

Mechanisms of Action in Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) and Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) in People with Physical and/or Psychological Conditions: A Systematic Review

Authors : Modi Alsubaie, Willem Kuyken, Rebecca Abbott, Barnaby Dunn, Chris Dickens, Tina Keil, William Henley

Abstract : Background: Recently, there has been an increased interest in studying the effects of mindfulness-based interventions for people with psychological and physical problems. However, the mechanisms of action in these interventions that lead to beneficial physical and psychological outcomes have yet to be clearly identified. Purpose: The aim of this paper is to review, systematically, the evidence to date on the mechanisms of action in mindfulness interventions in populations with physical and/or psychological conditions. Method: Searches of seven databases (PsycINFO, Medline (Ovid), Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials, EMBASE, CINAHL, AMED, ClinicalTrials.gov) were undertaken in June 2014 and July 2015. We evaluated to what extent the studies we identified met the criteria suggested by Kazdin for establishing mechanisms of action within a psychological treatment (2007, 2009). Results: We identified four trials examining mechanisms of mindfulness interventions in those with comorbid psychological and physical health problems and 14 in those with psychological conditions. These studies examined a diverse range of potential mechanisms, including mindfulness and rumination. Of these candidate mechanisms, the most consistent finding was that greater self-reported change in mindfulness mediated superior clinical outcomes. However, very few studies fully met the Kazdin criteria for examining treatment mechanisms. Conclusion: There was evidence that global changes in mindfulness are linked to better outcomes. This evidence pertained more to interventions targeting psychological rather than physical health conditions. While there is promising evidence that MBCT/MBSR intervention effects are mediated by hypothesised mechanisms, there is a lack of methodological rigour in the field of testing mechanisms of action for both MBCT and MBSR, which precludes definitive conclusions.

Keywords : MBCT, MBSR, mechanisms, physical conditions, psychological conditions, systematic review

Conference Title : ICPCT 2017 : International Conference on Psychiatry and Cognitive Therapy

Conference Location : Rome, Italy

Conference Dates : July 17-18, 2017