

Impact of a blended web-based mindfulness programme for General Practitioners: a pilot Study

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Background and objectives: General Practitioners report high levels of distress at work. Mindfulness techniques seem to yield benefits in a large variety of medical and psychological conditions. This study examined if a brief blended web-based mindfulness intervention could enhance well-being in General Practitioners. In addition, the possible mediating role of awareness was investigated.

Methods: An open uncontrolled trial, with pre-post measurements, was conducted. The intervention comprised one face-to-face meeting (4 h) and eight online practice sessions without support (two weekly sessions over 4 weeks). The primary outcome was positive affect (PANAS-positive), and the secondary outcomes were: negative affect (PANAS-negative), awareness (MAAS), resilience (CDRISC), and the three burnout subtypes (BCSQ-12). Mixed effects analysis for repeated measures and mediation analysis by regression models of indirect effects were performed.

Results: Two hundred ninety Spanish General Practitioners took part in the study, attending the first face-to-face meeting. Nearly one out of 10 participants (n = 28) completed the recommended minimum 'one weekly practice', and 10.4% (n = 30) accomplished 'two or more weekly practices'. There were benefits for those with 'two or more weekly practices' in PANAS-positive (B = 2.97; p = 0.007), and MAAS (B = 4.65; p = 0.023). No effects were found for those with only 'one weekly practice'. Mediating effects of MAAS in PANAS-positive were found, explaining 60.8% of total effects.

Discussion and conclusion: A brief blended mindfulness intervention, with minimum face-to-face contact and web-based practice sessions, seems to confer improvements in well-being of Spanish General Practitioners. The benefits may be mediated by awareness. The implementation of this kind of programs might enhance wellbeing among General Practitioners, but adherence to practice needs to be improved. Further research using randomized controlled designs are needed to support the evidence found in this study.