

Association between Mindfulness and Self-esteem among the medical students of NRI Institute of Medical Sciences, Sangivalasa.

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Abstract:

Introduction: Mindfulness is the psychological process of bringing one's attention to experiences occurring in the present moment. It contributes greatly to psychological well-being Mindfulness has been related to many positive outcomes, including healthy self-esteem. Self-esteem has been defined as the evaluation that an individual makes regarding him or herself, and reflects one's sense of individual competence and personal worth in dealing with life c

Aims: 1. To measure the level of mindfulness among the medical students. 2. To measure the level of self-esteem among the medical students. 3. To study the association between mindfulness and self-esteem among the medical students.

Materials and Methods: This is an observational cross-sectional study where the study sample consisted of 120 medical students of NRI Institute of Medical Sciences, Sangivalasa. Prior informed consent was taken and the study tools used were a semi-structured proforma to collect the sociodemographic data, The Rosenberg Self Esteem scale to measure the self-esteem and The Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory to measure the mindfulness. Descriptive and Correlational analysis of the data was carried out using SPSS software version 23.

Results: A total of 120 students participated in the study. A statistically significant positive correlation was found between the scores on the Rosenberg Self esteem scale and the Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory. ($r=0.252$, at $p<0.01$).

Conclusions: This study concludes that there is a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and mindfulness.

Key Words: Self-esteem, Mindfulness.

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I. Introduction

Several factors optimize human functioning, and contribute to psychological flourishing. Mindfulness is one such factor. Mindfulness is the psychological process of bringing one's attention to experiences occurring in the present moment. It contributes greatly to psychological well-being¹.

Mindfulness is also defined as the process of 'paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally. Bishop et al. (2004) propose that this self-regulation of attention facilitates an awareness of thoughts, emotions, and sensations that is based on the direct experience of these processes, as opposed to becoming involved in rumination or engaging in elaborative processing about these experiences.

Mindfulness can refer to a psychological trait known as dispositional mindfulness, to a state or quality of awareness, or to the practice of cultivating and enhancing mindfulness through meditation. Some authors propose that mindfulness has two key components: (1) self-regulation of attention and (2) a certain orientation to experience. Mindfulness has been related to many positive outcomes, including healthy self-esteem².

Self-esteem has been defined as the evaluation that an individual makes regarding him or herself, and reflects one's sense of individual competence and personal worth in dealing with life challenges. Self-esteem is an important construct, and is related to a variety of positive psychological outcomes, including overall psychological adjustment, positive emotion, social confidence, prosocial behavior, and life satisfaction.

Some studies have shown that mindfulness is also associated with higher levels of self – esteem. Here, we tried to find the association between mindfulness and self-esteem among the medical students of NRI Institute of Medical Sciences, Sangivalasa.

Aims and Objectives: 1. To measure the level of mindfulness among the medical students. 2. To measure the level of self-esteem among the medical students. 3. To study the association between mindfulness and self-esteem among the medical students.

II. Materials and Methods:

Study Design: Cross sectional observational study

Sampling Method: Convenience sampling

Inclusion criteria:

- Students studying in NRI Institute of Medical Sciences.

Exclusion criteria:

- Students with any medical illness.
- Students who refused to participate.

Operational Procedure:

Prior informed consent was taken and the study tools used were a semi-structured proforma to collect the sociodemographic data, The Rosenberg Self Esteem scale to measure the self-esteem and The Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory to measure the mindfulness.

Study Tools:

