IMPLEMENTING A MINDFULNESS TRAINING PROGRAM FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS AT RADIOLOGY DEPARTMENT OF A TERTIARY HOSPITAL: A BRAZILIAN EXPERIENCE

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Introduction

Healthcare professionals play a crucial role in patient care, and they are susceptible to job-related stress and burnout.

Several research studies have indicated a potential connection between mindfulness practice and heightened levels of self-compassion and compassion towards others. This relationship is believed to be fostered as individuals become more adept at embracing the present moment without harsh judgment, leading to a more realistic understanding of situations. Moreover, it is thought to enhance skills like decision-making and interpersonal communication.

Objectives

The primary goal of this study was to evaluate the compliance and effectiveness of an eight-week mindfulness training program within the radiology department of a private tertiary hospital in Brazil, involving healthcare professionals.
Methods

A workshop was conducted to showcase mindfulness techniques and provide an overview of the associated theoretical concepts. An initial meeting was organized for 44 participants, allowing them to decide whether they wished to commit to eight weeks of practice following this introductory session.

Participants who opted to join the program completed various standardized forms and instruments, such as the Informed Consent Form, a sociodemographic questionnaire, and other general information sheets. Additionally, well-being assessments were conducted using the Conscientious Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) and the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS10). The study employed a pre-and-post design to measure changes in well-being outcomes.
Methods

Between June and July 2022, a series of eight workshop sessions were held, and voluntary involvement was encouraged among the intended participants. Daily meditation exercises were shared, and discussion forums were established to provide a platform for addressing any questions or concerns.
Encouraging and friendly messages, along with meditation files, were distributed within the exclusive participant group to provide support for their daily mindfulness practices.

Recordings of the classes were made and shared within the group for employees who couldn't participate in real-time.

Methods

Digital folders with motivational content were established as a proactive measure to address the anticipated challenge of project abandonment resulting from the prioritization of other tasks and the occurrence of demanding or stressful events.
Results

The final sample was composed of 22 health professionals (mostly nurses and biomedical scientists) that volunteered to participate, and ten professionals (45%) fully adhered to the training (group 1).

**Employee adherence (N)**

- Group 1: 12 employees who did not adhere to the eight weeks of practice.
- Group 2: 10 employees who joined the eight weeks of practice.

**Employee adherence (%)**

- People who did not adhere to the eight weeks of practice: Group 1: 52%, Group 2: 48%.
- People who joined the eight weeks of practice: Group 1: 48%, Group 2: 52%.

**PSS10**

- Before the intervention: 100%
- After the intervention: 45.45%

**MAAS**

- All participants (group 1 and group 2) reached a consensus on those questions:
  - “Have you been thinking about the things you should do?”
  - “I tend to walk fast to reach my destination, without paying attention to what I experience on the way”
  - “I am worried about the future and the past”
  - “I don't usually notice pain or physical discomfort until they really call my attention”
Discussion

To enhance participant engagement in the Mindfulness Program, a variety of strategies were employed.

These included implementing reminders, providing access to class recordings and guided meditation audio files to encourage daily practice. However, it was crucial to establish prior communication and alignment with managers to ensure that participants’ practice times could be safeguarded within their schedules without negatively impacting clinical responsibilities.

There were instances when adherence to the practices was challenging due to the demands of regular patient care routines. In such cases, ongoing support from managers was essential. Project leaders played a vital role in monitoring participation and assisting individuals who utilized the recorded materials to ensure that they were able to engage in daily practices as instructed by the experienced psychiatrists leading the program.
Conclusions

The intervention described showed a connection to shifts in how participants perceived pain and physical discomfort, irrespective of their ability to commit to the full eight weeks of practice.

Following the intervention, both groups displayed increased mindfulness in the present moment and reduced preoccupation with future events, indicating potential benefits in terms of self-awareness and attention.

These findings imply that the intervention was successful in enhancing the well-being of participants, even if they didn't fully adhere to the practice. It's worth noting that individuals who completed the full eight weeks of practice scored higher in their self-perception of pain or discomfort.
Take home message

Securing the emotional well-being of healthcare professionals leads to enhanced performance, ultimately elevating the standard of patient care.

Institutions must recognize their obligation to foster well-being among their caregivers. Beyond enhancing decision-making, focus, and communication, mindfulness practices, including meditation techniques, can contribute to both personal and professional satisfaction and well-being, fostering a compassionate and humane work environment.

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References


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