Introduction

- High demands of nurse anesthesia programs (NAP) lead to student registered nurse anesthetist (SRNA) stress and anxiety affecting self-efficacy and coping skills needed to succeed
- Mindfulness programs proven effective in other student populations, but no literature exists for NAP
- Evidence-based with positive impact on physical, psychological, cognitive well-being

Purpose

- To assess if SRNAs will improve traits of self-efficacy, develop positive coping skills, and stress management needed to succeed in NAPs by learning about mindfulness and it’s techniques

Background and Significance

Factors Affecting SRNA Retention & Success
- Self-efficacy, coping/social support, and stress impacts program success
- 7/10 average level of SRNA stress
- Common coping mechanisms negative (alcohol use, gossip, expression of inappropriate negative feelings)
- Stress affects cognition- motor control, learning, memory formation = decreased academic and clinical productivity
- Individuals with low self-efficacy less likely to succeed

What is Mindfulness?
- Helps focus on present moment without judgment to accept current situation for what it is
- Techniques to build mindfulness:
  - Meditation: listening to spoken words used to guide focus
  - Diaphragmatic breathing and Mindful walking: taking notice of body sensations with each deep breath and step
  - Mindful eating: focus on food textures/flavors to build attention

Positive Effects of Mindfulness on Other Student Populations
- Undergraduate Students: maintained well-being and coped with academic stress exams, lowered overall perceived stress, improved sleep, increased mindfulness
- Nursing Students: beneficial non-pharmacological approach useful in academia and future careers to improve depression, anxiety, stress
- Medical Students: greater life satisfaction, improved cognition/mental health, less psychological distress during medical school

Methodology

- Design: Prospective, qualitative, pilot study
- Sample: Second year SRNAs beginning first clinical rotations during a challenging didactic curriculum (n = 22)
- Intervention: Mindfulness program implemented over 5 days in 5 weeks
  - Lecture discussing benefits and techniques
  - Meditation, diaphragmatic breathing, mindful walking, mindful eating practice
- Measures:
  - Adapted Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE)
  - Adapted Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)
  - Adapted Cognitive & Affective Mindfulness Scale-Revised (CAMS-R)

Analysis: Descriptive statistics using Wilcoxon signed rank test to assess data through SPSS

Results

- Mean values from GSE and CAMS-R survey scores increased and PSS scores significantly decreased after the mindfulness program
- CAMS-R and PSS Pre v. Post and Pre v. Post Post scores were statistically significant, while GSE scores were not statistically significant

Discussion

- Study results showed that a mindfulness program provides positive psychological benefits to SRNAs
  - Developed more mindfulness
  - Decreased stress levels
  - Taught new coping skills
  - May not have significant impact on increasing self-efficacy
- Greater improvements in mindfulness (13% ↑) and stress (29% ↓) two months following program may indicate long-term sustainable benefits

Implications

- Reducing stress and anxiety leads to better SRNA academic and clinical performance = improved patient safety and increased NAP success
- Can be implemented at other NAP across the nation to improve attrition

Summary

- Implementing a mindfulness program in a NAP can be a cost-effective method to prevent harmful effects of stress
- SRNAs will develop valuable skills that can be used anytime to help overcome challenges in their personal lives, academia, and future careers

References