Measuring the Psychological Impact of Mindfulness Meditation on Health Among Patients With Cancer: A Literature Review

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Purpose/Objectives: To describe the construct of mindfulness meditation and systematically review instruments measuring the psychological impact of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) on health among patients with cancer.


Data Synthesis: 13 psychological instruments used in seven studies (2000–2005) to measure effects of MBSR on health in patients with cancer were reviewed. Most studies used a one-group pre- and post-test design. The post-MBSR outcomes for each instrument varied, suggesting different yet promising relationships. For some instruments, data were insufficient to conclude sufficiently whether any were strong or appropriate to use in future intervention studies.

Conclusions: To enhance knowledge of MBSR, more intervention research studies of MBSR in patients with cancer and reexamination of specific instruments are needed.

Implications for Nursing: Based on the review, instruments can measure MBSR effects and found MBSR to be a potentially beneficial oncology nursing intervention.

Key Points . . .

➤ Mindfulness meditation is an awareness of moment-by-moment experiences arising from purposeful attention, along with nonjudgmental acceptance of the experiences.
➤ Various instruments have been used to measure the psychological impact of mindfulness meditation on health.
➤ Although the literature on mindfulness meditation is sparse, preliminary findings point to a potential positive impact of mindfulness-based stress reduction on the health and well-being of patients with cancer.

Background

Mindfulness Meditation

Mindfulness meditation has been defined as an awareness of moment-by-moment experiences that arises from purposeful attention, along with nonjudgmental acceptance of the experiences (Kabat-Zinn, 2003; Leigh, Bowen, & Marlatt, 2005). Meditation resides at the core of Buddha’s teaching more than 2,500 years ago (Bonadonna, 2003) and also is the fundamental stance underlying all streams of Buddhist meditative practice. Meditation was introduced to Western culture in the 1960s (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Although many construct of mindfulness meditation and an overview, attributes, and limitations of selected research instruments. An understanding of mindfulness meditation and related research instruments will help future researchers build a solid conceptual framework to design studies, choose an appropriate existing tool(s), and develop new research instruments.

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Digital Object Identifier: 10.1188/07.ONF.1059-1066