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Joanne Azulay

JFK Medical Center, USA

The impact of the MAP (Mindfulness Attention Program) on Neurologic symptoms associated with Brain Injury (BI)

Objective: To introduce a mindfulness meditation treatment program called the Mindfulness Attention Program (MAP). This program was developed and researched to address neurologic symptoms and has been running successfully for over ten years to address memory, attention and self-regulation deficits associated with neurologic disorders such as TBI, Stroke, Parkinson's and Autoimmune disorders.

Design: Over the last six years we have assessed a convenience sample in a post acute brain injury rehabilitation center. Participants completed outcome measures and neuropsychological testing pre and post treatment intervention.

Participants: Participants included sixty- eight individuals with neurologic disorders and a time post onset greater than 7 months.

Intervention: The intervention consisted of a 10-week group (with weekly, 2-hour sessions) mindfulness program designed to facilitate implementation with a neurologic population. The treatment-involved the enhancement of attentional skills, increased awareness of internal and external experiences and exploration of physical and emotional pain.

Main Outcome Measures: Primary outcome measures included the Perceived Quality of Life Scale (PQOL), Perceived Self-Efficacy Scale (PSE) and the Neurobehavioral Symptom Inventory (NSI). Additional measures included neuropsychological (NP) tests, a self-report problem solving inventory, an emotional regulation measure and self-report measure of mindfulness.

Results: Clinically meaningful improvements were noted on measures of quality of life (Cohen's $d = 0.53$) perceived self-efficacy (Cohen's $d = 0.57$) and emotional regulation (Cohen's $d = 0.70$), with smaller but still significant effects on measures of central-executive aspects of working memory.

Conclusion: A modified mindfulness program called the MAP is a powerful intervention with the cognitive, emotional and physical symptoms associated with a neurologic population.

Biography

Joanne Azulay is clinical Neuropsychologist and Researcher at the JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute- USA and is an Assistant Clinical Professor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School/ Rutgers University and Neuroscience at Seton Hall University. She received her doctoral training in Clinical Psychology from Seton Hall University, completed her residency at UMDNJ Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. She has been treating and researching in the field of neurologic disorders with a specialty in cognitive disorders of concussion. She has studied meditation in the Tibetan tradition as well as MBSR. Bringing together her training in mental health, brain injury and meditation, she has been lecturing, publishing and teaching nationally and internationally for both patients and non-patients alike.

jazulay111@gmail.com