

EFFECTS OF MINDFULNESS-BASED INTERVENTIONS ON MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES OF SURVIVORS OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

Crystal Luong, BSN Honors Student, The University of Texas at Austin School of Nursing

Yang Li, PhD, The University of Texas at Austin School of Nursing

Purpose: Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a common form of violence that affects millions of individuals worldwide. IPV is a serious and preventable public health issue that is associated with poor physical and mental health outcomes. Mental health consequences of IPV can be severe, and include suicidal ideation, substance abuse, anxiety disorders, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Non-pharmacological interventions aimed at improving the mental health of IPV survivors have become more popular in recent years, however there is little research done reviewing the impact of mindfulness-based interventions on mental health outcomes for survivors of IPV. The purpose of this systematic review is to examine the literature and evaluate the effects of mindfulness-based interventions on mental health outcomes in survivors of IPV.

Methods: In search of evidence-based literature, the following databases were searched for randomized control trials pertaining to mindfulness interventions and intimate partner violence: Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), Cochrane, ProQuest, PsychInfo, PubMed, SOCindex, and Web of Science. The following terms were used to generate a search: Intimate partner violence, Domestic violence, Partner abuse, Intimate partner aggression, Mindfulness, Mindfulness based interventions, Mindfulness meditation, Mindfulness or mindful. Inclusion criteria for evaluated studies include female or male survivors of IPV, consideration of mindfulness-based and meditation-based interventions, and access to full text. Studies were excluded if it was written in a language other than English.

Findings: The search of the databases resulted in a total of 615 articles. After detailed evaluation of the titles, abstracts, and application of the eligibility criteria, a total of 6 studies were selected for evaluation. Four studies were randomized control trials, and two studies were quasi-experimental studies. All studies consisted of a mindfulness-based intervention including Mindfulness Approach, Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy, Trauma Informed Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction, and Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction. Review of the studies found that mindfulness-based interventions were effective for survivors of IPV by increasing awareness and self-compassion, improving emotional regulation and attentional control, and decreasing symptoms of PTSD, anxiety, and depression.

Conclusions: Despite the small number of studies that met the eligibility criteria, this systematic review demonstrated the effectiveness of mindfulness-based interventions in improving mental health outcomes among survivors of intimate partner violence. Mindfulness has the potential to be widely used as a self-care technique for mitigating the mental health effects of IPV.