

Contents

65 New Cites p1

27 Interventions

16 Associations

3 Methods

19 Reviews

0 Trials

Highlights p5

Editor-in-Chief

David S. Black, PhD, MPH

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Seth Segall, PhD

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INTERVENTIONS

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

Amaro, H., Cortés, D. E., Garcia, S.,...Black, D. S. (2017). **Video-based grocery shopping intervention effect on purchasing behaviors among Latina shoppers.** *American Journal of Public Health.* [\[link\]](#)

Arif, M., Sadlier, M., Rajenderkumar, D.,...Tahir, T. (2017). **A randomised controlled study of mindfulness meditation versus relaxation therapy in the management of tinnitus.** *The Journal of Laryngology and Otology.* [\[link\]](#)

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Gallo, R., Chiorri, C., Gasparini, G.,...Parodi, A. (2017). **Can mindfulness-based interventions improve the quality of life of patients with moderate/severe alopecia areata? A prospective pilot study.** *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology.* [\[link\]](#)

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MacDonald, L. A., Minahan, C. L. (2017). **Mindfulness training attenuates the increase in salivary cortisol concentration associated with competition in highly trained wheelchair-basketball players.** *Journal Sports Sciences.* [\[link\]](#)

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Contents

65 New Cites p1

27 Interventions

16 Associations

3 Methods

19 Reviews

0 Trials

Highlights p5

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Miller, M. M., Brannon, L. A. (2017). **Testing mindfulness-based acceptance against implementation intentions to discourage counterintentional cell phone use.** *Mindfulness*. [link]

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Tarrasch, R., Margalit-Shalom, L., Berger, R. (2017). **Enhancing visual perception and motor accuracy among school children through a mindfulness and compassion program.** *Frontiers in Psychology*. [link]

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Articles examining the correlates and mechanisms of mindfulness

Beks, R. B., Mellema, J. J., Menendez, M. E.,...Vranceanu, A. M. (2017). **Does mindfulness correlate with physical function and pain intensity in patients with upper extremity illness? HAND.** [link]

Bluth, K., Roberson, P. N., Girdler, S. S. (2017). **Adolescent sex differences in response to a mindfulness intervention: A call for research.** *Journal of Child and Family Studies*. [link]

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Contents

65 New Cites p1

27 Interventions

16 Associations

3 Methods

19 Reviews

0 Trials

Highlights p5

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Gamboa Arana, O. L., Garcia-Campayo, J., Mueller, T., Von Wegner, F. (2017). **Suppress to forget: The effect of a mindfulness-based strategy during an emotional item-directed forgetting paradigm.** *Frontiers in Psychology.* [link]

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Russell, L., Orellana, L., Ugalde, A.,...Livingston, P. M. (2017). **Exploring knowledge, attitudes, and practice associated with meditation among patients with melanoma.** *Integrative Cancer Therapies.* [link]

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METHODS

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

Anderson, R., Rycroft-Malone, J., Gradinger, F.,...Kuyken, W. (2017). **Accessibility and implementation in the UK NHS services of an effective depression relapse prevention programme: Learning from MBCT through a mixed-methods study.** *Implementation Science.* [link]

Hartigan, B. F. (2017). **Mindfulness in teacher education: A constructivist approach to stress reduction for teacher candidates and their students.** *Childhood Education.* [link]

Trube, B. (2017). **Mindfulness practices in mentoring and teaching.** *Childhood Education.* [link]

REVIEWS

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

Contents

65 New Cites p1

27 Interventions

16 Associations

3 Methods

19 Reviews

0 Trials

Highlights p5

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Bliss, S. A. (2017). **Exploring shunyata (emptiness) and the cultivation of mindfulness practices: Educators finding their zero-point balance.** *Childhood Education.* [\[link\]](#)

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Harris, K. I. (2017). **A teacher's journey to mindfulness: Opportunities for joy, hope, and compassion.** *Childhood Education.* [\[link\]](#)

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Kielty, M. L., Gilligan, T. D., Staton, A. R. (2017). **Whole-school approaches to incorporating mindfulness-based interventions: Supporting the capacity for optimal functioning in school settings.** *Childhood Education.* [\[link\]](#)

