Mindfulness and Transpersonal Psychology: Two Trends Between Psychotherapy and Spirituality

IV Global Transpersonal Symposium

Bucharest

February 23, 2019

Mag. Dennis Johnson

EUROTAS – European Transpersonal Association

Overview

Mindfulness-based interventions
Transpersonal psychology

Science
History

Mental health
Spiritual experience

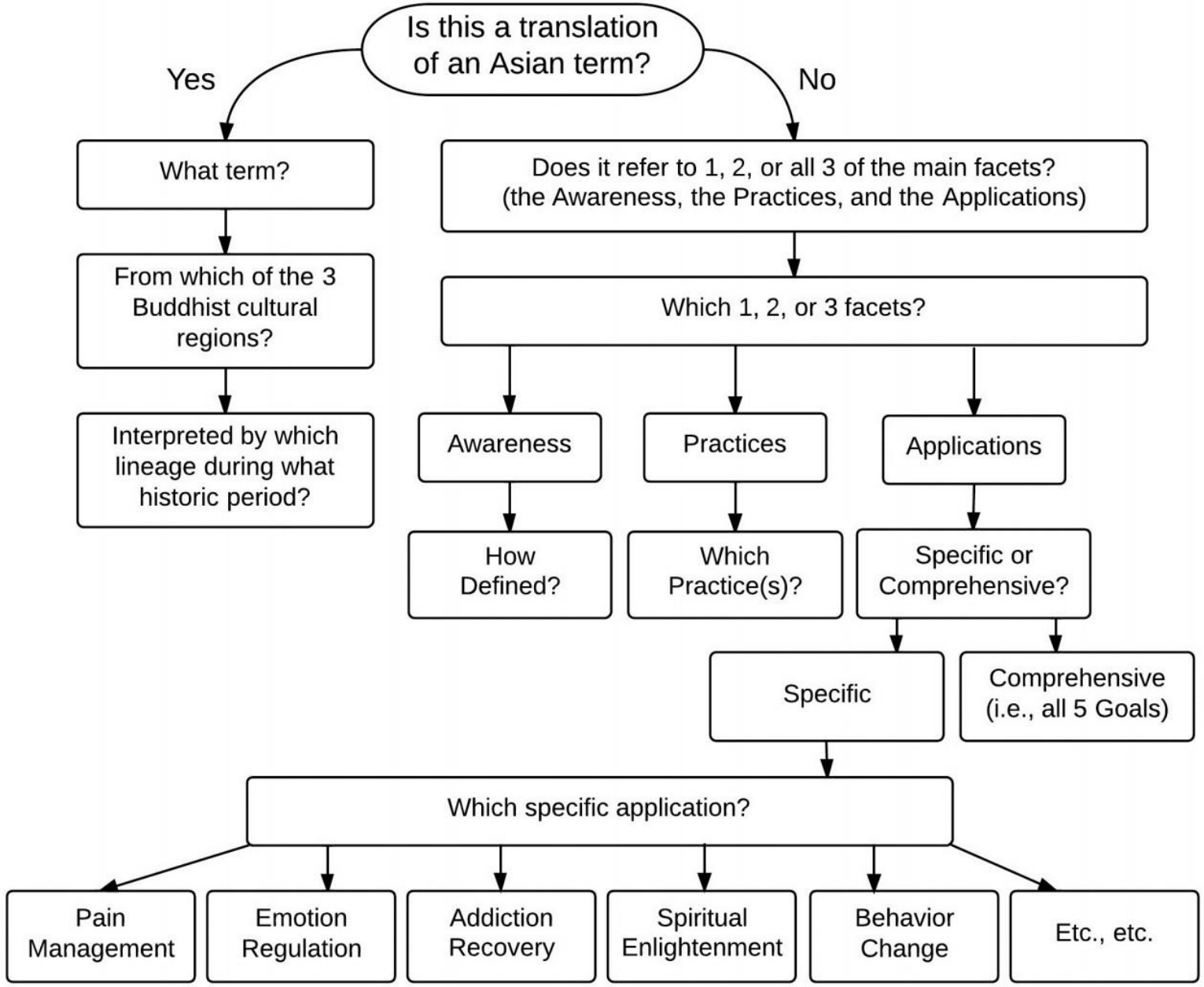
Prosociality
Proenvironmentalism

Operational Definition of Mindfulness

"The first component involves *the self-regulation of attention* so that it is maintained *on immediate experience*, thereby allowing for increased recognition of mental events *in the present moment*. The second component involves *adopting a particular orientation* toward one's experiences in the present moment, an orientation that is characterized by *curiosity*, *openness*, and *acceptance*."

