

Patient Preference for individual Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT)

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BACKGROUND

MBCT was developed to help patients suffering from recurrent depressive disorder. MBCT has been shown to be as effective as maintenance antidepressant medication in reducing relapse rate in depression. There is increasing evidence that patients with other psychiatric disorders benefit from MBCT.

MBCT was devised as a group intervention for cost-effective purposes, however this may not be the right format for everyone. Offering individual MBCT could be greatly beneficial and encourage those who are uncomfortable with groups to undertake the course. There is little research exploring individual MBCT. We report on six cases of patients with a variety of psychiatric disorders who underwent individual MBCT.

METHODS

Six patients were referred for individual MBCT, aged 15-57 years (mean 35 years). Four patients were female and two were male. Patients attended eight one-hour weekly sessions. All patients completed the 8-week MBCT program. MBCT was delivered by HR, an experienced teacher. Patients completed pre and post course self-rating scales measuring stress (Cohen Perceived Stress Scale), depression (PHQ-9), and anxiety (GAD-7).

RESULTS

Stress: All six participants scored “high” stress at the start of the course. At the end of the course, three scored “above average” stress and 3 scored “below average” stress.

Depression: One participant scored “moderately severe” at the start of the course, and ended in the “mild” range. Three participants scored “moderate” at the start, and at the end one scored “mild” and two “normal”. The last participant scored “mild” at the start and ended in the “normal” range.

Anxiety: At the start, four of the participants scored “severe” and two scored in “moderate”. At the end of the course two patients scored “mild” and four patients scored “none”. The four participants with severe anxiety all had substantial reductions to “none” at the end of the course.

CONCLUSIONS

The results from these six cases demonstrate marked reductions in stress, depressive and anxiety symptoms. There is a demand for individual MBCT and further research is required to assess the efficacy of individual MBCT versus group MBCT.