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Mindfulness Reduces Smoking

As a stand-alone treatment, mindfulness training seems effective for smoking cessation.

Mindfulness training (MT) has been incorporated into cognitive therapy, relapse prevention, and acceptance and commitment therapy for smoking cessation. This 4-week, randomized, controlled study tested the efficacy of MT as a stand-alone treatment.

Eighty-eight smokers interested in quitting (mean age, 46; 62% men; average use, 20 cigarettes/day; mean previous quit attempts, 5) underwent MT or the American Lung Association's Freedom From Smoking (FFS) program, a manual-based and validated smoking cessation treatment. People on psychotropic medications or with comorbid substance use disorders were excluded. Both treatments involved twice-weekly group sessions for 4 weeks; follow-up occurred through week 17. MT focused on awareness and acceptance of cravings and on negative affect, such as anxiety or stress.

In both groups, cigarette use was significantly reduced during treatment and follow-up. MT was associated with greater smoking reductions than FFS during both periods. A trend toward higher abstinence rates with MT at the end of treatment (36% vs. 15% with FFS) became significant at 17 weeks (31% vs. 6%).

Comment: MT shows promise as a stand-alone treatment for smoking cessation. Further studies are necessary to determine whether MT is effective for smoking cessation in psychiatric patients. In another study, greater mindfulness was associated with lower levels of craving, perceived stress, and laboratory-tested attentional bias towards alcohol-related images in 58 recovering alcohol-dependent adults (*Cognit Ther Res 2011* (Link to: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10608-011-9378-7>)). Together, these studies suggest that mindfulness may benefit patients with substance use disorders by increasing their acceptance of, and ability to cope with, cravings and negative affect. Given its efficacy for anxiety and depression as well, MT appears a useful treatment for mental health clinicians to learn.

— **Deborah Cowley, MD** (Link to: http://psychiatry.jwatch.org/misc/board_about.dtl#aCowley)

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Brewer JA et al. Mindfulness training for smoking cessation: Results from a randomized controlled trial. *Drug Alcohol Depend* 2011 Jun 30; [e-pub ahead of print]. (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2011.05.027>) (Link to: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2011.05.027>))

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mindfulness

D.P.D Wijesinghe, NIMH- Sri Lanka, 13 Sep 2011 11:23 AM EST

Specialty: Addiction Psychiatry

Mindfulness training is originally derived from Buddhist philosophy. The founder of this, the Lord

Buddha himself described it in... [\[more\]](#) (Link to: </cgi/eletters/2011/912/4#31130>)

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