



Effective Health Care

Mindfulness for Mental Health

Nomination Summary Document

Results of Topic Selection Process & Next Steps

- Mindfulness for mental health will go forward for refinement as a systematic review. The scope of this topic, including populations, interventions, comparators, and outcomes, will be further developed in the refinement phase.
- When key questions have been drafted, they will be posted on the AHRQ Web site and open for public comment. To sign up for notification when this and other Effective Health Care (EHC) Program topics are posted for public comment, please go to <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/join-the-email-list1/>.

Topic Description

Nominator: Government agency

Nomination Summary: The nominator is interested in the efficacy of mindfulness approaches across the broad range of mental health: psychiatric disorders, substance abuse, and hypothalamus-pituitary-adrenal related phenomena such as anxiety, depression, stress, and post-traumatic stress disorder. The nominator is interested in putative mediators or mechanisms for mindfulness (attentional processing, emotional regulation) and whether evaluation of them is possible. The nominator is interested in an effectiveness review of mindfulness-based stress programs compared to no treatment, sham, or standard treatment.

Staff-Generated PICOTS:

Populations: Healthy individuals; healthy individuals with stress from specific situations, such as care-giving for difficult diseases; individuals with stress from specific physical diseases

Interventions: Mindfulness-based stress programs

Comparators: No treatment, sham, or standard treatment

Outcomes: Patient-reported outcomes, such as stress and well-being, and clinical biomarker outcomes, such as cortisol

Timing: Duration of therapy, duration of improvements

Setting: Group and individual treatment settings

Key Questions from Nominator: None

Considerations

- The topic meets all EHC Program selection criteria. (For more information, see <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/submit-a-suggestion-for-research/how-are-research-topics-chosen/>.)
- Mindfulness programs are widely available in the US, and an increasing number of hospitals are now offering such programs to patients. Correspondingly, recent surveys indicate an increasing number of individuals are using mindfulness strategies and seeking such programs. Mindfulness is currently being used for mental disorders as well as control of stress, improvement of cognitive abilities, insomnia, and overall well being. These disorders have a high prevalence, carry substantial morbidity, affect quality of life, and pose significant financial burden on the population.
- There remains considerable decisional uncertainty on the efficacy of mindfulness-based strategies for various mental disorders such as depression, anxiety, pain, substance abuse, stress and post-traumatic stress disorder. There is important variation in clinical care and controversy over what constitutes an appropriate technique, dose, and training program. While mindfulness-based strategies are becoming increasingly available, the balance of efficacy and potential harms, such as delay in treatment, has not been rigorously evaluated. Therefore, this topic will go forward as a new systematic review by the EHC Program.