

P03-162

MINDFULNESS MEDITATION, PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING AND RESILIENCE TO STRESS: DEVELOPMENT AND PILOT STUDY OF THE NEWLY DESIGNED MEDITATION BASED AWARENESS TRAINING

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Mindfulness meditation has been practiced in the Eastern world for more than 25 centuries but only recently it has become popular in the West. Today, therapeutic interventions such as 'Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction' are used within health services throughout Europe as a means of improving patient wellbeing. Whilst these interventions have proved successful in reducing stress and depression a limitation is that they tend to apply the practices of mindfulness in an 'out of context' manner. Meditation Based Awareness Training (MBAT), on the other hand, includes a composite array of 'spiritual-based' trainings, which are traditionally assumed to enhance the cultivation of a more sustainable quality of wellbeing within the meditator.

The purpose of this program is to design, implement, and evaluate MBAT as an approach to meditation and mindfulness that can be adapted to meet the needs of various populations. In the current phase, MBAT was developed in a general format for individuals from the general population who want to increase their levels of wellbeing. A controlled comparison trial has been run to evaluate this version of MBAT: Participants of the study undertook an 8-week MBAT program and comparisons were made with a control group on perceived psychological wellbeing (depression, anxiety, and anger management) and stress. In a second phase (not included in this presentation) MBAT will be adapted to populations with special needs, e.g., elderly people, trauma victims, and forensic inmates. Findings from the trial will be reported and implications for further development of MBAT will be discussed.