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Promoting mindfulness in psychotherapists in training influences the treatment results of their patients: a randomized, double-blind, controlled study.

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Source

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Abstract

BACKGROUND:

All therapists direct their attention in some manner during psychotherapy. A special form of directing attention, 'mindfulness', is recommended. This study aimed to examine whether, and to what extent, promoting mindfulness in psychotherapists in training (PiT) influences the treatment results of their patients.

METHODS:

The therapeutic course and treatment results of 124 inpatients, who were treated for 9 weeks by 18 PiTs, were compared. The PiTs were randomly assigned to 1 of 2 groups: (i) those practicing **Zen meditation** (MED; n = 9 or (ii) control group, which did not perform meditation (noMED; n = 9). The results of treatment (according to the intent-to-treat principle) were examined using the Session Questionnaire for General and Differential Individual Psychotherapy (STEP), the Questionnaire of Changes in Experience and Behavior (VEV) and the Symptom Checklist (SCL-90-R).

RESULTS:

Compared to the noMED group (n = 61), the patients of PiTs from the MED group (n = 63) had significantly higher evaluations (according to the intent-to-treat principle) for individual therapy on 2 STEP scales, clarification and problem-solving perspectives. Their evaluations were also significantly higher for the entire therapeutic result on the VEV. Furthermore, the MED group showed greater symptom reduction than the noMED group on the Global Severity Index and 8 SCL-90-R scales, including Somatization, Insecurity in Social Contact, Obsessiveness, Anxiety, Anger/Hostility, Phobic Anxiety, Paranoid Thinking and Psychoticism.

CONCLUSIONS:

This study indicates that promoting mindfulness in PiTs could positively influence the therapeutic course and treatment results in their patients.

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