

Mindfulness may reduce opioid cravings, study finds

15 October 2019, by Modesta (Maud) Alobawone



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

People suffering from opioid addiction and chronic pain may have fewer cravings and less pain if they use both mindfulness techniques and medication for opioid dependence, according to Rutgers and other researchers.

The study, published in the journal *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, examined the effects of mindfulness and [methadone therapy](#) on 30 patients with [opioid addiction](#) and [chronic pain](#). Mindfulness is the meditative practice of focusing on the present moment and accepting one's thoughts, feelings and bodily sensations, without judgment.

The findings showed that those who received methadone and a mindfulness training-based intervention were 1.3 times better at controlling their cravings and had significantly greater improvements in pain, stress, and positive emotions, even though they were aware of more cravings than those who only received standard methadone treatment and counseling.

"Methadone maintenance therapy (MMT) has been

an effective form of medication treatment for [opioid use disorder](#)," said Associate Professor Nina Cooperman, a clinical psychologist in the Division of Addiction Psychiatry at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. "However, nearly half of individuals on MMT continue to use opioids during treatment or relapse with six months."

Cooperman said many of those with opioid addictions experience chronic pain, anxiety and depression while on methadone maintenance, which is why mindfulness-based, non-drug interventions are promising treatments.

The researchers said mindfulness-based interventions could help people dependent on opioids increase their self-awareness and self-control over cravings and be less reactive to emotional and physical pain. Individuals with an opioid addiction could also be taught to change their negative thoughts and savor pleasant events, which may help them to regulate their emotions and experience more enjoyment.

More information: Eric L. Garland et al. Mindfulness-Oriented Recovery Enhancement reduces opioid craving among individuals with opioid use disorder and chronic pain in medication assisted treatment: Ecological momentary assessments from a stage 1 randomized controlled trial, *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* (2019). [DOI: 10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2019.07.007](#)

Provided by Rutgers University

APA citation: Mindfulness may reduce opioid cravings, study finds (2019, October 15) retrieved 13 July 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-10-mindfulness-opioid-cravings.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.