

Mindfulness treatment as effective as CBT for depression and anxiety

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A collective meditation in Sri Lanka. Image: Wikipedia.

(Medical Xpress)—Group mindfulness treatment is as effective as individual cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) in patients with depression and anxiety, according to a new study from Lund University in Sweden and Region Skåne. This is the first randomised study to compare group mindfulness treatment and individual cognitive behavioural therapy in patients with depression and anxiety in primary health care.

The researchers, led by Professor Jan Sundquist, ran the study at 16 [primary health care](#) centres in Skåne, a county in southern Sweden. They trained two mindfulness instructors, from different occupational groups, at each [primary health](#) care centre during a 6-day training course.

In spring 2012, [patients](#) with depression, anxiety or reactions to severe stress were randomised to either structured group mindfulness treatment with approximately 10 patients per group, or regular treatment (mainly individual CBT). Patients also received a private training programme and were asked to record their exercises in a diary. The treatment lasted 8 weeks. General practitioner and mindfulness instructor Ola Schenström designed the mindfulness training programme and model for training instructors.

A total of 215 patients were included in the study. Before and after treatment, the patients in the mindfulness and regular treatment groups answered questionnaires that estimated the severity of their depression and anxiety. Self-reported symptoms of depression and anxiety decreased in both groups during the 8-week treatment period. There was no statistical difference between the two treatments.

"The study's results indicate that group mindfulness treatment, conducted by certified instructors in primary [health care](#), is as effective a treatment method as individual CBT for treating depression and anxiety", says Jan Sundquist. "This means that group mindfulness treatment should be considered as an alternative to individual psychotherapy, especially at primary health care centres that can't offer everyone individual therapy".

More information: Mindfulness group therapy in primary care patients with depression, anxiety and stress and adjustment disorders: randomised controlled trial, *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 2014. bjp.rcpsych.org/content/early/.../114.150243.abstract

Provided by Lund University

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