Bishop et al. (2004)

→ Compare Grof's concept of „non-specific amplifiers" and holotropic breathwork

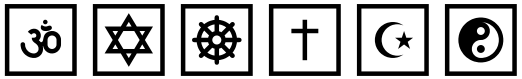

Is this a translation of an Asian term?
Yes
No
What term?
From which of the 3 Buddhist cultural regions?
Interpreted by which lineage during what historic period?
Does it refer to 1, 2, or all 3 of the main facets? (the Awareness, the Practices, and the Applications)
Which 1, 2, or 3 facets?
Awareness
Practices
Applications
How Defined?
Which Practice(s)?
Specific or Comprehensive?
Specific
Comprehensive (i.e., all 5 Goals)
Which specific application?
Pain Management
Emotion Regulation
Addiction Recovery
Spiritual Enlightenment
Behavior Change
Etc., etc.

Young 2013

History

AD 500 – 1500

Premodernity



1500 – 1800

Modernity

1945 –

Contemporary History

History

	Mindfulness	Transpersonal Psychology
1970s	Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) Clinic at the University of Massachusetts (1979)	Journal of Transpersonal Psychology (JTP, 1969) Association for Transpersonal Psychology (ATP, 1972) International Transpersonal Association (ITA, 1978) Institute of Transpersonal Psychology (ITP, 1975) Stan Grof develops holotropic breathwork
1980s	MBSR spreads to hospitals worldwide Mindfulness in Acceptance and Commitment therapy (ACT) & Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)	Theoretical grounding (Wilber, Washburn, Grof, ...) Transpersonal psychology as a division in APA fails (1984, 1985, 1986) European Transpersonal Association (EUROTAS, 1984) First training program in Holotropic Breathwork

