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Topic: 309 - Debate: Is Mindfullness an Evidence-Based Treatment?

IS MINDFULLNESS AN EVIDENCE-BASED TREATMENT?

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Derived from ancient Buddhist and Yoga practices, mindfulness is a mental state characterized by nonjudgmental awareness of the present moment experience while encouraging openness, curiosity, and acceptance. This skill can be learned through practice, and has be integrated in different clinical approaches.
Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) is a structured group programme conceived to alleviate suffering associated with physical, psychosomatic and psychiatric disorders.
A systematic review of RCTs on MBSR supports that this approach improves mental health in non-clinical and clinical populations. In clinical populations with psychiatric disorders, MBSR has some benefit as it reduces symptoms of distress, anxiety and depression or teaches patients coping skills to handle these symptoms.
Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), which is an adaptation of the MBSR programme, incorporates elements of cognitive therapy to prevent depressive relapse. Meta-analysis indicate that MBCT is an effective intervention for relapse prevention in patients with recurrent major depressive disorder in remission, at least in case of three or more previous episodes. Moreover, in two studies, MBCT was at least as effective as maintenance antidepressant medication.
While MBCT is a relapse prevention programme for patients in full remission, recent data suggest that it may be indicated also for people in partial remission, including those with quite significant residual depressive symptoms.

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