

MBSR vs. Aerobic Exercise in Social Anxiety: fMRI of Emotion Regulation of Negative Self-Beliefs.

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Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) is thought to reduce emotional reactivity and enhance emotion regulation in patients with social anxiety disorder (SAD). The goal of this study was to examine the neural correlates of deploying attention to regulate responses to negative self-beliefs using functional magnetic resonance imaging. Participants were 56 patients with generalized SAD in a randomized controlled trial who were assigned to MBSR or a comparison aerobic exercise (AE) stress reduction program. Compared to AE, MBSR yielded greater (a) reductions in negative emotion when implementing regulation, and (b) increases in attention-related parietal cortical regions. Meditation practice was associated with decreases in negative emotion and social anxiety symptom severity, and increases in attention-related parietal cortex neural responses when implementing attention regulation of negative self-beliefs. Changes in attention regulation during MBSR may be an important psychological factor that helps to explain how mindfulness meditation training benefits patients with anxiety disorders.

Soc Cogn Affect Neurosci. 2012 May 13. Goldin P, Ziv M, Jazaieri H, Hahn K, Gross JJ. Ph.D., Department of Psychology, Jordan Hall, Bldg. 420, Stanford, CA 94305-2130, Telephone: 650-723-5977, Fax: 650-725-5699 pgoldin@stanford.edu.

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