

**Critical Review:
Do mind-body therapies improve language outcomes in persons with aphasia?***

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As mind-body therapies become increasingly popular and better known, it is important to investigate how they might enhance treatment of speech and language disorders. This critical review examines the role of mind-body therapies in the treatment of persons with aphasia and whether they improve language outcomes in these individuals. A literature search of electronic databases identified six articles meeting the selection criteria. Study designs include four single-subject experimental designs and two within-subjects designs. The results of the research suggest that in some cases, mind-body therapies improve language outcomes and could play a role in enhancing traditional language therapy.

Introduction

Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) is gradually making its way into the traditional Western medical model and is being recognized as a viable treatment by both clinicians and patients (Laures & Shisler, 2004). Mind-body therapies fall under the CAM umbrella. These therapies seek to enhance the mind's positive impact on the body. With the growing popularity and knowledge of these treatments, it is important to understand how they might play a role in speech and language therapy (Marshall & Basilakos, 2014). If mind-body therapies positively impact language recovery in aphasic individuals, they could act as an adjunctive treatment to enhance conventional speech-language therapies in the future (Marshall & Basilakos, 2014).

There are a number of proposed mechanisms by which mind-body therapies facilitate language in individuals with aphasia. Relaxation therapy and yogic breathing techniques claim to reduce anxiety, frustration and tension, thereby freeing more cognitive resources for language processing. It is suggested that this increase in resources results in improved performance (Laures & Shisler, 2004). These techniques are especially appropriate to investigate in aphasic individuals because they can experience increased anxiety when having trouble word-finding and communicating in general (Marshall & Watts, 1976). Improving attention is another mechanism through which language abilities are thought to be enhanced (Orenstein, Basilakos, & Marshall, 2012). It is suggested that some of the linguistic deficits that persons with aphasia experience are as a result of reduced attention. Mindfulness meditation targets attention and proposes to increase attentional abilities through regular practice (Orenstein, Basilakos, & Marshall, 2012). Based on 1u1 72.024 89.904 Tm[B]691(a6 13.25.49 577.47 Tm28(f)8(o)-5(o)-5(n04(d)-5i3

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and limitations in the measures used. More research is needed using more resource demanding language tasks and the inclusion of additional linguistic measures such as MLU. Overall, this study provided equivocal evidence that mindfulness meditation does not result in language gains in people with aphasia.

may be an effective treatment option, but more evidence is needed to support these findings.

Discussion

The papers reviewed offered different levels of evidence and validity, but overall the findings are suggestive that mind-

Marshall, R. S. & Basilakos, A. (2014). Hot or not?: a survey regarding knowledge and use of complementary and alternative practices in speech-language pathology. *Contemporary Issues in Communication Science and Disorders*, 41, 235-251.