



Mindfulness Based Intervention for the Treatment of Depression and Anxiety Symptoms

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Abstract:

Mental illness affects people of all ages and it is often difficult to treat. In older adults, up to 60% of patients are unresponsive to pharmacotherapy, have adverse effects or ineffective. Given our aging population and increased pressures in the health system, there is an urgent need to find alternative therapies that are cost-effective, scalable and efficient. Approximately, 10-20% of older adults treated in primary care settings suffer from symptoms of depression and/or anxiety. Mindfulness-based interventions such as Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) and other meditative practices offers a theoretical construct for the acute management of depressive and anxiety symptoms. In this presentation, we will review the scientific evidence for the use of these Mindfulness-Based practices for the treatment of mental health illnesses. Additionally, the presentation will cover the results of a recent randomized controlled trial of MBCT versus wait list control in seniors 65 years and older with depressive and anxiety symptoms conducted by our group. In this clinical trial, pre-post testing data on both arms were collected at baseline, post-intervention to assess the symptoms of Depression (PHQ-9), Anxiety (GAD-7), Quality of life (Euro-Qol), mindfulness (CAMS-R), psychological mechanisms (DSQ-40), insomnia (Athens), adverse childhood events & Intervention acceptability. Additionally, samples of blood were collected to assess the levels of inflammation and hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) activity in each participant. Our results showed a significant decrease in depressive and anxiety symptoms, thus, suggesting that MBCT can be delivered and is effective for the management of late life depressive and anxiety symptoms.

Biography:

Gabriela finished her Ph.D. in Neuroscience at McGill University and she has an expertise in the inflammatory mechanisms that contribute to depression and suicide.



She specialized in the interplay between glial cells and inflammatory mediators. Gabriela is currently interested in understanding the biological mechanisms that contribute to psychiatric disorders that are mediated by mind-body interventions such as mindfulness meditation. She currently holds a certification to deliver mindfulness-based group interventions from Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre (Toronto). She is interested in promoting and encourage the prevention of mental health disorders through mind-body interventions. Dr. Torres-Platas has original publications in journals such as *Molecular Psychiatry*, holds scholarships and award from the government of Mexico and Canada and has been invited speaker in national and international conferences.

Publication of speakers:

1. Fotso Soh J, Almadani A, Beaulieu S, Rajji T, Mulsant BH, Su CL, Renaud S, Mucsi I, Torres-Platas SG, Levinson A, Schaffer A, Dols A, Cervantes P, Low N, Herrmann N, et al. The effect of atorvastatin on cognition and mood in bipolar disorder and unipolar depression patients: A secondary analysis of a randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Affective Disorders*. 262: 149-154. PMID 31733459 DOI: 10.1016/j.jad.2019.11.013
2. Torres-Platas SG, Escobar S, Belliveau C, Wu J, Sasi N, Fotso J, Potes A, Thomas Z, Goodman A, Looper K, Segal M, Berlim M, Vasudev A, Moscovitz N, Rej S. Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy Intervention for the Treatment of Late-Life Depression and Anxiety Symptoms in Primary Care: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics*. 1-3. PMID 31288245 DOI: 10.1159/000501214

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