Abstract

Studies of mindfulness are consistent in their finding indicating that mindfulness can serve as a therapy model to deal with many psychological and physical problems, and improve wellbeing. Further, mindfulness is also found to enhance the moment to moment experience of individuals with better clarity of phenomenon. Interestingly, most of these studies have been conducted among seasoned practitioners or as long-format courses. Although long-format can be an ideal practice, it often proves to be expensive for many. Also, some people may not be able to practice in long-format due to several reasons. Thereby, it is imperative to investigate the benefits of short-format mindfulness exploring its utility and scalability. This experimental study examined the effect of short format mindfulness especially on affect and cognitive function. Participants (N=72; F=40, M=32) were randomly divided into an experimental group (N=35; M=15, F=20) and an active control group (N=37; M=17, F=20). The average age of participants in the experimental group and the active control group was 21.79 and 21.59 respectively. The experimental group practiced body-scan mindfulness, one session per day for six days, each session lasting for 25 minutes. Participants in the active control group spent an equal amount of time while reading fiction of their choice and listening to soothing music. Variables that were considered include positive and negative affects, and five cognitive functions namely psychomotor function, attention, learning, working memory-simple, and social-emotional cognition. Results showed an increase in positive affect and a decrease in negative affect, and an increase in performance in all five cognitive functions in the experimental group with an effect size ranging from mild to moderate, in comparison to active control. The study concluded that short format mindfulness practice, although may not be ideal, might be an alternative for individuals who due to various reasons cannot practice long format courses.