

UA psychology professor seeks relief for chronic headache sufferers

May 10 2011

(Medical Xpress) -- Dr. Beverly Thorn, chair of The University of Alabama's psychology department, is seeking volunteers for a key study into how "[mindfulness meditation](#)" can help manage chronic pain from headaches.

Complementary and [alternative medicine](#) approaches are becoming increasingly popular among the American public for the treatment of an array of physical, emotional and mental problems, Thorn said. One such approach is "mindfulness [meditation](#)." The approach appeals to a wide range of people and is gaining steady research support for its use in treating health-care problems.

Mindfulness meditation is a specific form of meditation originally developed in the East. The idea has been integrated into Western psychology and health care.

Jon Kabat-Zinn, the founder of mindfulness-based approaches within the Western medical community, describes mindfulness as "the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience, moment by moment."

"Although people might think of monasteries and monks when they hear the word 'meditation,' patients across the country are discovering that these approaches are much more applicable to everyday life than once thought," said Thorn, who has performed extensive research on the

psychology of [headaches](#) and pain management. “Meditation as applied to healthcare is being demystified and made practical at a number of locations.”

Investigators in UA’s psychology department are performing cutting-edge research on the effectiveness of this treatment approach for chronic headache pain management. The eight-week program, developed by Thorn and her senior graduate student, Melissa Day, is an integrated treatment with [mindfulness meditation](#) at its core.

The treatment also includes mindful yoga, led by Dr. Nancy Rubin, a certified yoga instructor, and stress management skills. Treatment groups are under way with headache patients meeting once a week for two-hour sessions, for a total of eight weeks.

Also as part of the program, patients are provided with a series of CDs that are intended as a guide for daily, at-home meditation practice. This research already is receiving international recognition and is being funded through grants from the Anthony Marchionne Foundation and the National Headache Foundation.

Provided by University of Alabama

Citation: UA psychology professor seeks relief for chronic headache sufferers (2011, May 10) retrieved 20 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2011-05-ua-psychology-professor-relief-chronic.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--