History

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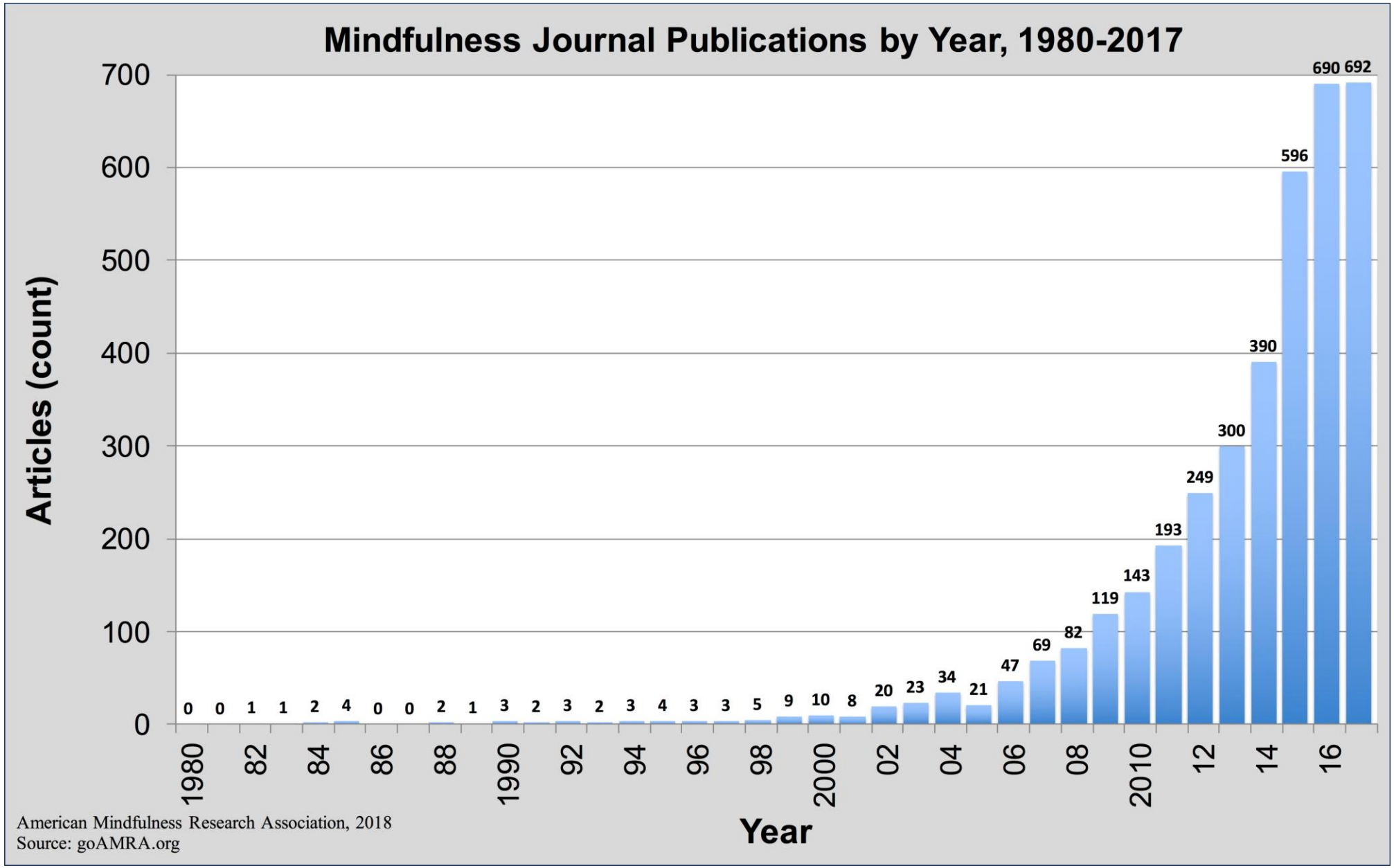
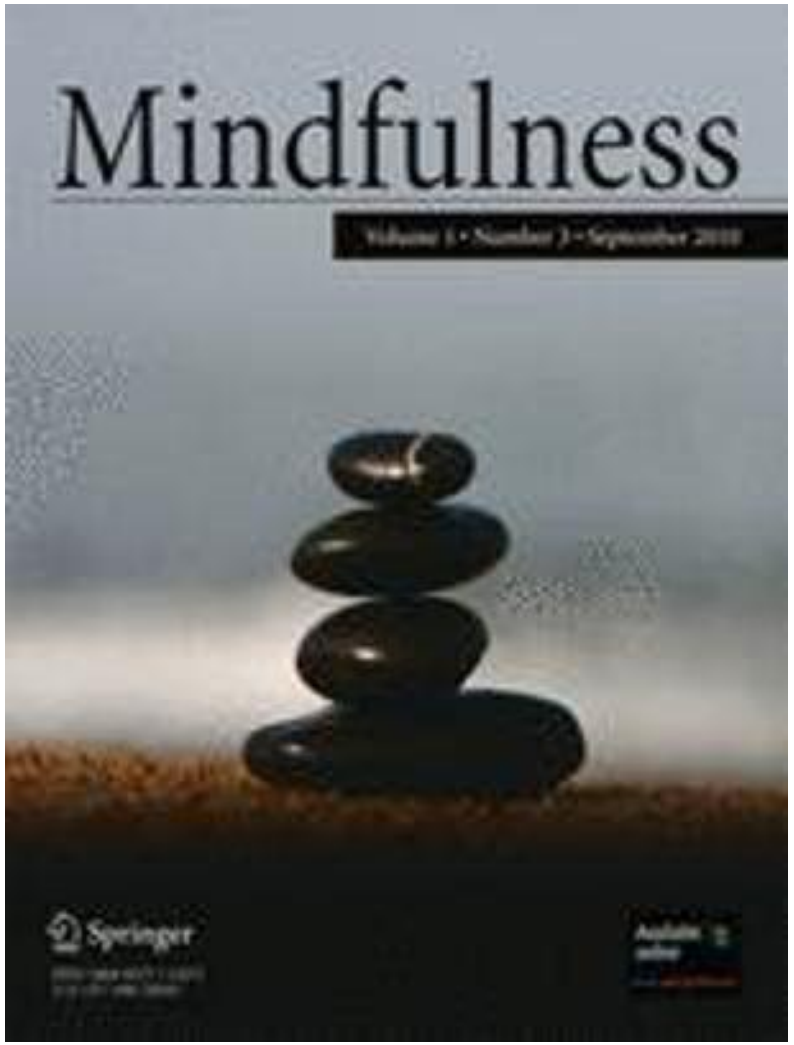
1990s	Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy for Depression (MBCT) is developed based on MBSR MBSR is popularized featured on US-TV series “Healing from Within” (1993)	Transpersonal Psychology Section in the British Psychological Society DMS-IV includes “religious or spiritual problem” (1993) New contributions to the field (Cortright, Sovatsky, Lukoff, Turner, Lu …)
2000-	Proliferation of mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) for specific purposes and populations Research on MBIs intensifies	Revision project of Jorge Ferrer (second-wave transpersonalism) Wilber leaves TP for “integral theory” International Transpersonal Association reopens(2009)
2010-	Research on MBIs continues to grow Mindfulness Journal (2010-) “Mindfulness movement” “McMindfulness” and backlash	Institute of Transpersonal Psychology becomes Sofia University EUROTAS accreditation attempts at the European Association for Psychotherapy (EAP)

