Do Times Change?: Buffering Effects of Mindfulness for College Students and Older Adults

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Stress & Depressive Symptoms

- Current work suggests an association between chronic or acute stress and depressive symptoms, although the exact cause(s) are still being investigated (Hammen, Kim, Eberhart, & Brennan, 2009).
- Nearly 45% of adults report more stress in their daily lives than they did even five years ago (Simon & Zieve, 2013).
- If Stress is increasing, is there anything we can do about the potential increase in depressive symptoms?

Buffering Effects of Mindfulness

- Mindfulness promotes nonjudgmental awareness of an individual's present experience (Kabat-Zinn, 2009; Teper, Segal, & Inzlicht, 2013).
- Mindfulness skills encourage individuals to observe their thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations without immediately reacting, in other words, to act skillfully in one's life in the moment between awareness and reaction (Blacker, Meleo-Meyer, Kabat-Zinn, & Santorelli, 2009).
- Physiologically, mindfulness has shown to decrease heart rate, respiratory rate, and blood pressure, as well as combat fatigue and sleep interruptions (Carlson & Garland, n.d.; Matchim et al., 2011).

Measures

- **Perceived Stress and Management**. (e.g. “In the past month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle personal problems?”; Cohen et al., 1988). Scores could range from (1 = never; 5 = very often; α = .89).
- **Depressive symptoms.** CES-D 10 (Andresen et al., 1994). (e.g., “I was bothered by things that don’t usually bother me.”) Scale from (0 = rarely or none of the time; 3 = most of the time; α = 80).
- **Trait Mindfulness.** (e.g., I find myself preoccupied with the future or the past) adapted from The MAAS (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Scale (0 = almost never; 5 = almost always; α = .90).

Sample Characteristics and T-tests of Key Variables

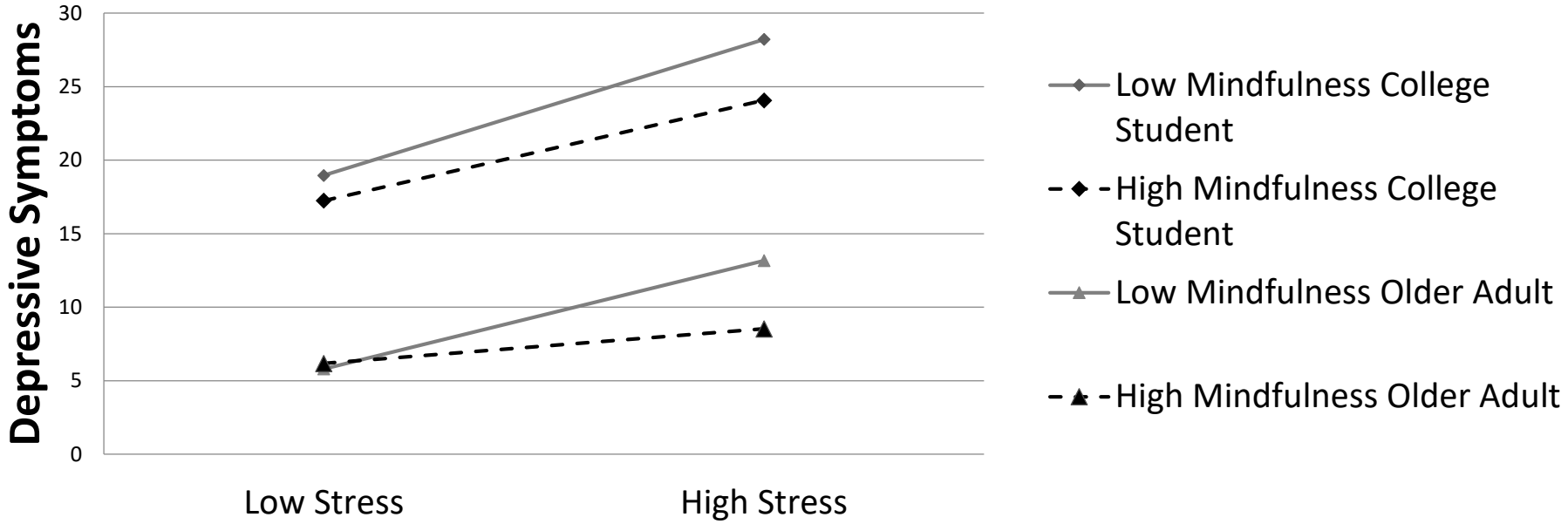
Variable	College Student Mean (SD)	Older Adult Mean (SD)
Age	20.22 (2.27)	67.67 (9.13)***
Years of Education	14.52 (1.38)	16.95 (2.15)***
Ethnicity (% Caucasian)	68.3%	94.3%***
Gender (% Female)	55.9%	68.2%*
Marital Status (% Married)	1%	59.1%***
Median Income	$25,000-$29,000	$40,000-$59,000***
Self-rated Health	3.36 (.97)	3.82 (.92)**
Alcohol Consumption	2.91 (1.83)	3.88 (2.34)***
Stress	30.37 (6.75)	22.79 (5.97)***
Mindfulness	31.63 (8.81)	40.76 (6.56)***
Depressive Symptoms	20.57 (6.41)	14.47 (4.94)***

Results

Final Models for the Associations Between Mindfulness, Stress, and Depressive Symptoms

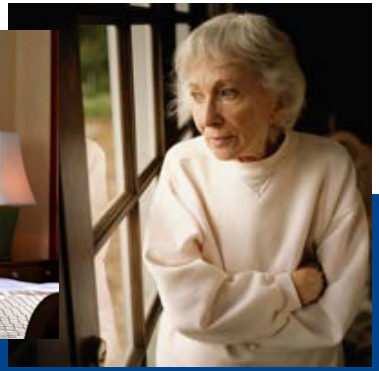
	College Students (N = 168)		Older Adults (N = 76)	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
	B	B	B	B
Gender[a]	2.62**	-.09	.36	.32
Income	-.31*	-.21*	-.39	.93***
Alcohol Consumption	.66**	.43*	.13	.11
Self-rated Health	-1.44**	-.50	-1.42*	-.78*
Stress		.49***		.41***
Mindfulness		-.22***		-.16*

Moderating effects of mindfulness and stress on depressive symptoms



Implications

- Providers may consider the importance of mindfulness on perceived stress and management and depressive symptoms.
- The results from this study would be useful for college counselors who could incorporate activities that focus on mindfulness in order to help reduce college students stress levels and susceptibility to psychological distress
- And for senior centers or other places working with older adults



Questions