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Effects of a CBT based stress management program for teaching professionals augmented by complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) approach

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Background: The present study aims to assess psychosomatic and physical effects of a CBT based stress management program augmented by CAM among teaching professionals in Hong Kong.

Method: A random controlled trial (RCT) was used to compare between CBT group (n =26) and the CBT-CAM group (n =30). Interventions were administered for 1.5 hours once a week for eight consecutive weeks. A self-administered questionnaire including perceived stress scale (PSS) and frequency of psychosomatic symptoms were measured at baseline (T1), immediate after the program (T2), and 4 weeks after the program (T3). Physical parameters were measured at T1 and T2.

Results: A reduction of 23% in PSS was observed in the CBT group, while the CBT-CAM group yielded 18% reductions in PSS from T1 to T3 [$F(2,108) = 3.099$; $p = .049$]. No significant interactions were observed in the frequency of psychosomatic symptoms and physical parameters. However, a significant downward time trend was observed ($p < .001$) and larger percentage changes in physical responses were shown in the CBT-CAM group than CBT group.

Conclusion: Clinical evidence of both the CBT-CAM and CBT programs has been demonstrated in the current study and both approaches are easy to be self-implemented. The CAM technique might serve as an alternative choice for self-administered stress management to replace the additional time needed for professional follow-up contacts. It might further improve some physical responses such as handgrip strength and resting heart rate, which are associated with better psychosomatic health and better occupational stress management.

Biography

Hector W H Tsang has received a number of local and international awards including the International Educator of the Year 2003 from the International Biographical Center, being a finalist for the Director's Fellowship at the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) in 2004, and the Most Valuable Consultancy Projects Award from The Hong Kong Polytechnic University in 2006. Recently, he is awarded Performance Funding from his serving department at PolyU to develop collaboration with Professor Morris Bell's cognitive remediation laboratory at the School of Medicine, Yale University, on his supported employment study in the next two years. He has frequently been invited to deliver workshops and lectures in the Asia-Pacific region including mainland China, Singapore, Japan, and Australia.

Wai Ming CHEUNG (PhD) is an Associate Professor who is interested in stress management of teachers & students, especially second language learners

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