**INTERVENTIONS**

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


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**ASSOCIATIONS**

**Articles examining the correlation and mechanism between mindfulness and other variables**

Vajrayana and Theravada meditative practices. *PLoS ONE*, 9(7), e102990. [link]


METHODS

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


REVIEWS

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


TRIALS

Research studies newly funded by the National Institutes of Health (AUG 2014)


University of Massachusetts Medical School (J. Brewer, PI). Augmenting mindfulness training through experience-driven neurofeedback devices. NIH/NCCAM project #5R01AT007922-03. [link]

VA Puget Sound Healthcare Center (D. Kearney, PI). A trial of loving-kindness meditation and cognitive processing therapy for PTSD. Veterans Affairs project #1101CX000857-01A2. [link]

Yale University (H. Kober, PI). Regulation of craving: Brief neurocognitive training and neural mechanisms. NIH/NIDA project #2P50DA009241-21. [link]
The Default Mode Network (DMN) is a functional network of interconnected anatomical brain structures. DMN interconnected structures are typically activated during mind-wandering and deactivated during periods of mindful awareness. Prior research has shown that meditators often have increased DMN gray matter density and decreased DMN connectivity compared to non-meditators. “Connectivity” is the degree to which the different DMN regions work together in concert.

Wang et al. [Neuroscience] explored the relationship between DMN connectivity while undergoing functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) and trait mindfulness as measured by the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale in 245 Beijing college students. Participants were asked to relax with eyes closed and remain still while undergoing the fMRI scan, which is a mundane procedure that usually evokes mind-wandering and DMN activity.

The researchers found that greater connectivity between the thalamus and the posterior cingulate cortex — two important DMN-connected anatomical structures — was associated with lower mindfulness. The thalamus appeared to be the key structure driving this relationship. This makes sense, as the thalamus is a crucial structure in both the DMN and the ascending reticular activating system (ARAS) — a competing brain network that plays an important role in wakefulness, attention, and vigilance.

The authors suggest that one can think of the thalamus as a switch that shifts the brain back and forth between mindfulness and mind-wandering. The greater the interconnectivity between the thalamus and the other DMN structures, however, the harder it may be to achieve mindful focus on the present moment. The thalamus is itself a complex structure containing multiple nuclei, and future research is needed to specify which regions are most involved.

Insomnia affects up to 20% of the U.S. population, and sufferers present with difficulties in both falling asleep and staying asleep. Drugs used to treat insomnia often have undesirable side effects including substance dependency and memory impairment. Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) can help, but less than half of all insomnia sufferers treated with CBT achieve full remission.

Ong et al. [Sleep] tailored a mindfulness-based therapy for insomnia (MBTI) modeled on MBSR. The program targets psychophysiological hyperarousal and includes behavioral strategies often used in CBT when applied to insomnia. Fifty-four patients meeting diagnostic criteria for chronic insomnia and reporting elevated pre-sleep arousal were randomly assigned to one of two mindfulness-based interventions (MBSR or MBTI) or an 8-week self-monitoring (SM) control. All participants kept a sleep diary and rated the severity of their insomnia and pre-sleep arousal. Objective measures of sleep quality were also obtained through polysomnography (laboratory monitoring of brain rhythm, eye movement, and muscle tone) and wrist actigraphy (a measure of nighttime movement using a watch-like device worn on the wrist).

Both the MBSR and MBTI groups showed significant reductions in total self-reported awake time when compared with the control group. The combined meditation groups reduced self-reported time awake by 44 minutes per night, while the control group reported a reduction of only 1 minute per night. The combined groups also showed significantly greater reductions in self-rated pre-sleep arousal and significantly greater improvement in self-rated insomnia severity than the controls. Effect sizes were moderate to large. Treatment response rates — as defined by at least a 7-point decline in self-rated insomnia severity — were 60% (MBTI), 39% (MBSR) and 0% (SM), respectively. MBTI response rates continued to improve up to six-month follow-up, whereas MBSR treatment response remained constant over time. Study groups did not differ from each other on the objective measures.

