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Can inner peace be improved by mindfulness training: A randomized controlled trial

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Background: Maintaining inner peacefulness is seen as very important in Buddhist theory and practice. However, whether mindfulness training, as “the heart” of Buddhist meditation, can increase inner peace has not been studied. This article reports a proof-of-principle randomized controlled trial to investigate whether mindfulness training (MT) can successfully improve inner peace in participants.

Method: 57 participants were randomized to either MT (n=29) or wait-list control (n=28). The Experience Sampling Method (ESM) was used to measure the fleeting momentary experience of inner peace. In addition, we used an experimental approach to assessing ability to focus attention: the Meditation Breath Attention Score (MBAS), as well as self-report Five-Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ).

Results: The measurement of inner peace had good reliability and validity. Compared to wait-list control group, MT led to increase in scores of inner peace, MBAS and FFMQ using analysis of repeated measures ANOVA. Change in inner peace were not, however, mediated by changes in self-rated mindfulness (FFMQ) nor by increased attentional focus (MBAS).

Conclusions: The findings provide first evidence suggesting that using mindfulness meditation improves inner peace. The focus here was on immediate effects and future studies need to use follow-up.

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