Mindfulness-based Interventions (MBIs)

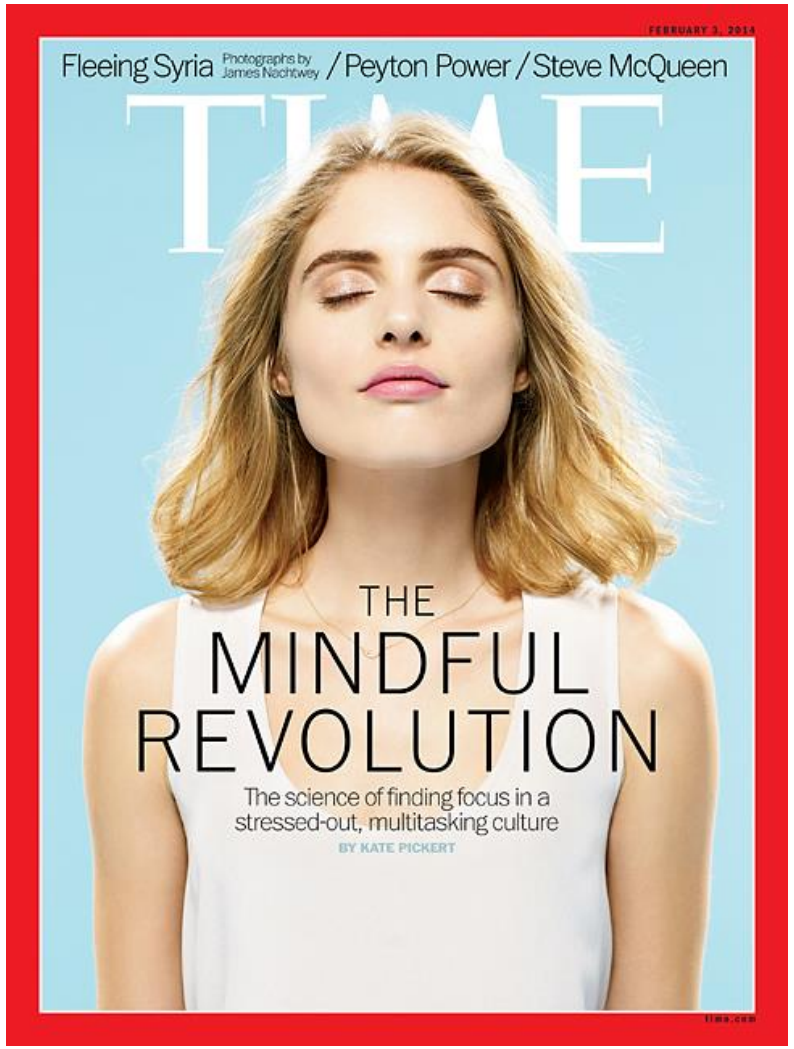
- MBAT Mindfulness-Based Art Therapy
- MBBT Mindfulness-Based Biofeedback-Therapy
- MBCL Mindfulness-Based Compassionate Living
- MBCP Mindfulness-Based Childbirth and Parenting
- MBCPM Mindfulness-Based Chronic Pain Management
- MBCR Mindfulness-Based Cancer Recovery
- MBCT Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy
- MBCTC Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Anxious Children
- MBCTCa Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Cancer
- MBEAT Mindfulness-Based Eating Awareness Training
- MBEC Mindfulness-Based Elder Care
- MBHP Mindfulness Basics for Helping Professionals
- MBPI Mindfulness-Based Program for Infertility
- MBRE Mindfulness-Based Relationship Enhancement
- MBRP Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention
- MBSR Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction
- MBSR-T Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction for Teens
- MBTI Mindfulness-Based Therapy for Insomnia
- MBTSR Mindfulness-Based Tinnitus Stress Reduction
- MBFT Mindfulness-Based Feminist Therapy
- MEAL Mindful Eating and Living
- MMFT Mindfulness-Based Mind Fitness Training
- MSC Mindful Self-Compassion Training

