

# Hype or Hope:

## Mindfulness Training for Physicians

A Systematic Review of the Impact of Mindfulness-Based Interventions on Physicians' Well-being and Performance in Medical Practice

Prof. Kiki Lombarts, MSc PhD  
Amsterdam UMC, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Amsterdam Center  
for Professional Performance  
and Compassionate Care





# Research team

- Renee Scheepers, PhD:
  - Socio-Medical Sciences, Erasmus School of Health Policy and Management, Erasmus University of Rotterdam, The Netherlands
- Helga Emke, PhD candidate:
  - Department of Health Sciences, Faculty of Science, Free University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- Prof. Ronald Epstein, MD PhD:
  - Department of Family Medicine, Psychiatry & Oncology, University of Rochester Medical Center, Rochester, MI, United States
- Prof. Kiki Lombarts, PhD
  - Research group Professional Performance & Compassionate Care, Dep. Of Medical Psychology, Amsterdam University Medical Center, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands



# Professional Performance & Compassionate Care



Amsterdam Center  
for Professional Performance  
and Compassionate Care

- Research focus on measuring, clarifying and improving physicians' professional performance

3 Pillars of Professional Performance:

1. Constant pursuit of excellence
2. Humanistic Practice
3. Accountability

- **Physician well-being**
  - inherent part of professionalism
  - conditional for high quality patient care



# Interventions to improve well-being

## . Mindfulness-based interventions (MBI)

- “Purposeful and non-judgmental attention to present experiences, thoughts and feelings”
- Mindfulness meditation exercises
  - Breathing
  - Mind-body scanning

**JAMA Internal Medicine | [Original Investigation](#) | PHYSICIAN WORK ENVIRONMENT AND WELL-BEING**

## **Controlled Interventions to Reduce Burnout in Physicians**

### **A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis**

Maria Panagioti, PhD; Efharis Panagopoulou, PhD; Peter Bower, PhD; George Lewith, MD; Evangelos Kontopantelis, PhD; Carolyn Chew-Graham, MD; Shoba Dawson, PhD; Harm van Marwijk, MD; Keith Geraghty, PhD; Aneez Esmail, MD



# Effects of MBI

## Focus on present-moment

- Concentration & psychological distress

### → Well-being

- Stress
- Burnout

### → Performance

- Empathy: interpersonal domains
- Attention & awareness: safety domains



# This systematic review

- Effects of MBI on
  - Well-being
  - Performance



# Method

- PubMed & PsychInfo
  - Mindfulness
  - Physicians
- Abstract & full-text screening
  - Two researchers
- Quality assesment
  - Medical Education Research Study Quality Instrument\*



# Results

934 unique hits → 23 eligible articles

- Randomized controlled trials 6 studies
- Controlled trials 3 studies
- Pre-post studies 12 studies
- Interview study 2 studies
  
- Study quality
  - Average MERSQI score = 9.6





# Results

## Mindfulness-based interventions

- Group-based: 20 studies
- Individual-based: 3 studies
  
- Outcome measures
  - Well-being
    - Physical
    - Psychological
    - Occupational
  
  - Performance
    - Interpersonal
    - Safety



# Results

## ± Physical well-being

- Heart rate & blood pressure
- Self-reported physical health

## + Psychological well-being

- Anxiety
- Distress
- Mood
- Mental health
- Quality of life

## + Occupational well-being

- Burnout
- Dedication
- Empowerment at work
- Specialty satisfaction



# Results

- + Interpersonal performance
  - Empathy
  - Patient-centered communication
- ± Safety performance
  - Cognitive failures
  - Medical errors
  - Hand hygiene adherence



# Discussion

- Popularity of MBI
  - 19 out of 23 eligible studies: 2014-2018
- MBI: hype or hope?
  - Evidence-based hope
    - Psychological well-being
    - Occupational well-being
      - Negative & positive indicators
- Tailoring of MBI to different well-being needs
  - Prevention of burnout
  - Well-being promotion



# Discussion

- Mindfulness & performance
  - Empathic communication
  - Patient safety
- Physicians
  - Listening
  - Attentive to concerns
  - Effective responses
- Patients
  - Patient-centred
  - Rapport building
  - Discussion of psychosocial issues



# Discussion

- Limitations
  - Long-term outcomes
  - Patient-reported outcomes
  - More RCT's
  - Placebo-interventions?
- Directions for future research
  - Knowledge gaps
  - Standardization of MBI

Thank you!



**Prof. dr. Kiki Lombarts,**  
Amsterdam UMC, University of Amsterdam

[m.j.lombarts@amsterdamumc.nl](mailto:m.j.lombarts@amsterdamumc.nl)