

The relevance of online delivery format for the efficacy of a mindfulness-based intervention in a student sample

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Abstract

The increasing mental health problems among university students during the COVID-19 pandemic have increased the demand for online interventions. A randomized controlled trial was used to investigate the benefits of a videoconference-delivered mindfulness training compared to a podcast-delivered training.

Fifty university students were randomized to a mindfulness-based intervention conducted by videoconference ($n = 25$) or provided by podcasts (unguided, $n = 25$). Participants in both groups took part in a 7-week mindfulness intervention. Outcome measures included mindfulness, depression, anxiety, and life satisfaction pre-and postintervention.

A larger decrease in depression in the videoconferencing group than in the podcast group was found. However, mindfulness and life satisfaction increased in both groups. The frequency of home practice was linked to positive changes in outcome measures, but only for the videoconferencing group.

The findings indicate that mindfulness training delivered via videoconferencing can be a viable option to address depressive symptoms among students. However, both interventions can be intervention tools to increase mindfulness and life satisfaction.

Keywords: delivery method, mental health, online mindfulness intervention, RCT, students