

Assignment Two

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Meditation Postures



Introduction

Complementary therapy encompasses a range of practices and philosophies that have become more popular over the years. More and more people are becoming aware that orthodox therapy is not the only form of treatment. Doolan and Carne (2021) highlights the evidence from the British Parliament to support the idea that complementary therapy use is increasing in Britain.

This academic report will be giving an overview of complementary therapies and the current systems utilised to regulate the treatments. The history, uses, efficacy and contraindications of meditation and how it compares to more traditional treatments will be explored. An evaluation of the statutory membership bodies that govern meditation practitioners in the United Kingdom will be discussed. The ethical considerations as regards meditation treatment will be discussed. Finally, recommendations will be given as regards meditation treatment. (There are some references used in this report that are not from the United Kingdom but are relevant to the report and have been utilised to give a wider perspective regarding meditation.)

Complementary Therapies Overview

Complementary therapy encompasses a variety of treatments, that are different from orthodox treatment. Robson (2020) explains complementary therapy as a variety of healthcare practices, that are not practiced normally in that country and are not fully consolidated into their main health care structure. It is therefore sometimes difficult for individuals to make sense of the modalities of complementary therapies.

Complementary therapies are treatments that, have the ability to heal the mind, body and soul. These kinds of therapies could be used on their own; or sometimes used in combination with more traditional therapies. Crop et al (2018) agree with this line of thought, and states that complementary therapies are well-liked by patients; and often used with orthodox healthcare. To make sure the public is protected, there are a few ways, that this is done, such as traditional herbal remedies are regulated by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and display the Traditional Herbal Registration (THR) logo before they can be sold to the public. (Medicines and Healthcare Regulations Agency, 2021). There are also various regulatory bodies that protect the public as well as the practitioners, such as the British Acupuncture Council, and the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (2020). They regulate various complementary practitioners such as Aromatherapists, Alexander Technique teaching, Reflexologists and Sports Therapists.

History of Meditation

Meditation comes from the Latin word *merdi* which means 'to cure'. (Hoge et al, 2020). Meditation is classified as one of the complementary therapies, it is utilised on its own or can be used in combination with more orthodox treatments, it has been in existence for many years. Meditation works on the mind of people, and it has its origin in spiritual practice. The main goal of meditation was to raise human awareness through the training of the human mind. (Neto, 2018). The word meditation comes from the Latin verb *meditatum* which means 'to ponder, (Mead, 2020). Meditation is a process in which a person is able, focus on a particular thought or activity. Jia et al (2020) define meditation as a form of psychological training aimed at enhancing one's psychological abilities such as attention and emotional self-regulation. Meditation has been in existence for centuries and was known to China and India, in the Hinduism and Buddhism religions. The oldest evidence of meditation is around the 6th to 5th centuries which were developed in Taoist China and Buddhist India. (Mindworks.org, 2020). Over the years meditation has spread to the western world and has become popular.

The Use of Meditation

Jia et al (2020) carried out research as regards individuals using meditation and a vegan diet, the outcome was that long term vegan meditation has a positive effect in one's immunity and metabolic levels which improves the health of all parts of the body. There are various types of meditations however the two main types are concentrative meditation and mindfulness meditation. Mindfulness meditation requires, no gurus, no community, no money, as it works on the mind. (Hoge et al, 2020). Mindfulness meditation is very useful when it comes to making people concentrate on the present moment. Mindfulness meditation can help slow things down and bring one's attention to the present moment (Niksirat et al, 2017). Meditation works on the human mind, it can be utilized for various conditions, it is used by itself as therapy or with more traditional forms of therapies. It can be used for skin conditions, Shenefelt (2017) explains that the medical usage of meditation in the treatment of skin conditions, include relaxation, to promote healing of skin disorders.

Meditation can also be used for the treatment of anxiety. Bamber and Morpeth (2018) argue that mindfulness meditation is an approach to anxiety reduction comprise of self-regulation and orientation. Asthma patients, are known to benefit from meditation therapy. This thought is agreed by Paudyal et al (2017) as results of individual trials carried out on asthma patients to see if there were any effects on patients who participated in meditation, the result,

demonstrated that meditation improved their quality of life. Meditation has also been found to be effective in the use of lowering blood pressure; a study carried out by Park and Han (2017) highlighted that the use of meditation decreased the participants' blood pressure.

Efficacy of Meditation

When people want to meditate, what they will be focusing on are its safety and how successful it has been for others. It is vital that any treatment or therapy that is used is safe for individuals; however, this is where efficacy comes to play. It is vital that those that practice meditation are sure that it will not cause harm, and not only that, the desired effect; is what they get. The efficacy of meditation can be seen in various studies that have been undertaken Huberty et al (2021) carried out a randomized study on a group of students, by undertaking meditation via a mobile app known as clam. The result of the research showed that clam was a very effective app in delivering mindfulness meditation to the students for reducing their stress. However, more research is still needed. Smoking research undertaken as regards mindful meditation been effective in smoking cessation highlighted that no noticeable differences were seen on those participants that did not smoke or how many cigarettes were smoked daily. (Maglione et al, 2017). This research demonstrates that meditation had no visible effect on the participants of the smoking cessation research.

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Contra Indications of Meditation

Farias et al (2020) emphasize that there are growing concerns for the safety of meditation, when meditation is used correctly it can have a lot of benefits; however, there are times when it could lead to hallucinating, unwanted signs such as jerks, uncontrollable motions, sudden brief sensation of heat, very hot feelings and oversensitivity. Some individuals are not suited for the use of meditation Neto (2018) undertook a study and it was stated that people with severe psychotic illness meditate with caution, and meditation, should only be carried out by experienced and advanced teachers. Farias et al (2021) stated that in 1977 the American Psychiatric Association stated in a publication, that research was found which indicated earliest meditation manuals like the Buddhist Dharmatrata Meditation Scripture also stress that meditation must be practised properly, as it could cause the mind, to become unsteady, uneasy or disoriented.

