

MSc. Thesis - L. Drvaric; McMaster University - Psychology, Neuroscience & Behavior

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TITLE: Impact of One Session of Mindfulness vs. Cognitive Restructuring Skills on  
Worry and Associated Symptoms in Generalized Anxiety Disorder AUTHOR: Lauren  
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## Abstract

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is recognized as an evidenced-based psychological treatment for Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD). Despite proven efficacy of CBT (i.e., large effect sizes), not everyone responds. One promising alternative approach is Mindfulness-based therapy, which has been shown to be effective in preliminary research in GAD. The purpose of this study was to directly compare a brief (1 hour) Mindfulness to CBT intervention to determine efficacy in reducing excessive worry and associated anxiety symptoms in a GAD population. Forty-five participants with a principal diagnosis of GAD were assessed by the Structured Clinical Interview for DSM Disorders (SCID-IV) and randomly assigned to one of three conditions: Mindfulness, CBT, or Information (control condition). Following the intervention, all participants completed daily practice for one week. Assessment consisted of self-report measures of worry and factors associated with GAD symptoms pre-and post-intervention. Overall findings did not support the main hypothesis that the brief interventions (Mindfulness and CBT) would be associated with a significant reduction in worry compared to the control group. However, group differences on factors associated with GAD were found. Individuals in the CBT condition reported a significant reduction in current level of general anxiety symptoms compared to the Mindfulness and Information conditions. Individuals in both CBT and Mindfulness conditions reported a significant reduction in current stress symptoms compared to the Information condition. In addition the CBT condition also demonstrated a trend for reduction in symptoms of depression compared to both Mindfulness and Information conditions. In summary, although a more intensive intervention may be

needed to affect chronic worry, the CBT intervention was associated with greater benefit than the mindfulness intervention and may be useful as a brief pre-treatment intervention for individuals on a waitlist for standard treatment.

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## List of Abbreviations

- i. GAD - Generalized Anxiety Disorder
- ii. CBT - Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- iii. MBCT - Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy
- iv. MBSR - Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction
- v. SCID - Structured Clinical Interview for Diagnostic Statistical Manual Disorders
- vi. DSM-IV - Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Disorders, Version 4
- vii. ATRC - Anxiety Treatment & Research Centre
- viii. ANOVA - Analysis of Variance
- ix. TEF - Therapy Evaluation Form
- x. GAD-7 - Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7-item
- xi. PSWQ - Penn State Worry Questionnaire
- xii. MWQ - Meta-Worry Questionnaire
- xiii. BMWS - Brief Measure of Worry Severity
- xiv. TCQ - Thought Control Questionnaire
- xv. MCQ-30 - Meta-Cognitions Questionnaire 30-item
- xvi. IUS - Intolerance of Uncertainty
- xvii. DASS-21 - Depression, Anxiety, Stress Scales 21-item
- xviii. PHQ-15 - Patient Health Questionnaire 15-item

### Declaration of Academic Achievement

I am pleased to be declaring my research contribution in the form of my Master's Thesis to the field of psychology, as well as that of my supervisor, Dr. Randi McCabe, and collaborators, Dr. Brenda Key and Dr. Karen Rowa.