→ Compare the concept „non-specific medicines“ (Amanda Fielding)

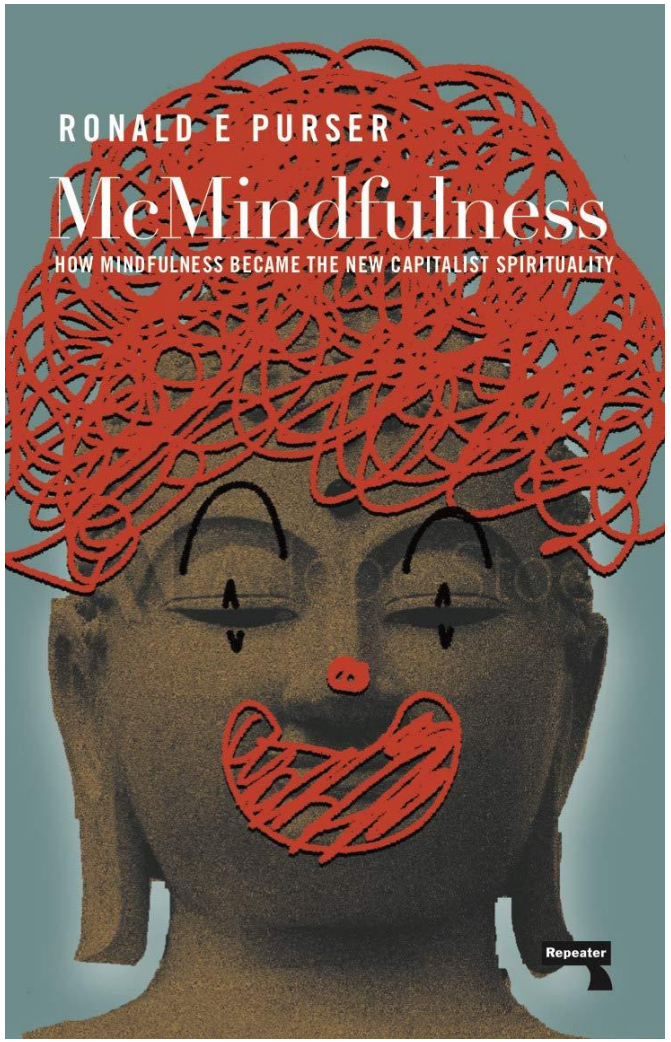

Mindfulness Journal Publications by Year, 1980-2017
Articles (count)
700
600
500
400
300
200
100
0
0 0 1 1 2 4 0 0 2 1 3 2 3 2 3 4 3 3 5 9 10 8 20 23 34 21 47 69 82 119 143 193 249 300 390 596 690 692
1980 82 84 86 88 1990 92 94 96 98 2000 02 04 06 08 2010 12 14 16
Year
American Mindfulness Research Association, 2018
Source: goAMRA.org



