Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy and the Adult ADHD Brain: A Neuropsychotherapeutic Perspective

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Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a recognized serious mental disorder that often persists into adulthood. The symptoms and impairments associated with ADHD often cause significant mental suffering in affected individuals. ADHD has been associated with abnormal neuronal activity in various neuronal circuits, such as the dorsofrontostriatal, orbitofrontostriatal, and frontocerebellar circuits. Psychopharmacological treatment with methylphenidate hydrochloride is recommended as the first-line treatment for ADHD. It is assumed that medication ameliorates ADHD symptoms by improving the functioning of the brain areas affected in the condition. However, side effects, contraindications, or non-response can limit the effectiveness of a psychopharmacological treatment for ADHD. It is therefore necessary to develop non-pharmacological interventions that target neuronal mechanisms associated with the condition in the same way as pharmacological treatment. We think that mindfulness meditation employed as a neuropsychotherapeutic intervention could help patients with ADHD to regulate impaired brain functioning and thereby reduce ADHD symptoms. In this paper, we highlight the mechanisms of such mindfulness meditation, and thus provide a rationale for further research and treatment development from a neuropsychotherapeutic perspective. We conclude that mindfulness meditation employed as a neuropsychotherapeutic intervention in therapy is a promising treatment approach in ADHD.