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PROCEEDINGS

OF THE III INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND PRACTICAL
CONFERENCE

**“PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH OF THE PERSON:
LIFE RESOURCE AND LIFE POTENTIAL”**

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Proceedings of the III International Scientific and Practical Conference “Psychological Health of the Person: Life Resource and Life Potential”

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РЕПОЗИТОРИЙ БГПУ

Part 5. ASSESSMENT OF HEALTH SAVING AND HEALTH DEVELOPING
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POSSIBILITIES OF THE MINDFULNESS-BASED TECHNIQUE
FOR CORRECTION OF IMPAIRED SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS
IN THE PRESENCE OF PSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to analyze the researches of efficiency of mindfulness practices in the course of working with self-consciousness of personality in mental disorders. The therapeutic possibilities of use of the methods based on Mindfulness aimed at the correction of self-consciousness disorders are summarized. There is the increasing of awareness of negative thoughts and feelings in the process of using such programs. It allows to track them down and to stop the process of formation of mental rumination. For these reasons, interventions based on meditative practices have proven to be an effective therapeutic tool for depressive and anxiety disorders, which are often trigger and accompany other mental disorders, including those associated with dysfunction of self-consciousness. The results of the foreign researches testify that Mindfulness-meditation can be effective in preventing schizophrenia spectrum disorder, clinical depression, traumatic and stress disorders, bipolar affective disorder. The technology has been successfully used for rehabilitation of patients developing their self-control, attention, organization, stress resistance, impulses control.

Keywords: mindfulness, self-consciousness, schizophrenia spectrum disorders, schizophrenia, psychosis, self-consciousness disorders

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Relevance

At the present time, there is a growing popularity of mindfulness-based psychotherapeutic methods in the West (Panayiotou, Karekla, & Panayiotou, 2014; Prouvost, Calamari, & Woodard, 2016; Stein, 2015; Dijkerman, 2015; Edgar, Kitzinger, & Kitzinger, 2015; Touskova T., & Bob P, 2015). Mindfulness is defined as a non-judgmental attention focusing on the present moment with full concentration on it and registration of the various aspects of reality without trying to analyse and interpret them (Bishop, 2004; Brown, 2003; Kabat-Zinn, 1982). Empirically and theoretically substantiated programs based on this method are mostly composed of meditative techniques that can be used to achieve psychotherapeutic, relaxation and developmental effects (including the formation of cognitive processes) (Bishop, 2004; Brown, 2003; Chiesa, 2011; Kabat-Zinn, 1982; Segal, 2002).

State of the problem

Mindfulness-based practices are widely used not only in the treatment of depression and prevention of its recurrence, stress decrease and functionality improvement (Brown, 2003; Segal, 2002; Teasdale, 1995), but also in working with self-consciousness. In particular, researchers are exploring the effects of mindfulness-based practices on the formation, development and correction of self-consciousness in health and mental disorders. The legality of the use of correction programmes is based on mindfulness-based techniques as additional methods of various mental disorders treatment (including anxiety, depression, substance use disorders and other mental impairments, accompanied by self-consciousness disorders) (Hazif-Thomas, Stephan, Walter, & Thomas, 2015; Fuente, 2016; Zhou, Zhang, Yin, & Yang, 2015; Berezovskaya, & Tichonova, 2012). There is an increase of awareness of negative thoughts and feelings in the process of using such programmes. This increase of awareness allows tracking down negative thoughts and feelings and stopping the process of mental rumination. For these reasons, interventions based on meditative practices have proven to be an effective therapeutic tool for depressive and anxiety disorders, which often trigger and accompany other mental disorders, including those associated with dysfunction of self-consciousness (Hunot et al, 2010; Segal et al, 2002; Teasdale, 1995).

Judson A. Brewer and his colleagues from Yale University monitored the brain activity of the experienced mindfulness-based practice meditators and beginners with the use of functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). The researchers concluded that meditation practices have a “decelerating” effect on the human brain’s default mode network which plays an important role in self-consciousness and, at the same time, is involved in the processes of random obsessive thoughts appearance – rumination (Garrison, Brewer et al, 2013). Limitation of the “self-examination” neural activity prevents the mind from a centering on the self, a deep immersion in one’s own thoughts, from high anxiety, low efficiency – symptoms of various psychiatric disorders, including autism and schizophrenia. The process of mindfulness-based meditation, regardless of subspecies practice, causes a reduction of activity in some areas of the cerebral cortex (the medial prefrontal and posterior cingulate). In addition, people practicing mindfulness-based meditation activate areas of the brain engaged in cognitive control. The researchers believe that the practice of meditation allows balancing “self-examination” activity of consciousness, keeping it in the moment and at the same time maintaining contact with the outside world (Garrison, Brewer et al, 2013).

