Mindfulness Tools (MT) for Health and Wellness for Cancer Patients During COVID-19 Pandemic
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Mindfulness is paying attention in the present moment on purpose non-judgmentally and watching the awareness that arises. Jon Kabat-Zinn PhD

Background:
MT has been offered for cancer patients, caregivers, and healthcare providers through the University of Vermont Medical Center beginning in 2010. MT is an evidence-based program proven to foster stress reduction, symptom management, and improve quality of life. It is based on the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program started by Jon Kabat-Zinn PhD.

In 2015 the impact of MT was examined on physical and psychosocial outcomes among cancer survivors, as well as their use of pharmaceuticals to manage symptoms.1

Here we compare the delivery of MT using online classes necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic to prior onsite classes.

Results:
Comparison of evaluations (22 classes) from 2010-2019 with three online classes held in 2020. Results show evidence of reduction in stress and physical symptoms (pain) and if participants would recommend the class.

MT results from Fall 2010 – Spring 2019 ONSITE 8-week classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Question</th>
<th>Percent agree or strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class helped reduce stress</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class helped reduce pain</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would recommend to CA pts</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on 267 participant evaluations from 22 Mindfulness Tool programs taught at University of Vermont Medical Center VT Cancer Center

MT Results from three 2020 ONLINE1 8-Week classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Question</th>
<th>Percent agree or strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class helped reduce stress</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class helped reduce pain</td>
<td>31%2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would recommend to CA pts</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
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Of 28 participants, 9 returned course evaluations

Conclusions:
Participants report feeling “doubly isolated” from navigating the challenges of their cancer diagnoses and isolation from family, friends, and support systems. Of the online participants 69% stated this option worked well for them. A need was identified to improve online evaluation participation.

Discussion:
Addressing mental health and managing anxiety and stress have been identified among six recommendations for cancer patients during COVID-19.2 Included in these recommendations are meditation and yoga, practices fundamental to MT. We are currently in the process of strategic planning with the help of a consultant to determine a future vision for the program.

References:

Methods:
Compare and contrast participant experience and satisfaction of the delivery of MT on an online platform (2020) to the prior in person onsite delivery of classes (2010-2019).

Evaluations were collected from participants in both the onsite (n=267) and online (n=9) classes.

Data on stress reduction, pain relief, and willingness to recommend program to others were collected.

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