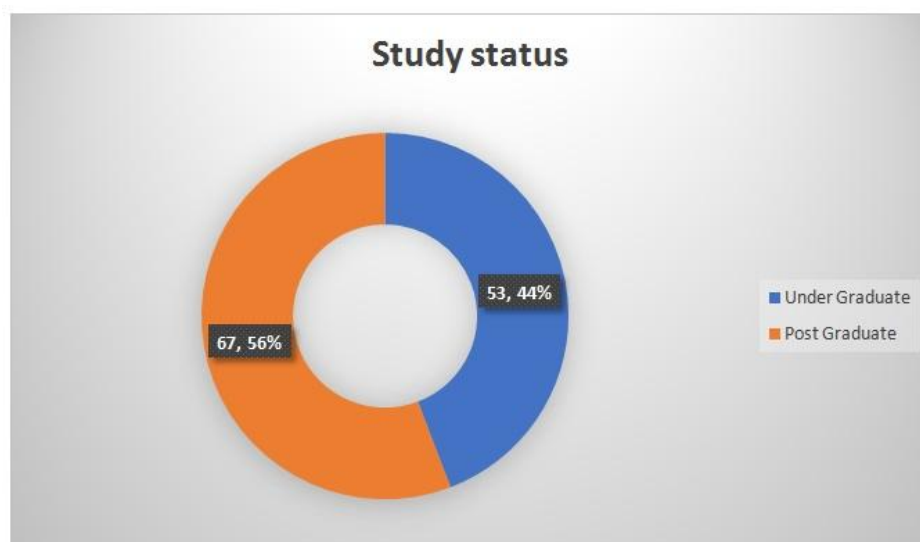
Self-designed semi-structured proforma was used to assess the sociodemographic data of the students.

Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory: The FMI is a useful, valid and reliable questionnaire for measuring mindfulness with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.86³. It is most suitable in generalized contexts. It is a 4-point Likert-scale containing 14 items, each ranging from "Rarely to Almost always".

Rosenberg Self- Esteem Scale: A 10-item scale that measures global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self⁴. The scale is believed to be unidimensional. All items are answered using a 4-point Likert scale format ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. It is a reliable and valid scale with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.86.

Statistical analysis: Statistical analysis of the data was carried out using SPSS software version 23. Mean and standard deviation were presented for all the continuous variables. To examine the relationship between mindfulness and self – esteem, correlation statistics were applied.

Results: A total of 120 students participated in the study. Of them, 69 were female and 51 were male. 57 of them were undergraduates and 63 were post graduates. The mean age of the sample was 25.28 years with a SD of 3.66. presence of family history was also assessed and 19 of the students reported a family history of mental illness. 27 of them were married and 93 were unmarried.



Association between Mindfulness and Self-esteem among the medical students of NRI Institute of

The mean score of the Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory was 38.91 with a SD Of 8.04 and the mean score of Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale was 22.79 with a SD of 3.08.

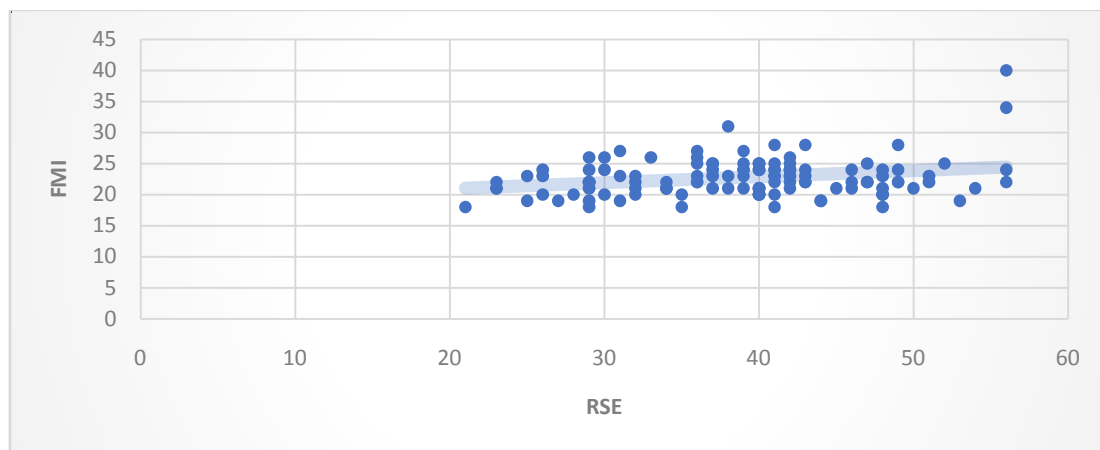
	Mean	SD
Age	25.28	3066
Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory	38.91	8.04
Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale	22.79	3.08

Using Pearson correlation statistics, a positive correlation was found between age and the scores on Rosenberg Self esteem scale with a r value of 0.077. A statistically significant positive correlation was found between the scores on the Rosenberg Self esteem scale and the Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory. ($r= 0.252$, at $p<0.01$).

