

The effect of focused-attention meditation dosage on time perception.

Zaffie Cox, Dinkar Sharma

University of Kent, Canterbury, United Kingdom

Background and Objectives

Kramer, Weger and Sharma (2013) have shown that mindfulness-based focused-attention meditation can alter time perception. Using the temporal-bisection task their study showed that an 8-minute meditation intervention led to an overestimation of time compared to a control group listening to an audio clip. The current study was designed to replicate this research and extend it by looking at the effect of different meditation dosages.

Methods

The length of the meditation intervention was varied in which identical instructions were heard but the duration of the self-practice elements were of 20 seconds, 6 minutes or 12 minutes in three different groups. The study used the same temporal-bisection task where probe durations were compared to “short” (400 ms) or “long” (1600 ms) standard durations as in Kramer et al. The temporal-bisection task was completed before and after the meditation session.

Results

Results show that longer meditation practice times led to participants displaying greater overestimations of time. This supports previous research and suggests that meditation self-practice is related to these overestimations of time and indicates that length of the session can have significant implications for focused-attention meditation outcomes.

Discussion and Conclusion

These results could have implications for the application of mindfulness-based meditative interventions, both in their efficacy and in their duration, for both clinical and everyday participants.