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17th World Summit on

Positive Psychology, Psychotherapy & Cognitive Behavioral Sciences May 01-03, 2017 Toronto, Canada

Effects of mindfulness and self-awareness in rest and stress: Biofeedback and neurofeedback measures and training

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Statement of the Problem: Stress has been known to accumulate and negatively impact emotional and psychological states. When faced with stress, one of the first line of recommendations is to take time away and withdraw from the stressors. Practices such as mindfulness have been increasingly been recommended by many healthcare professionals particularly when stressors cannot be removed. Researchers in the field of neurology have reported that mindfulness meditation training can alter regions of the brain known to coordinate stress processing and physiological stress responses. In field research and in real life it can be difficult to maintain a practice of mindfulness. Without daily practice the benefits of Mindfulness are reduced. Neuro and Biofeedback can be used a real time feedback to teach self-regulation and potentially be used as an aid for mindfulness meditation. Rest as much as it prescribed for immediate relief of stress is not that clearly defined. A period of rest could provoke mind-wandering and time to think of stressful thoughts. Not only is this internal stress difficult to observe objectively from others but many have difficulty identifying and recognizing their own internal state. Lack of awareness of stress levels could contribute to difficulties in emotion regulation. The purpose of this study is to assess the effects of self-awareness (mindfulness) on stress recovery (rest/ neuro-psychophysiology).

Hypothesis: Mindfulness Meditators (MM) have significant difference in psychophysiological self awareness and emotion regulation during rest and recovery than non-Mindful Meditators (nMM).

Methodology: Psychophysiological Measure (GSR, EEG, EEG; EMG, HR, Temperature) used to measure Base-line, Rest (Post-stressors)/Recovery. Script on a computer screen with the following sequence of events will be presented:1. Baseline psychophysiology (no stressor), stressor 1 (colour stroop test), rest, stressor 2 (numbers and speed), rest, stressor 3 (timed recall), rest period. Self-Report Methods: Mindfulness attention awareness scale (MAAS) and Short compassion scale will also be used.

Results: Significant differences were found between MM and nMM in some psychophysiological measures (EEG and GSR). Self-awareness significantly improved rest and recovery in both groups. Mindfulness and self-awareness could help improve emotional and physical effects of stress.

Biography

Rose Schnabel has expertise in Bio/Neurofeedback to assist and research methods to improve self-regulation for optimal experiences and evaluation. The application of her treatment model is useful in clinical and research settings. Her main areas of study and application are Improved Resting State, Flow State, Emotion and Cognition. She has built this model after many years of experience in research, evaluation, teaching and administration both in hospital and education institutions.

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