Mindfulness Practice: Effects on Mental Health of Stroke Patients

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Stroke rehabilitation typically involves motor skill exercises, mobility training, and range of motion exercises. With stroke patients often reporting heightened stress and anxiety, recent studies attempted to use psychological methods with limited success. The purpose of this project, which was supervised by a kinesiology professor, was twofold: (a) understand the benefits of mindfulness practices with patients who are recovering from stroke, and (b) apply the techniques of mindfulness training in enhancing the emotional and mental health of my father who had suffered from a stroke in Spring, 2022. For the first part of the current, I completed a literature review about the connections between stroke rehabilitation and mindfulness practices with a focus on the history, techniques, benefits of mindfulness and how it may be able to assist stroke patients improve their mental health. For the second part, I obtained my father’s consent to practice mindfulness meditation and body scanning with him. I learned the meditation and body scanning skills with my advisor and then taught these to my father. After the learning was completed, he went through 4 weeks of practice using audio recordings. At the end of each week’s practice, the Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS), an ordinal 15 item single-dimension measure of trait mindfulness, was administered. Finally, I completed an interview with my dad based on 10 open-ended questions prepared by my advisor. The MAAS results indicated that mindfulness resulted in improved mindfulness. Interview results also suggested that my father benefited from mindfulness practice with reported reduced stroke-related anxiety and stress. I hope to continue my work in this area with the aim to conduct research on a larger population in the future.