



An Experimental Prospective Study on Effectiveness of Brief Heartfulness-Based Start 'U'p Program on Anxiety and Perceived Stress in Allied Health Students

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BACKGROUND

- Stress & anxiety among paramedical students is an area of increasing concern worldwide.^{1,2,3}
- Mental Healthcare management is an important issue in the development of countries.⁴
- Meditation is a tool that has been used since ancient times to treat stress-related conditions and promote overall wellness.⁵



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To determine the efficacy and feasibility of a brief Heartfulness-based Start 'U'p program to reduce anxiety & stress in allied health students of MGMSBS, MGMIHS, Navi Mumbai.



METHODS

- A total of 308 students (Academic year 2020-21) of MGM Teaching hospital met the inclusion criteria of our study, however, only 203 students voluntarily agreed to participate in the study.
- A quasi-experimental study with two repeated measures (pre and post) was performed.
- Participants received instructions from a Heartfulness certified trainer. 7 sessions of Start 'U'p Heartfulness Meditation of 2 hours duration was carried out, once in every week.
- Research tools such as Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) and Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) were used.

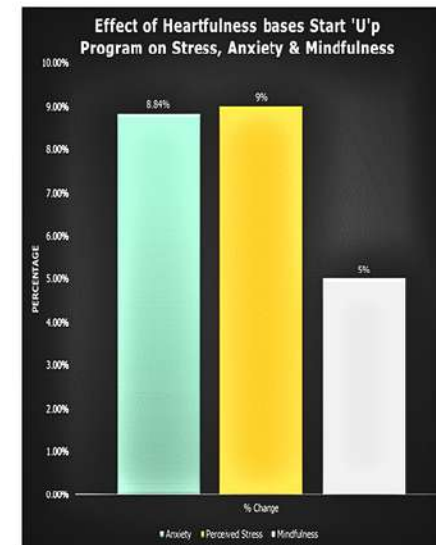


Figure 1 Effect of Heartfulness based Start 'U'p Programme on anxiety, stress & mindfulness among paramedical students



Figure 2. Participants undergoing Heartfulness Meditation

Table 1 Mean outcomes of participants in a study to assess the effect of Brief Heartfulness-Based Start 'U'p meditation sessions on stress, anxiety, and mindfulness of allied health college students

| Outcome | Baseline mean | 7 weeks mean | Difference mean | p-value ^a |
|-------------------------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Anxiety ^b | 32.93 | 30.02 | 2.91 | < 0.001 |
| Perceived stress ^c | 17.89 | 16.28 | 1.61 | 0.006 |
| Mindfulness ^d | 115.7 | 121.38 | 5.68 | 0.005 |

^ap-values were calculated using the Wilcoxon signed rank test due to non-normal paired data.

^bAs determined by the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI).

^cAs determined by the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS).

^dAs determined by the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ Total).



RESULTS

- Out of 203 students in this study, 75.86% were female and 24.14% were male.
- Students' BAI scores dropped an average of 2.91 points, whereas PSS scores dropped an average of 1.61 points. The largest increase in mindfulness was seen for non-judging, with an average increase of 2.1 points
- Statistically significant changes ($p < 0.05$) in categorical data from pre- to post-intervention on the BAI and PSS tool were obtained post-intervention.



CONCLUSIONS

- Our results indicate mere the glimpse of meditation offers an accessible and efficient method to reduce anxiety & stress in allied health students.
- Therefore, this study suggests that a continuation of this practice with engagement in learning-oriented objectives will improve overall mental health and thereby holistic development of the students.



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