Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction for Executives: Results from a Field Experiment

Zubin R. Mulla¹
Kalaiselvan Govindaraj²
Srinivasa Rao Polisetti²
Elis George²
Nagraj Rao S. More²

Abstract

Mindfulness-based meditation has been reported to produce positive effects on psychological and physiological well-being and to reduce stress levels. The present study examined the effects of a 16-weeks Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program on stress levels and self-compassion of 22 executives of a large public-sector oil company located in the south of India. The study was a pre- and post-test experimental design in which participants were tested for physiological and psychological parameters both before and after the intervention. Physiological assessment was carried out through testing of blood cortisol and measurement of systolic and diastolic blood pressure. Participants also reported on variables such as self-compassion, and various stress indicators such as physical indicators, sleep indicators, behavioral indicators, emotional indicators, and personal habits. Results from the present study suggest that a 16-week MBSR intervention not only had a positive impact on various stress indicators (physical, sleep, behavioral, emotional, and personal habits) and self-compassion; it also reduced systolic and diastolic blood pressure and blood cortisol levels. The findings suggest that Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction can be useful Stress Management Intervention for addressing the issues of high stress for senior executives in Indian organizations.

Keywords: Mindfulness Meditation, Cortisol, Stress, Self-compassion

¹ School of Management & Labor Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India
² Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd. ‘K’ Installation, Sewree Fort Road, Sewree (East), Mumbai, India

Corresponding Author:
Zubin R. Mulla, School of Management & Labor Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India
E-mail: zubin@tiss.edu

The authors thank Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited for providing the resources required to conduct this study.