Individuals that have pre-existing anxiety may experience 'relaxation – induced anxiety, this line of thought is supported by Jarret (2017) she highlights that meditation is not completely risk-free, people with pre-existing severe anxiety can notice that they can get relaxation –

induced anxiety, it is therefore recommended that if an individual has a pre-existing mental health illness professional advice is sought before carrying out any form of meditation; this is also supported by Compson (2018) who states that certain meditation practices may be contraindicated to those that have a previous history of mental health issues.

Governing Body for Meditation Practitioners

There is no official statutory governing body for those that practice meditation however there are voluntary bodies that meditation practitioners are able to join, The two main bodies, in London, are London Buddhist Centre and Transcendental Meditation. London Buddhist Centre teaches, mindfulness of inhaling and exhaling which increases awareness, tranquillity and Metta bhavana. Transcendental Meditation was founded by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, individuals are also taught how to meditate. Even though there is no official governing body such as the General Medical Council for medical doctors. There are no educational requirements needed to join both London Buddhist Centre and Transcendental Meditation. (Research Council for Complementary Medicine, 2020).

The Ethical Issue as Regards the Practice of Meditation on Individuals

The law of the land still governs, meditation practitioners and if harm is caused to an individual while meditation is being undertaken, criminal and civil law of the land can still make such a practitioner liable and could still be sued in a court of law. Pozgar (2019) argue that ethics helps caregivers make sound judgments, good decisions and right choices. Ethically a practitioner should not cause harm this is known as non-maleficence and also to always to do good which is also known as benevolence. Those practicing meditation on individuals have to be fair and just. It is important that people are not judged due to their race, values or culture. Fairness in taking care of individuals is of utmost importance, as all people should be seen as equal.

Some research papers argue that the problems people who practice meditation face are under reported, this could be, because it is not sometimes noticed as a side effect or a problem. Lindhal et (2017) explain that there are under reported incidences, that are expressed as testing, hard, upsetting and sometimes in extreme case needing additional support.

All meditation practitioners are accountable for their actions and inactions. It is important and imperative that this is taken into account, at all times when interacting with an individual.

Hochman (2020) highlights that everyone has a right to health, and this is a fundamental right, no matter, the colour, religion, creed or belief. Each meditation practitioner should know their limitation and when things do go wrong, they should be aware that they will be accountable for their actions.

How Meditation Therapy Compares to Traditional Treatments

Meditation therapy and traditional treatment all have their part to play, in the treatment of patients, however it is often used in conjunction as the benefits of meditation is becoming very popular. Cancer Research UK has recommended that oncology patients should practice meditation as it helps, to cope with discomfort, insomnia, fatigue, nausea and hypertension. (Cancer Research, 2019).

There are some patients that do not like taking medication and would rather use other forms of treatment such as meditation. Cettina (2018) explains that patients seeking medication free treatments meditation could be an alternative as it is easy to implement for the treatment of anxiety.

Diabetic patients have chronic pain, which they have to take painkillers that could make them addictive, meditation could be an effective alternative treatment. Hussain and Said (2019) agree with this line of thought as a research was undertaken and it was discovered that mindfulness medication could assist in reducing the intake of pain killers which could lead to addiction, however meditation does not have, the ability for patients cannot become addicted nor abuse meditation.

Recommendations

Meditation is from a religious background and is fast becoming utilized in other settings, this is because of its visible benefits. Jani (2020) explains that meditation or as the Westerns like to term it 'mindfulness' has the ability to enhance skills like attention, memory and emotional intelligence. The fact that there are no organised regulated bodies to control its practice, makes meditation to be a therapy; that needs to be practiced with caution.

There is a need for meditation organised regulated bodies, the issue is that there are at least two main religions Buddhism and Hinduism it will be quite difficult to merge the two

to have one organised regulated body, the main reason being that the way they practice meditation would be different and also the fact that the way they practice their religion is also different. A recommendation would be for each religion to have their own regulatory body, by so doing there will be better monitoring also better standards that can be set hence this would lead to less individuals getting the unwanted effects from practicing meditation, as there would be uniformity in the way meditation practitioners carry out their practice

It has been known to help in some illnesses and conditions when patients do not want to use medication, however with the research that have being conducted both qualitative and quantitative there have been questions as to whether sometimes it does not cause more harm than good. The fact that some of the effects of meditations, are not clear cut whether it is due to the meditation the individual has undertaken or it is due to the fact that the person has underlining health issues. This makes it quite difficult to evaluate how safe it is.

Conclusion

This report has shown how complementary therapy is becoming popular also that there are checks and balances to make sure that the public is as safe as possible. It has also demonstrated the usefulness of meditation as a complementary therapy and how it can be used in conditions such as skin conditions, and hypertension. The report has also discussed the background of this form of treatment and has discussed how it has been in existence for centuries.

The efficacy of meditation was discussed and analysed. The fact that meditation therapy is cheap to practice has also been explained. As well as the dangers of meditation discussed. Various research papers have been utilised to explain the ethical issues concerning the practice of meditation. A comparison between meditation and more traditional therapy was also touched upon, and it was concluded that both therapies have their place in the treatment of patients hence one cannot state that one is better than the other. It has been advised that the combination of both therapies could be the way forward.

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