

Validation of the Dutch Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory in Patients With Medical Illness

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background and objectives

Mindfulness-based interventions effectively reduce psychological symptoms in patients who suffer from life-threatening medical illness. To investigate whether, or to what extent, mindfulness skills are a working mechanism and if the level of mindfulness can predict treatment outcome there is a need for a short, reliable and valid mindfulness measure. This can help to inform patients about how the intervention may work and to improve allocation of patients to suitable interventions.

A group of Dutch experts in mindfulness and medical psychology selected the Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (FMI) for this purpose, as it includes two fundamental facets considered most crucial in medical psychology: (a) focus on the present moment including bodily awareness and (b) nonreactivity to the inner experience, thus an accepting attitude. This presentation will focus on the validation of the Dutch translation of the FMI in medical psychology.

methods

Psychometric properties of the Dutch FMI were examined in two patient groups of two different studies: (Sample 1) cardiac patients (n = 114, M age = 56 years, 18% women) and (Sample 2) severely fatigued cancer survivors (n = 158, M age = 50 years, 77% women).

results

Confirmatory factor analysis (studied only in Sample 2) provided good fit for the two-factor solution (Acceptance and Presence), while the one-factor solution provided suboptimal fit indices. Internal consistency was good for the whole scale in both samples (Sample 1 alpha = .827 and Sample 2 alpha = .851). The two-factor model showed acceptable to good internal consistency in Sample 2 (Presence: alpha = .823; Acceptance alpha = .744), but poor to acceptable in Sample 1 (Presence subscale: alpha = .577, Acceptance subscale: alpha = .791). Clinical sensitivity was supported in both samples, and construct validity (studied only in Sample 1) was acceptable.

discussion and conclusion

To investigate if the FMI is indeed measuring the concept of mindfulness, one would need a “gold standard” to compare it with (criterion validity), which unfortunately is unavailable so far. For now, the Dutch FMI is an acceptable and sensitive instrument to measure mindfulness in patients who experienced a life-threatening illness in a Dutch-speaking population.