

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction as a Treatment for Tourette Syndrome

What is the research about?

Although there are medications available for Tourette Syndrome (TS), some people don't want to take them, or they have unacceptable side effects. Behaviour therapies are offered, too, but they work in only some people. Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) therapies are used successfully in other conditions, it has not been tried with TS. While stress does not cause TS, it can worsen the tics. This study looked at whether, or not a modified version of MBSR had a positive effect on the tics seen in TS.

What did the researchers do?

The researchers recruited 18 people between the ages of 16 to 67 with a diagnosis of either Tourette Syndrome or Chronic Tic Disorder (CTD). Their aims were to see if it was possible to use MBSR with this population, if the participants found the process of mindfulness meditation acceptable, and to see if it had a positive effect on the tics. Eighteen individuals age 16–67 completed an uncontrolled open trial of MBSR-tics. The treatment consisted of 8- 2hour, weekly sessions, and a 4-hour retreat at week 5 or 6. The researchers asked about symptoms at the beginning of the study, after the study ended, and then one month later.

What did the researchers find?

The researchers found that it was possible to successfully set up the groups, and that group members thought MBSR was acceptable. Nearly 60% of the participants had significant improvement in their tic severity and a reduction in the impairments usually seen with tics. The researchers found that these gains were still maintained one month after the end of the treatment. group members thought MBSR was acceptable, and that it was possible to successfully set up the groups. Nearly 60% of the participants had significant improvement in their tic severity and a reduction in the impairments usually seen with tics. The researchers found that these gains were still maintained one month after the end of the treatment.

Take home message

Although this was a small study without a comparison group, the researchers found that the concept of using MBSR was acceptable to patients, and that it could be carried out successfully with individuals with TS or CTD, aged 16 years and older. The researchers suggest that a larger, randomized controlled trial should be carried out to provide better evidence that this treatment works.

NOTE: The original [Research Report](#) was written by H. Reese and colleagues and published in the Journal of Psychosomatic Research. 2014.