

M. Hernandez, C. Gannon, C.M. Ko, F. Grace, L.E. Olson. *Impact of One-Day Mindfulness Intervention on Mindfulness and State Anxiety*. Western Psychological Association Annual Meeting, Portland, OR, 2013.

Abstract

Research has shown that mindfulness interventions are helpful in the treatment of anxiety. Mindfulness entails intentionally focusing a person's attention on internal and external experiences occurring at the moment. This nonjudgmental practice allows the person to fully experience emotions. The goal of this exploratory, pilot study was to determine the efficacy of a mindfulness intervention and to test the physiological and psychological assessments related to stress and psychological well-being in a healthy college population since it has been shown that stress impacts health, academic performance and retention. Only 10 undergraduate students between the ages of 18-24 were recruited to participate. These students participated in an eight-hour mindfulness retreat. Mindfulness practices such as nature observation, Tonglen meditation and loving kindness meditation were introduced and practiced. Measures of mindfulness (Mindful Attention Awareness Scale, MAAS, and Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaires, FFMQ) and state anxiety (State Trait Anxiety Inventory-State Subscale, STAI-S) were administered the day before and after the one-day retreat. There are five FFMQ subscales: Observe, Describe, Act with Awareness, Nonjudge, and Nonreact. Of these 10 recruited students, eight participated in the baseline assessments and six completed both. The mean age of the five female and one male participants was 19.33 years. Four students had prior experience with mindfulness, contemplation or meditation. The mindfulness measures were highly significantly correlated with each other; the MAAS was positively correlated with FFMQ Observe ($r = .92$), Describe ($r = .75$), Act with Awareness ($r = .88$), and Nonreact subscales ($r = .78$); it was not correlated with Nonjudge. MAAS is also significantly negatively correlated with anxiety ($r = -$

.82). Following the retreat, there was an increase in mindfulness (MAAS scores ($t(1,5) = -2.76$, $p < .05$). Despite the obvious limitation of the very small sample size, these pilot data show the trend that anxiety decreases after the mindfulness intervention. These data are going to be used for a larger study examining the effects of mindfulness curriculum on stress and anxiety.