

Mindfulness-based relapse prevention and individual functions of substance abuse

We investigated the individual functions of substance abuse and the effect of a mindfulness-based relapse prevention program (MBRP, Marlatt) specifically on these functions. We also observed possible side effects and contraindications of MBRP.

Our study population consisted of 73 male and 74 female patients mostly addicted to alcohol but also to cocaine, cannabis or heroine who participated in outpatient MBRP program in Brugmann University Hospital or Enaden addiction center between 2015 and 2019.

We developed a questionnaire about the individual functions of substance abuse in the categories of pleasure, emotion regulation, stress, relationship problems with others and oneself. In a second part patients were asked to score the effect of the completed training on the same items. 32 completely filled in questionnaires were included.

Patients gave high scores for the function of substance abuse in all of the proposed categories. We also found high scores of the effect of mindfulness in all of them. The different functions of substance abuse as well as the effect of mindfulness showed strong individual variance. Side effects and contraindications were observed and described.

Conclusion :

- Mindfulness training can have a positive impact on many of the core functions of substance abuse and therefore may help patients to overcome the deeper reasons behind their addictions.
- Indications, side effects and contraindications are to be taken into account when using mindfulness-based treatment with psychiatric patients.

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