

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a practice of being present and fully engaged in the current moment, without judgment or distraction. It involves focusing your attention on the present moment and becoming aware of your thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations. Mindfulness can be practiced through various techniques, such as meditation, deep breathing, and yoga, and has been shown to have many benefits for physical and mental health.

Here are some benefits of mindfulness:

Reduced stress and anxiety: Mindfulness can help reduce stress and anxiety by promoting relaxation and reducing negative thoughts.

Improved mood: Mindfulness has been shown to improve mood and increase positive emotions.

Increased focus and concentration: Practicing mindfulness can improve focus and concentration by training the brain to stay present and attentive.

Better decision-making: Mindfulness can help improve decision-making by increasing awareness of thoughts and feelings and reducing impulsive reactions.

Better sleep: Mindfulness has been shown to improve sleep quality by promoting relaxation and reducing stress and anxiety.

Lowered blood pressure: Mindfulness can help lower blood pressure and reduce the risk of heart disease.

Increased self-awareness: Mindfulness can help increase self-awareness by promoting introspection and reflection.

By practicing mindfulness, individuals can improve their physical and mental health, reduce stress and anxiety, and increase focus, concentration, and self-awareness. Mindfulness is a skill that can be developed over time through regular practice and can be incorporated into daily activities, such as taking a mindful walk or practicing mindful breathing during a break.

Mindfulness Training for Young Neurosurgeons

Burnout is prevalent among neurosurgeons and can negatively impact both technical and nontechnical skills and subsequent patient care. Mindfulness training has previously been shown to ameliorate the effects of burnout and improve performance in health care workers and high-stress occupations, but no such evaluation has been formally conducted for neurosurgeons. We aimed to determine the effectiveness and feasibility of a virtual mindfulness-based intervention (MBI) in neurosurgeons.

Methods: A prospective trial of an MBI was implemented and hosted from our tertiary academic unit, running virtually from October to December 2020. Practicing neurosurgeons of all grades were recruited from 9 neurosurgical centers. Participants underwent 8 weeks of 90-minute MBI classes and suggested daily practice. Psychometric measures related to burnout, stress, wellbeing, and mindfulness competencies were assessed at baseline and on course completion.

Results: Twenty-one neurosurgeons participated in the study (attendings = 2, residents = 18, interns = 1, mean age = 30.3 [standard deviation 3.9] years). Significant improvements after intervention were present in perceived stress ($Z = -2.54$, $P = 0.04$) and emotional exhaustion ($Z = -2.41$, $P = 0.04$). Mindfulness training was associated with improved mindfulness skills ($Z = -2.58$, $P = 0.006$), self-compassion ($t = -4.4$, $P = 0.002$), resilience ($Z = -3.18$, $P = 0.004$), and choice response times ($Z = -2.13$, $P = 0.03$). All neurosurgeons who completed the postintervention assessment stated they would recommend the course and agreed that it was relevant to their surgical practice.

Conclusions: Preliminary evidence from this trial cautiously supports the effectiveness and feasibility of a virtual MBI for dealing with stress, burnout, and improving dexterity among young neurosurgeons. Further research is warranted to validate these findings ¹⁾.

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Pandit AS, Reka A, Layard Horsfall H, Marcus HJ. Mindfulness Training for Young Neurosurgeons: A Virtual Multicenter Prospective Pilot Study. *World Neurosurg.* 2022 Aug;164:e446-e457. doi: 10.1016/j.wneu.2022.04.128. Epub 2022 May 6. PMID: 35533949.

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