Implementation of Mindfulness Meditation to Decrease Depression in Older Adults
Attending a Medical Day Care: A Pilot Study
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BACKGROUND & SIGNIFICANCE
- One of the goals of Healthy People 2020 is to reduce the number of people who experience major depressive episodes (Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion [ODPHP], 2010).
- Older adults are vulnerable to depressive episodes due to chronic illness, sensory and/or cognitive impairments, & decline in functional status resulting in loss of independence (Institute of Medicine [IOM], 2012).
- In 2030, the number of Americans 65 years or older will increase from 43 million in 2012 to 73 million (Ortman, Velkoff, & Hogan, 2014).
- It is estimated that clinically significant depressive symptoms affect 15% of older adults living in the community (Xiang, An & Heinemann, 2018).
- Health care spending in the U.S. reached $2.9 trillion in 2014 (amounts to more than 17% of the U.S. economy).
- Personal healthcare spending for depressive disorders accounted for $71.1 billion in 2013 costliest mental health condition & 6th costliest condition overall (Dielman et al., 2016).

AIMS & OBJECTIVES
The aim is to provide a strategy, specifically mindfulness meditation, to address depression in the older population.

OBJECTIVES:
- Administer the PHQ-9 to clients in an AMDC to measure pre-intervention and post-intervention depression scores.
- Implement a mindfulness meditation group for 30 minutes each session, twice a week, for 4 weeks, for a total of 8 sessions.
- Compare pre-intervention and post-intervention PHQ-9 scores at the end of four weeks to determine if there are any changes.
- Gather qualitative data each session by asking participants how they feel about the mindfulness meditation group.

METHODOLOGY
- Quality-improvement; Pilot study
- Quasi-experimental, pre-test post-test design

PHQ-9 administered to participants before and after the implementation of a mindfulness meditation group.

RESULTS
Decreased depression symptoms as evidenced by lower post-intervention PHQ-9 scores.

DISCUSSION/IMPLICATIONS
- Analysis of the data using the Wilcoxon signed rank test revealed a statistically significant decrease in post-intervention PHQ-9 scores, suggesting a decrease in depressive symptoms after the intervention.
- Clinicians who work in settings like nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and adult day cares, can improve their practice by having some sort of training/experience with mindfulness meditation.
- When an intervention that targets depression in older adults, such as mindfulness meditation, is incorporated into clinicians’ practices and healthcare organizational policies, this will inevitably improve quality of care and safety.
- More studies with greater sample sizes and more diverse patient population is suggested for improved generalizability.

 References

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