Some studies report the effectiveness of mindfulness-based practices in the treatment of dysfunctional reactions to severe stress, as well as the accompanying anxiety, depression and dissociative disorders with self-consciousness disorders as a component of clinical picture (depersonalization, derealization) (Frewen et al., 2015; King et al., 2016). Mindfulness-based practices are considered to be an effective tool in dealing with traumatic and stress disorders (including PTSD), due to reduction of symptoms severity, self-regulation skills improvement and an increase in the level of subjective well-being (Frewen et al., 2015; King et al, 2016).

Materials and methods

Regular use of mindfulness-based techniques in case of bipolar affective disorder is reported to provide a significant reduction of anxiety and depressive symptoms, as well as to improve patients’ emotional regulation (Gotink et al., 2015). The results of the recent research indicate that awareness can reduce clinical manifestations of schizophrenia (Tabak et al, 2015). Thus, the researchers conclude that the use of mindfulness practices by people

who were diagnosed with schizophrenia and who expressed specificities in self-consciousness work and problems with social adaptation (motivation problems, emotion regulation disorders, dysfunctional relationships, etc.) helps to reduce these negative symptoms (Tabak et al., 2015).

L.W. Davis, A.M. Strasburger and L.F. Brown have proved that mindfulness-based technique is effective in reducing symptoms of anxiety disorders in people with schizophrenia and schizophrenia spectrum disorders (Davis et al., 2007). The practicing of mindfulness-based techniques by people with these disorders contributes to the effectiveness of anxiety and stress management. Mindfulness-based approach is reported to have a restorative effect in the treatment of patients with schizophrenia after the acute phase of the disorder. Particularly, teaching these patients how to monitor and manage symptoms of their disease facilitates reaching mental stability, accelerates adaptation, improves well-being and causes the formation of a more adequate and complete identity (Davis, Kurzban, 2012).

W.T. Chien & D.R. Thompson investigated the mindfulness-based technique effectiveness in the treatment of people with schizophrenia with respect to reducing recurrence (Chien, Thompson, 2014). People practicing mindfulness-based meditation demonstrated symptomatic relief, reduction in the number of symptoms, duration and severity of the acute phase of mental disorder and a significant improvement in self-awareness, including awareness of the signs of illness, duration of remission, tracking changes in their condition and rehospitalization time (Chien, Thompson, 2014). L.W. Davis and his colleagues demonstrated the effectiveness of mindfulness-based technique in the rehabilitation and recovery of patients with schizophrenia and schizoaffective disorder (Davis et al, 2015). The participants who had learned the practice of mindfulness showed higher operability after leaving the hospital, in comparison with groups of intensive support. The difference between the practitioners of mindfulness-based technique and the patients who received a standard assistance increased over time: those who were practicing meditation demonstrated the increase in productivity, efficiency and motivation for professional activity (Davis et al, 2015).

Until recently, clinicians believed the application of mindfulness-based practice to be harmful for patients with psychotic disorders. However, in recent years, mindfulness-based approach used in an adapted form has been reported to be safe for this category of

patients and, moreover, to have a therapeutic effect. Thus, P. Chadwick notes that therapeutic intervention based on mindfulness-based approach, allows patients to learn to respond to their symptoms more constructively (Chadwick, 2014). Instead of the usual patterns of responding to the occurrence of symptoms (mood decline, trying to mask or completely deny the symptoms) in case of a regular practice of mindfulness-based technique, some skills appear that help recognize, accept and carefully introspect without an immediate response. According to the results of experimental studies conducted by P. Chadwick, the use of meditative practices by people suffering from psychotic disorders helps them to learn how to recognize negative reactions, to increase the degree of self-acceptance, to adopt the disease and experience associated with the disease, to realize the importance of their reactions to painful feelings. None of the participants reported any adverse effects of these practices (Chadwick, 2014).

In C. Randal and his colleagues' study after passing the 8-step program of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy participants suffering from psychosis demonstrated improved self-assessment skills and the ability to act more consciously. The use of mindfulness-based technique in working with such patients contributes to the increase in self-understanding, improvement of interpersonal perception and general psychophysical recovery (Randal et al., 2015).

As A.C. Tong & J.J. Lin suggest, after practicing mindfulness-based techniques psychotic patients demonstrated a significant reduction in their depressive status, improvement of their quality of life, and their ability to distinguish sensations, emotions, feelings to response constructively. Participants also reported the positive effect of the practice on their emotional state as a whole (Tong et al., 2015).

Conclusion

Summing up the results of foreign research on mindfulness-based methods efficiency, it should be noted that mindfulness-based meditation can be an effective means of prevention and symptom relief in a variety of neuropsychiatric disorders, including disorders of self-consciousness (schizophrenia spectrum disorder, clinical depression, traumatic and stress disorders, bipolar affective disorder).

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