Correlations

		RSE	FMI
Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale	Pearson Correlation	1	.252**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.005
	N	120	120
Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory	Pearson Correlation	.252**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	
	N	120	120

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).



The mean scores of Freiburg mindfulness inventory and Rosenberg Self-esteem scale were compared between the groups using T-test. The scores were higher in the Post graduates compared to the undergraduates in both the scales. However, the difference between the means was not statistically significant.

Group Statistics

	Sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T value
FMI	PG	63	39.52	8.977	.596
	UG	57	39.43	8.796	
RSE	PG	63	22.84	2.447	.189
	UG	57	22.73	3.795	

The scores were higher in the students having no family history of mental illness compared to those without a family history in both the scales. However, the difference between the means was not statistically significant.

Group Statistics

	FamilyHistoryofMentalIllness	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T value
FMI	Yes	19	38.95	7.710	0.020
	No	101	40.90	7.744	
RSE	Yes	19	22.89	4.806	0.108
	No	101	25.77	4.668	

Scores on both the Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory and the Rosenberg Self-esteem scale, were higher in the married persons compared to those who were unmarried.

Group Statistics

	Study	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T value
FMI	Married	27	38.74	7.615	0.145
	Unmarried	93	34.55	6.436	
RSE	Married	27	22.11	2.483	0.079
	Unmarried	93	20.18	2.368	

III. Discussion

Our findings clearly demonstrate that mindfulness is related to healthy self-esteem. The findings from our study replicated the established association between mindfulness and self-esteem from previous studies. Mindfulness involves a non-judgmental, open, and receptive stance to one's thoughts, emotions, and experiences (Baer et al., 2006)⁵, and this may allow individuals to be less consumed by harsh, critical, and judgmental thoughts about the self. The scores had a positive correlation with the age of the participants. Studies have shown that with age, people become more aware of themselves gaining more self-awareness. This objective self-awareness could lead to being more confident of oneself, leading to increased self-esteem. Also, with increase in age, people mature and tend to learn more to stay in the present, gain more self-esteem.

Also, the scores were higher in the post graduate group, compared to those in the undergraduate group. This could be because post graduates are older in age, have more coping skills, career stability. A stable career orientation gives a sense of achievement increasing the self-esteem. This emphasizes the need for imbuing more positive psychological education at the level of under graduation.

The scores were higher in people who were married compared to those who were unmarried. Family dynamics play an important role in maintaining self-esteem, and with good family support, people develop better coping skills to deal with problems, stay focused and be more in the present, compared to those who are unmarried.

The scores were less in those having a positive family history. Persons with positive family history are at risk of developing psychiatric illnesses and lesser self-esteem compared to others could contribute to future psychiatric manifestations such as depression etc.,

Positive psychological education in the form of mindfulness is a useful component that helps improve the self-esteem of individuals⁶. This analysis is in line with the current understanding of this association, as it appears that present-focused attention, a nonjudgmental, non-reactive, and accepting stance towards thoughts and emotions, and the ability to label thoughts and feelings, contributes to the development of healthy self-esteem.

IV. Conclusions

- a). There is a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and mindfulness.
- b). There is less mindfulness and self-esteem in persons who have a family history of mental illness.
- c). There is less mindfulness and self-esteem among the undergraduates as compared to the postgraduate students.

- Limitations:**
- a). Cross sectional study- the study only assesses the correlation between mindfulness and self-esteem at a given point of time.
 - b). Sample not representative of general population.

V. Recommendations

It would be better to assess the self-esteem at one point, give mindfulness therapy and then re assess the self-esteem, to know the positive effects of enhancing mindfulness on self-esteem. The same study could be replicated in persons with mental illness to assess the positive effects of the mindfulness therapy in them.

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