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Shiyko, M. P., Hallinan, S., Naito, T. (2017). **Effects of mindfulness training on posttraumatic growth: A systematic review and meta-analysis.** *Mindfulness.* [\[link\]](#)

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Smith, G. D. (2017). **An introduction to mindfulness in irritable bowel syndrome.** *Gastrointestinal Nursing.* [\[link\]](#)

Tapper, K. (2017). **Can mindfulness influence weight management related eating behaviors? If so, how?** *Clinical Psychology Review.* [\[link\]](#)

Wood, K., Lawrence, M., Jani, B.,...Mercer, S. W. (2017). **Mindfulness-based interventions in epilepsy: A systematic review.** *BMC Neurology.* [\[link\]](#)

TRIALS

Research studies newly funded by the National Institutes of Health (MAR 2017)

None reported.

Contents

65 New Cites p1

27 Interventions

16 Associations

3 Methods

19 Reviews

0 Trials

Highlights p5

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HIGHLIGHTS

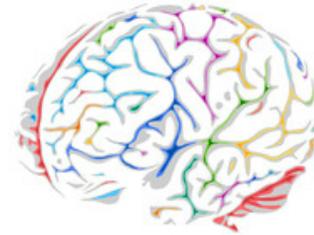
A summary of select studies from the issue, providing a snapshot of some of the latest research

Mindfulness training has been shown to improve performance on behavioral measures of executive control including attention, working memory, emotional and cognitive control, and decision making. Research also suggests that a brain region known as the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (dlPFC) plays an important role in executive control, serving as the hub of an executive control brain network. The dlPFC has rich anatomical connections to other brain regions that are also thought to be involved in executive control. Does mindfulness training assist executive control by improving the way the dlPFC interrelates with these other brain regions?

One way to test this is by assessing resting state functional connectivity between the dlPFC and other brain regions. Resting state functional connectivity is a measure of how much different brain regions work in tandem. For example, when one region increases activity, other brain regions act in sync with it. **Taren et al. [Psychosomatic Medicine]** tested whether mindfulness training increases the functional connectivity between the dlPFC and other executive control brain regions by comparing functional connectivity after either mindfulness training or relaxation training in a randomized, controlled study.

The researchers randomly assigned 35 unemployed, job-seeking adults (average age = 40; 57% male; 66% Caucasian) who reported high levels of stress to either an intensive 3-day residential mindfulness training, or an intensive 3-day residential relaxation training. Mindfulness training was a condensed version of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction that included body scanning, sitting, walking, and eating meditations, and mindful yoga. Relaxation training included resting while walking and stretching and didactic presentations, but did not include progressive muscle relaxation. All participants underwent

functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) both at baseline and two weeks after training. The fMRI sessions included a five-minute period when participants passively viewed a nearly empty computer screen with just a cross in the center while neither relaxing nor meditating. Resting state functional connectivity was assessed during this period.



The results showed that mindfulness training increased functional connectivity between the dlPFC and five different brain regions associated with cognitive control (the left superior parietal lobule, right supplementary eye field, right middle frontal gyrus, right inferior frontal gyrus, and left middle temporal/angular gyrus) significantly more than did relaxation training. Mindfulness participants showed no relative decreases in functional connectivity between the dlPFC and any of the brain regions as compared to relaxation training participants.

Findings show that mindfulness training increases functional connectivity between the dlPFC and other specific brain regions involved in executive control. This contributes to our knowledge of how mindfulness may enhance attention, working memory and other executive control functions through increasing functional connections between brain regions. Future research can determine whether there is a relationship between these functional changes and the structural differences reported in studies of long-term meditators. The study is limited by its failure to include behavioral measures of executive control to test if they varied with changes in functional connectivity.

