

# Mindful Continuing Education

## Reviewing the Efficacy of Meditation on Psychological Stress and Well-Being

1. Meditation is a mind and body practice that has a long history of use for enhancing overall health and well-being, and research suggests that practicing meditation may reduce blood pressure, symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome, anxiety and depression, insomnia, and the incidence, duration, and severity of acute respiratory illnesses.

- A. True
  - B. False
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### Anxiety, Depression, and Insomnia

2. A 2014 literature review of 47 trials in 3,515 participants suggests that mindfulness meditation programs showed moderate evidence of improving anxiety and depression, and improved difficulties in health-related behaviors that are affected by stress, such as eating habits and sleep

- A. True
  - B. False
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### Other Conditions

3. Research has consistently shown that certain forms of meditation help individuals who are suffering with chronic pain and chronic fatigue.

- A. True
  - B. False
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### Meditation and the Brain

4. Some research suggests that meditation may physically change the brain and body and could potentially help to improve many health problems and promote healthy behaviors, and research has demonstrated each of the following EXCEPT:

- A. Results from a 2012 study suggested that people who practiced meditation for many

years have more folds in the outer layer of the brain, which may increase the brain's ability to process information

B. A 2013 review of three clinical studies suggests that meditation may slow, stall, or even reverse changes that take place in the brain due to normal aging

C. Research about meditation's ability to reduce pain has produced mixed results, but in some studies scientists suggest that meditation activates certain areas of the brain in response to pain

D. Results from a 2012 NCCAM-funded study suggest that meditation can affect activity in the thalamus (an area of the brain that control mood, the attention span, and body sensations) and that different types of meditation can affect the thalamus differently even when the person is not meditating

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## **Meditation Programs for Psychological Stress and Well-Being-Executive Summary: Forms of Meditation**

5. Meditation training programs vary in several ways, including the emphasis on religion or spirituality, the nature and amount of training, the use of an instructor, the qualifications of an instructor, and:

A. The theories and practices emphasized

B. The type of mental activity promoted

C. The nature of the subjective experience

D. The use of techniques, skills, and areas of focus

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## **Evidence to Date**

6. Reviews to date have demonstrated that both "mindfulness" and "mantra" meditation techniques reduce emotional symptoms and improve physical symptoms from a moderate to substantial degree.

A. True

B. False

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## **Results-Findings**

**7. Results from the numerous trials that reviewed the efficacy of meditation programs on psychological stress and well-being among those with a clinical condition found that there was insufficient evidence to indicate that meditation programs were more effective than exercise, progressive muscle relaxation, cognitive-behavioral group therapy, or other specific comparators in changing any outcomes of interest.**

- A. True**
  - B. False**
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## **Discussion**

**8. Among mindfulness trials, the effects were significant for anxiety and marginally significant for depression at the end of treatment, and these effects continued to be significant at \_\_\_\_\_ for both anxiety and depression.**

- A. 9-12 months**
  - B. 6-9 months**
  - C. 3-6 months**
  - D. 1-3 months**
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**9. One study that demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in outcomes among mindfulness groups showed that mindfulness-based cognitive therapy improved quality of life in comparison with use of antidepressant drugs among depressed patients.**

- A. True**
  - B. False**
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## **Limitations of the Primary Studies**

**10. Although in some studies it was difficult to assess the amount of training that went into meditation practices, it was clear that the more time spent in expert instruction and dedicated to practice, the more likely it was that positive effects would occur.**

- A. True**
  - B. False**
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## **Future Directions**

**11. Experts agree that further research in meditation would benefit by addressing several remaining methodological and conceptual issues, including each of the following EXCEPT:**

- A. ^Researchers should account for or consider the level of skill in meditation and how variation in skill may affect the effectiveness of meditation when designing studies, collecting data, and interpreting data**
  - B. Although research has adequately validated currently available mindfulness scales, more scales need to be developed that differentiate between particular meditative skills**
  - C. Trials need to document the amount of training instructors provide and patients receive, along with the amount of home practice patients complete**
  - D. Positive outcomes are a key focus of meditative practices and future studies need to expand on these domains**
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## **Conclusions**

**12. Overall, a large number of outcomes from the meditation studies lacked sufficient evidence, which was probably due to the short-term nature of the studies which did not allow participants sufficient time to master meditation skills or enough time to measure meditation competency.**

- A. True**
  - B. False**
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