Mindfulness and Healthcare-Induced Anxiety Among College Students

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Introduction

- ❖ Mindfulness: state of being aware of present moment and accepting the feelings and sensations that accompany it
  - ❖ Proven to reduce general anxiety among healthcare providers [3]
- ❖ Healthcare-induced anxiety stems from health settings → leads to avoidance of doctor (similar phenomenon in dental clinics = dental anxiety)
  - ❖ Factors Causing: fear of unknown [2], perceived loss of control [1]
- ❖ Mindfulness has not been correlated with anxiety stemming from medical settings
  - ❖ Most research on health anxiety or generalized anxiety disorders

Hypotheses

1. College students who display higher levels of mindfulness will have lower levels of healthcare-induced anxiety.
2. College students who display higher levels of mindfulness will have lower levels of dental anxiety.

Methods

- ❖ Participants: 218 University of Texas at Austin undergraduates (above age 18) recruited through SONA research pool
- ❖ Completed self-report questionnaire through Qualtrics

Measures
- ❖ Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire
  - ❖ Observation, Description, Aware Actions, Non-Judgmental Inner Experience, Non-Reactivity
- ❖ State Trait Anxiety Inventory
  - ❖ State Section: healthcare scenario included beforehand
  - ❖ Trait Section: excluded due to collinearity problem with state anxiety
- ❖ Modified Dental Anxiety Scale
- ❖ Patient Health Questionnaire 9
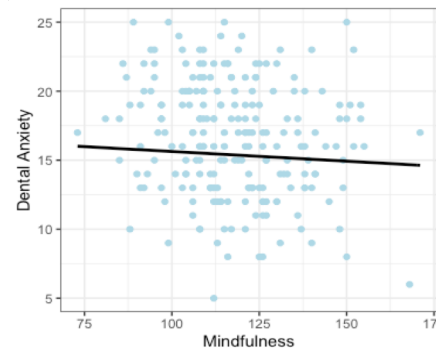 - ❖ Control variable (depression)

Results

Mindfulness Significantly Predicts Healthcare-Induced Anxiety
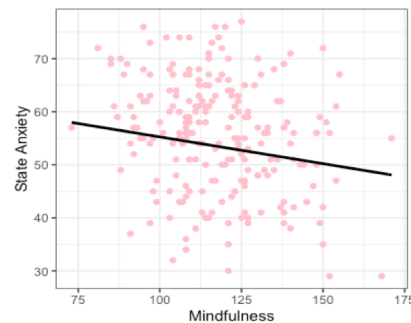
- ❖ Linear Regression showed that mindfulness was a significant predictor of healthcare-induced anxiety. ($\beta = -0.101$, p = 0.048, $R^2 = 0.066$)
- ❖ Regression analysis did not show that depression significantly predicted healthcare-induced anxiety. (p = 0.153)

Mindfulness Does Not Significantly Predict Dental Anxiety

- ❖ Linear Regression showed that mindfulness was not a significant predictor of dental anxiety. ($\beta = -0.014$, p = 0.487, $R^2 = 0.052$)
- ❖ Regression analysis also showed that depression significantly predicted dental anxiety. (p = 0.027)

Summary

- ❖ Mindfulness was a significant predictor of healthcare-induced anxiety with more mindful participants having lower amounts of healthcare-induced anxiety.
- ❖ Mindfulness was not a significant predictor of dental anxiety.
- ❖ Depression was a significant predictor of dental anxiety, but not healthcare-induced anxiety.

Conclusions

- ❖ Mindfulness plays a role in healthcare-induced anxiety suggesting its usefulness for patients in healthcare settings.
- ❖ The five facets of mindfulness can be further explored to see if a certain facet is a more significant predictor of either anxiety measure.
- ❖ Future studies can have surveys be given to patients before a real dental visit in the office waiting room in order to see more pronounced effects.
- ❖ Future studies should focus on using mindfulness-based interventions for healthcare-induced anxiety.

References

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2. Carleton, R. N. (2016). Fear of the unknown: One fear to rule them all? *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, *41*, 5–21. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.janxdis.2016.03.011
3. Gilmartin, H., Goyal, A., Hamati, M. C., Mann, J., Saint, S., & Chopra, V. (2017). Brief mindfulness practices for Healthcare Providers – A Systematic Literature Review. *The American Journal of Medicine, 130*(10). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amjmed.2017.05.041

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