People tend to be happiest when their career and relationship goals align with their motivations. The problem is that people often have relatively little awareness of their unconscious motives. We can infer the existence of unconscious motives based on how a person behaves, but people are rarely able to recognize or

Contents

65 New Cites p1

27 Interventions

16 Associations

3 Methods

19 Reviews

0 Trials

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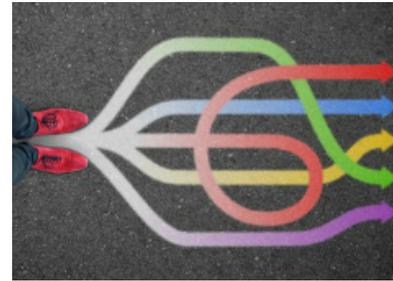
describe these motives. Unconscious motives are formed early in life and tend to be poorly integrated with higher mental processes. Prior research suggests, however, that people who are highly aware of their internal body sensations are also more likely to be aware of their unconscious motives. Could then a mindfulness exercise that increases body awareness also increase awareness of unconscious motives?

Strick et al [Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin] tested this possibility by first assessing people's unconscious motives, and then having them select and rate a set of goals after engaging in either a mindfulness practice called the body scan or a control activity.

Sixty college students (mean age = 22; 75% female) attended a series of three experimental sessions. In the first session, participants made up stories in response to pictures depicting social situations. The content of their stories was then rated by the researchers for the presence of implicit wishes for *affiliation* (the wish to pursue and maintain relationships) and *power* (the wish to control and influence others). The participants also rated their conscious desires for affiliation and power using a self-report measure.

In the second session, participants were randomly assigned to either a body scan or control activity. Body scan participants listened to a brief (12-14 minutes) digitally recorded guided body scan in which they were instructed to mindfully attend to body sensations. Control participants read magazines for the same length of time. Participants were then asked to imagine starting a new job and select the goals they would like to pursue from a list of *affiliation* (e.g., "I would like to work in a team") and *power* (e.g., "I would want to act self-confident") goals. Participants then rated the selected goals for how true they were for them. Following this, participants were asked to choose from another list of affiliation and power goals, but this time to vividly imagine how pursuing those goals might make them feel before selecting and rating them. Finally participants rated how aware they were of their bodily sensations. Two months later, participants returned for a third session in which those previously assigned to do the body scan now read magazines, and vice versa. During this third

session, participants selected and rated their goals in a new scenario involving imagining beginning to attend a new school.



The body scan effectively increased participants' ratings of bodily awareness. Unconscious affiliation motives significantly predicted participants' goal selections and ratings after the body scan, but not after reading magazines. In other words, unconscious *affiliation* motives led to selecting more affiliation goals, but only after the body scan manipulation. On the other hand, when the participants were later asked to vividly imagine their selections, the relationship between their unconscious motives and their goal selections disappeared. In contrast to affiliation motives, unconscious *power* motives did not affect power goal selection or ratings. Measures of unconscious and conscious motivation did not correlate with each other. Conscious affiliation motives were a better predictor of goal selection in the control condition than in the body scan condition, whereas unconscious affiliation motives were a better predictor of goal selection in the body scan condition than in the controls.

In summary, the findings show that the body scan enhances the influence of unconscious affiliation motives on goal selection, thereby better aligning goals with unconscious motives. However, this effect is either fleeting or easily counteracted because it disappeared when the participants vividly imagined pursuing their goals.

The research adds to our knowledge of whether and under what circumstances a mindfulness practice may increase access to unconscious mental processes. It also suggests a role for mindfulness in improving decision making around personal goals. The study is limited by the brevity of its mindfulness task and the fact that it was offered as a stand-alone task without accompanying mindfulness education.



EVALUATION OF A **MINDFULNESS GAME**

AN **ONLINE STUDY** FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF THE
SUNSHINE COAST, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA.

This research evaluates the efficacy and user experience of a digital game for mindfulness. The mindfulness game was developed using existing research evidence and several new studies conducted by the research team of Jacek Sliwinski, Prof. Christian Jones and Prof. Mary Katsikitis.

In this game, you will control an avatar through a virtual world to collect objects and dodge obstacles. Be the first to play the game and share your opinion on how it can be improved. Furthermore, the player who achieves the highest score in the game wins a surprise gift.

You can play the game on your browser, anywhere that is convenient for you. Currently, only desktop users with Chrome or Firefox are supported. The game takes 15 minutes to complete, excluding pre- and post-test.

To participate visit www.mindfulgaming.org/improve

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