



Mindfulness-Based Interventions: Efficacy in Reducing Symptoms of PTSD in Veterans

Gaia Akirav*

Department of Neurosciences, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, United States of America

DESCRIPTION

Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBIs) have emerged as a valuable therapeutic approach for addressing the complex symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), particularly among veterans who frequently experience high levels of trauma exposure and stress related to their military service. PTSD is characterized by persistent re-experiencing of traumatic events, avoidance of reminders of the trauma, negative alterations in cognition and mood and heightened arousal. These symptoms can severely impact the quality of life for veterans, leading to difficulties in personal relationships, employment challenges and co-occurring mental health issues such as depression and anxiety. As the prevalence of PTSD in veteran populations remains a significant concern, there is an urgent need for effective, accessible and evidence-based treatment options. This systematic review aims to evaluate the efficacy of mindfulness-based interventions in reducing PTSD symptoms among veterans, synthesizing current research findings and exploring the underlying mechanisms that contribute to their effectiveness [1].

Mindfulness, a practice rooted in ancient contemplative traditions, involves maintaining a non-judgmental awareness of the present moment. MBIs typically incorporate techniques such as mindful breathing, body awareness and guided meditation, encouraging participants to observe their thoughts and feelings without attachment or aversion. In the context of PTSD, mindfulness practices may help veterans develop greater emotional regulation, reduce rumination and enhance their ability to process traumatic memories. By fostering a mindful awareness of thoughts and feelings, veterans can learn to approach distressing symptoms with curiosity rather than fear, thereby reducing the intensity and frequency of PTSD-related symptoms [2].

A growing body of research has investigated the effectiveness of MBIs in various clinical settings and preliminary findings suggest that these interventions can significantly reduce PTSD symptoms in veteran populations. Several randomized controlled

trials have demonstrated that veterans participating in MBIs report lower levels of PTSD symptoms, reduced anxiety and improved emotional well-being compared to control groups receiving standard care or wait-list conditions. For example, studies utilizing the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program have shown promising results, with participants exhibiting significant improvements in PTSD symptom severity, overall psychological functioning and quality of life [3].

The mechanisms through which MBIs exert their effects on PTSD symptoms are multifaceted and warrant further exploration. One key aspect is the enhancement of emotional regulation skills. Veterans with PTSD often struggle with intense emotional responses, including anger, fear and sadness. By practicing mindfulness, individuals can learn to observe these emotions without becoming overwhelmed, fostering a sense of control over their emotional experiences. This ability to regulate emotions may contribute to a decrease in the reactivity associated with PTSD, allowing veterans to navigate their feelings with greater ease and resilience [4].

Additionally, MBIs may promote a sense of safety and acceptance, which is essential for individuals recovering from trauma. Many veterans experience feelings of shame, guilt, or isolation related to their traumatic experiences. Mindfulness practices encourage a compassionate and accepting attitude toward oneself, which can help mitigate these negative feelings. Through cultivating self-compassion, veterans may find it easier to confront and process their trauma, ultimately leading to a reduction in symptoms [5].

Another important mechanism is the impact of mindfulness on attention and cognitive processes. PTSD often involves intrusive memories and heightened hypervigilance, leading to difficulties in concentrating and engaging in daily activities. Mindfulness practices can help veterans train their attention, enhancing their ability to focus on the present moment rather than being preoccupied with distressing thoughts or memories. This shift in attention may contribute to decreased rumination and improved

Correspondence to: Gaia Akirav, Department of Neurosciences, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, United States of America, E-mail: gaia@akirav.com

Received: 30-Oct-2024, Manuscript No. JOP-24-27410; **Editor assigned:** 01-Nov-2024, PreQC No. JOP-24-27410 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 15-Nov-2024, QC No. JOP-24-27410; **Revised:** 21-Nov-2024, Manuscript No. JOP-24-27410 (R); **Published:** 29-Nov-2024, DOI: 10.35248/2378-5756.24.27.716

Citation: Akirav G (2024). Mindfulness-Based Interventions: Efficacy in Reducing Symptoms of PTSD in Veterans. *J Psychiatry*. 27:716.

Copyright: © 2024 Akirav G. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

cognitive functioning, thereby reducing the overall burden of PTSD symptoms [6].

Furthermore, the social aspects of mindfulness practice, particularly in group settings, may enhance the therapeutic effects of MBIs. Many mindfulness programs for veterans involve group participation, fostering a sense of community and shared experience among participants. This social support can be particularly beneficial for veterans, who may feel disconnected or isolated due to their experiences. The shared practice of mindfulness can create a safe space for veterans to explore their emotions and experiences, reducing feelings of loneliness and promoting connection [7-10].

CONCLUSION

Individual differences in responsiveness to mindfulness practices may influence treatment outcomes. Some veterans may initially struggle with mindfulness techniques or find it difficult to engage with the material due to their trauma history. Tailoring mindfulness interventions to meet the specific needs and preferences of veterans is essential for maximizing effectiveness. Moreover, ensuring accessibility and affordability of these programs is critical, as many veterans may face barriers to accessing mental health care.

REFERENCES

1. Davidson JR. Pharmacologic treatment of acute and chronic stress following trauma: 2006. *J Clin Psychiatry*. 2006;67(2):34-39.
2. Cohen BE, Shi Y, Neylan TC, Maguen S, Seal KH. Antipsychotic prescriptions in Iraq and Afghanistan veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder in Department of Veterans Affairs healthcare, 2007-2012. *J Clin Psychiatry*. 2015;76(4):1117.
3. Ahles EM, Shtasel DL. Usual course of treatment and predictors of treatment utilization for patients with posttraumatic stress disorder. *J Clin Psychiatry*. 2017;78(5):559-566.
4. Steenkamp MM, Litz BT, Hoge CW, Marmar CR. Psychotherapy for military-related PTSD: A review of randomized clinical trials. *Jama*. 2015;314(5):489-500.
5. Steenkamp MM, Litz BT, Marmar CR. First-line psychotherapies for military-related PTSD. *Jama*. 2020;323(7):656-657.
6. Wallace RK. Physiological effects of transcendental meditation. *Sci*. 1970;167(3926):1751-1754.
7. Wallace RK, Benson H. The physiology of meditation. *Sci Am*. 1972;226(2):84-91.
8. Chiesa A, Malinowski P. Mindfulness-based approaches: Are they all the same?. *J Clin Psychol*. 2011;67(4):404-24.
9. Hilton L, Maher AR, Colaiaco B, Apaydin E, Sorbero ME, Booth M, et al. Meditation for posttraumatic stress: Systematic review and meta-analysis. *Psychol Trauma: Theory Res Pract Policy*. 2017;9(4):453.
10. Nicotera N, Connolly MM. The influence of trauma-informed yoga (TIY) on emotion regulation and skilled awareness in sexual assault survivors. *Int J Yoga Therap*. 2020;30(1):19-31.