

Name: Diane Nash-McFeron

Title – Mindfulness in the treatment of chronic headache pain

Review Date: 4/10/05

Overall Significance/Relevance – This study seeks to test the efficacy of a mindfulness-meditation intervention to reduce pain and increase quality of life and sense of control in a population of neurology patients diagnosed with chronic headache pain. While uncontrolled trials suggest mindfulness may be a particularly effective intervention for patients suffering from chronic pain, to date, there have been no published randomized trials of mindfulness for chronic pain. The proposed study therefore has the potential to add significantly to the growing body of literature on mindfulness. In addition, it will test the effects of mindfulness on sense of control, which may be an important clinical outcome in its own right as well as a potentially important mediating variable (see suggestions below).

Does Study Test the Multidimensional Aspects of Control Theory & Research? – Yes (see above).

Methodology – The proposed design is pre-post test, experimental design using a wait-list as the control condition. Forty patients will be randomized and assessments (control, quality of life, and pain) made pre- and post intervention.

Specific Comments/Suggestions –

1. The applicant, Ms. Nash, discusses her collaborator Dr. Liu's experience/training in mindfulness-based interventions but does not mention her own. As discussed by Kabat-Zinn and others, having personal experience with mindfulness practice is believed to be crucial to one's being able to effectively guide others in learning the practice. It would therefore be helpful to know what her experience and background in this regard since she will be co-facilitating the groups.
2. It would be important to clearly indicate when the assessments will actually be given (i.e., the specific time points for both experimental and control groups).
3. A suggestion about analyzing the control data – While it will certainly be interesting to test the direct effects of the mindfulness intervention on the various control dimensions, it would also be interesting and potentially important to examine control as a mediator of clinical change – i.e., to what extent might increases in sense of control or changes in agency, moods, etc. mediate any improvements observed in quality of life and pain outcomes. In other words, does mindfulness help to reduce pain, in part, because it increases patient's sense of control? This can be tested statistically, at least in a preliminary fashion even with a relatively small sample size.

goal

very good
John

when from?