This study is in line with prior research showing a greater effect of mindfulness practice on self-report measures than on objective measures of sleep. While the discrepancy between self-report and objective measurement of sleep needs further examination, it is the subjective perception of insomnia that drives patients to seek treatment, and thus self-report is an important measure of clinical improvement.
Submit your announcements online at www.mindfulexperience.org/announcements.php

Categories: Events & Conferences, Research & Education, Books & Media, and Employment & Volunteer

Events & Conferences

Mindfulness at Work 2014 UK

The 2014 Mindfulness at Work conference, co-organised by Cranfield University and Mindfulnet.org, will be held at Cranfield University on 23rd September 2014. 29 international thought-leaders will share their cutting-edge work in Mindfulness practice, business, research, and policy. By combining these distinct perspectives, participants will be able to generate the most comprehensive evidence base for mindfulness at work to date, and apply it to their workplaces. Book by 23rd July to secure Early Bird Discount.

INFO: Contact jutta.tobias@cranfield.ac.uk

MBSR Class in Los Angeles

Announcing MBSR classes starting September 2014 in West Los Angeles and Manhattan Beach.

INFO: Call 323-447-8372 for more information.

Compassion Week 2014 - San Francisco

Hosted by Stanford University’s Center for Compassion & Altruism Research and Education, the Tenzin Gyatso Institute, and The Charter for Compassion, with lead sponsorship from Dignity Health. Compassion Week events integrate the science and practice of compassion, including conferences on the Science of Compassion; Compassion & Healthcare; and Empathy & Compassion in Society. The week concludes with the Charter for Compassion Day and Living Compassionately Retreat. November 10-16, 2014.


Buddhism and Science Conference

Pathways to a Healthy Mind is the topic for the fourth annual Buddhism and Science Conference, October 7-9, 2014. Researchers will present on the impact of meditation practices on behavior and the mindbrain. Meditation master Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, will lead group meditations.

INFO: More info at: serenityridge.ligmincha.org

Research & Education

Practicing Safety Mothers in Drug Treatment

The Children’s Bureau has awarded an Abandoned Infants Assistance funding to “Practicing Safety Mindfulness Project for Mothers in Drug Treatment”, Diane J. Abatemarco, PhD, MSW at Nemours Children’s Health System. This project provides integrated services to improve parenting in a population of pregnant and parenting women who are in outpatient treatment for opiate addiction. The multifaceted intervention includes a demonstrated quality improvement arm at the pediatric practice “Practicing Safety”, a Mindfulness Based Parenting course, and enhanced case management. Study outcomes evaluate child health outcomes; child development screening; parenting behavior and stress; and parental mindfulness.

INFO: http://aia.berkeley.edu/aia-projects/directory/psmdt/

FocusBand Assists with Mindfulness Validation

By validating your brain wave frequencies with the FocusBand, you are able to quickly and effectively focus on the moment. Using
affordable EEG technology that is continuous and real-time, the FocusBand is a tool to improve cognitive skills.

INFO: Visit: http://www.ifocusband.com

Books & Media

Mindful Leadership: the book

In this book, Wibo Koole, a long standing corporate leadership expert and management consultant, and director of the Center for Mindfulness in Amsterdam provides the first comprehensive framework for mindfulness-based leadership and teamwork. Full of insights and exercises that teach leaders how to practice mindfulness, and how to create a mindful corporate culture. The book has quickly become the starting point of ongoing research in psychology and business leadeership.

INFO: Available on Amazon at http://amzn.com/9492004003

Contemplative Education Website

This new website provides a virtual commons for connecting, collaborating and sharing for those involved with mindfulness and other forms of contemplative education. Registration is free. You can post full information (c.v., links to your work, websites, etc.) as well as notices of publications, events and much else. Non-members can search the site.

INFO: Go to: http://www.contemplativeeducation.ca

Employment & Volunteer

Post your announcements here!