that combine and synthesize studies, either statistically or theoretically, in an attempt to further knowledge in mindfulness and related areas. Key articles identified in this area include:


**Etiology and Associations**

**Etiology and Associations** references those studies that explore mindfulness as an empirical construct and examine its causes, outcomes and correlates in relation to biopsychosocial constructs. Key articles identified in this area include:


---

**Theory and Processes**

*Theory and Processes* references studies examining the principles and mechanisms underlying how mindfulness is developed and how it functions in relation to human health, behavior, cognition, and emotion. Key articles identified in this area include:


---

**Method and Measures**

*Method and Measures* references studies developing psychometric and implementation tools to measure and implement mindfulness, and those focusing on study design and methodology in mindfulness research. Key articles identified in this area include:

1. No publications in this area.

---

*Mindfulness Research Monthly* provides monthly research updates in order to inform researchers and practitioners interested in the field of mindfulness, and is hosted by the:

Mindfulness Research Guide
www.mindfulexperience.org