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Health benefits of mindfulness-based interventions for patients with inflammatory bowel disease: A systematic review and meta-analysis

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Introduction: Given that there is no cure for inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), psychosocial interventions have been recommended as an important component of complementary alternative therapies. Mindfulness-based interventions, a burgeoning psychological interventions, are increasingly used to reduce stress, alleviate psychological concerns and improve overall well-being in patients with other chronic disease. However, there are a lack of consensus regarding the effectiveness of mindfulness-based interventions in patients with IBD.

Objectives: We collected data to explore the efficacy of mindfulness-based interventions compared to treatment as usual, in treating psychosocial symptoms associated with IBD.

Methods: We conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. We included interventions focused on mindfulness-based stress reduction, mindfulness-based cognitive therapy, dialectical behavior therapy and acceptance and commitment therapy, with no restrictions on participants' age and disease severity. We searched the following electronic databases: MEDLINE, EMBASE, PsycINFO, CINAHL, the Cochrane Library, China

Biology Medicine, Chinese National Knowledge infrastructure, Wan Fang Data. The review was performed in accordance with Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses guidelines.

Results: We included six studies in the meta-analysis, with 400 patients. Mindfulness-based interventions showed significant effects on depression in both the short (SMD=-0.71; 95%CI: -1.20, -0.22; P=0.004) and long term (SMD=-0.53; 95%CI: -0.97, -0.10; P=0.02), short term effects on anxiety (SMD =-0.58; 95%CI: -1.03, -0.14; P=0.01), but not statistically significant improvements in QOL (SMD=0.18; 95%CI: -0.26, 0.61; P= 0.42) and not statistically significant effects on stress in both the short (SMD= -1.26; 95%CI: -2.99, 0.48; P=0.15), and long term (SMD=-0.82; 95%CI: -1.70, 0.06; P=0.07).

Conclusions: Mindfulness-based interventions are effective in alleviate depression and anxiety, but do not show an advantage in improving quality of life and reducing stress among patients with IBD. Further additional rigorously designed randomized controlled trials with larger sample size are urgently warranted to verify this conclusion.

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