Critical Review:

Does mindfulness intervention improve quality of life and depression symptoms in individuals with traumatic brain injury?

Emily Stajov
M.CI.Sc SLP Candidate
University of Western Ontario: School of Communication Sciences and Disorders

This critical review examines the evidence of mindfulness-based intervention for individuals with traumatic brain injury and its effects on depression and quality of life. A literature search resulted in five relevant articles, including a randomized clinical trial, single group pre-post designs, and a mixed-methods study. The articles were evaluated on study design, methods, validity and importance for clinical practice. Overall, results suggest that mindfulness intervention may improve the quality of life and/or depression symptoms of individuals with traumatic brain injury, however the strength of the research is limited at this time. Recommendations for future research are discussed.

I

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) is a serious medical condition that results from an external blow to the head, causing an alteration in brain function (Menon, Schwab, Wright, & Maas, 2010). The effects of a TBI can be devastating, and result in physical, cognitive and psychological impairments (Azulay, Smart, Mott, & Cicerone 2013). It has been reported that 22-50% of individuals experience depression following a TBI (Gualtieri & Cox, 1991; McCleary et al., 1998). The effects of depression can be difficult to treat and are associated with reduced quality of

Single Group Pre-Post Study

- reducing depression following traumatic brain injury. *AdvMind BodyMed*, 26(1),14–20.
- Bedard, M., Felteau, M., Marshall, S., Cullen, N., Gibbons, C., Dubois, S., . . . Mazmanian, D. (2013). Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy reduces depression symptoms in people who have a traumatic brain injury: results from a randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Head Trauma Rehabilitation*. doi: 10.1097/HTR.0b013e3182a615a0
- Bohlmeijer, E., Prenger, R., Taal, E., & Cuijpers, P. (2010). The effects of mindfulness-based stress reduction therapy on mental health of adults with a chronic medical disease: a meta-analysis. *Journal of psychosomatic research*, 68(6), 539-544.
- Fjorback, L. O., Arendt, M., Ørnbøl, E., Fink, P., & Walach, H. (2011). Mindfulness! Based Stress Reduction and Mindfulness! Based Cognitive Therapy—a systematic review of randomized controlled trials. Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica, 124(2), 102-119
- Gaultieri, C., & Cox, D. (1991). The delayed neurobehavioral sequelae of traumatic brain injury. Brain Injury, 5, 219-232.
- Hart, T., Brenner, L., Clark, A. N., Bogner, J. A., Novack, T. A., Chervoneva, I., ... & Arango-Lasprilla, J. C. (2011). Major and minor depression after traumatic brain injury. Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, 92(8), 1211-1219.
- Kristofferson, G. (2012). The effects of a mindful based intervention on impulsivity, symptoms of