Mindfulness Journal
(Springer 2010-)



Time Magazine
(Feb. 3, 2014)



McMindfulness: How Mindfulness Became the New Capitalist Spirituality
(Purser 2019)

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Mindful States and Mental Health

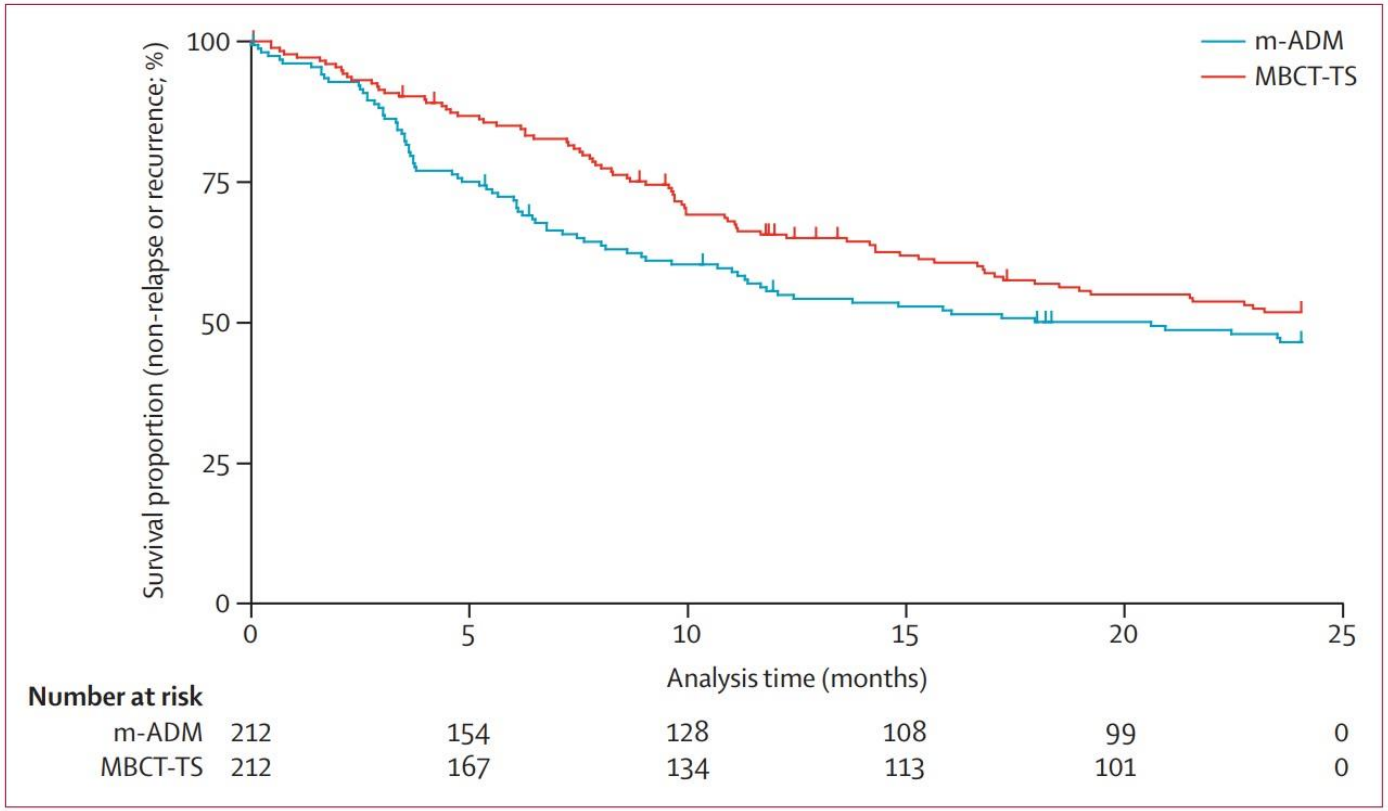


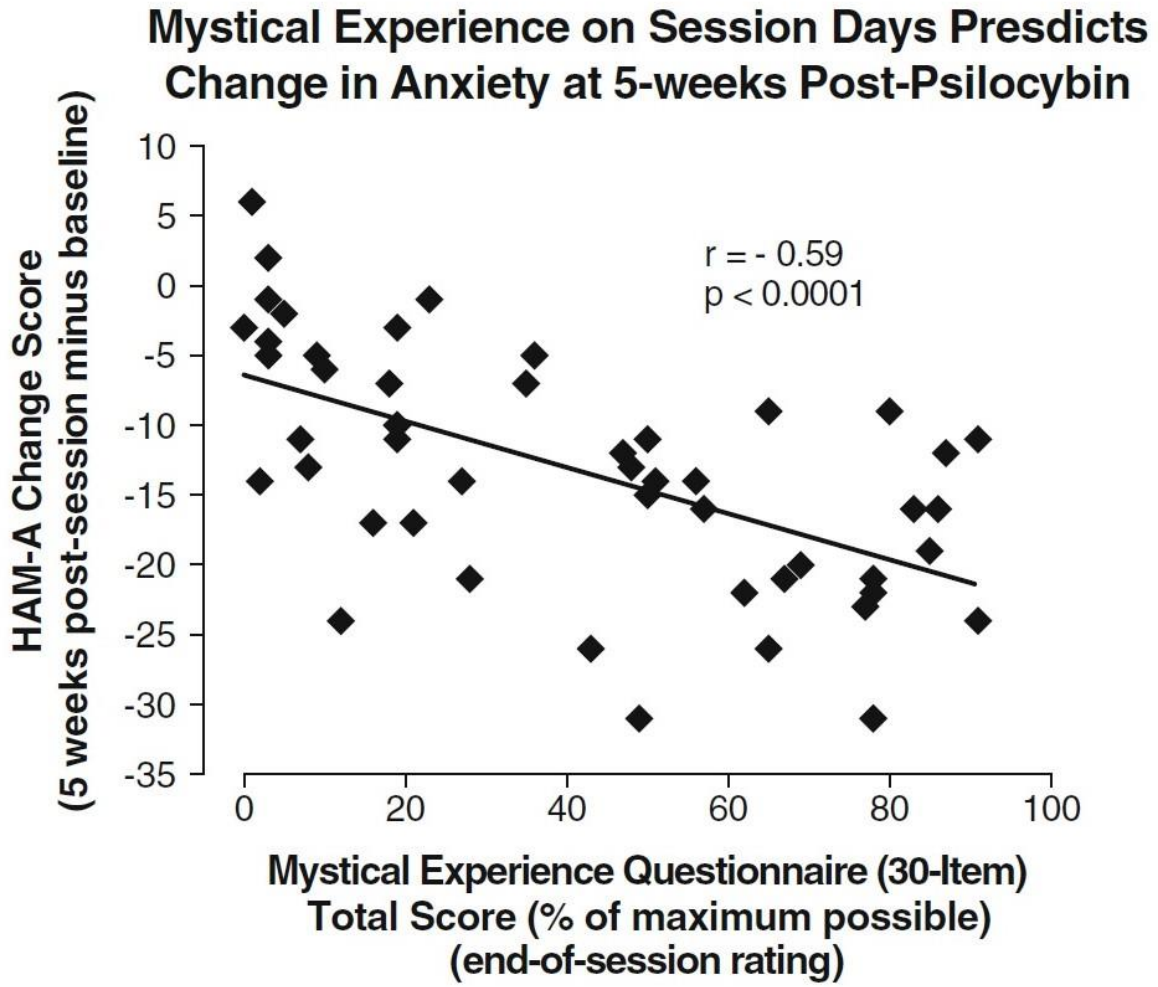
Figure 2: **Survival curves (of not relapse or recurrence) over a 24-month follow-up period for the intention-to-treat population**

m-ADM=maintenance antidepressant medication. MBCT-TS=mindfulness-based cognitive therapy with support to taper or discontinue antidepressant medication.

Kuyken et al. 2015

Effectiveness and Cost-effectiveness of Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy Compared with Maintenance Antidepressant Treatment in the Prevention of Depressive Relapse or Recurrence (PREVENT)

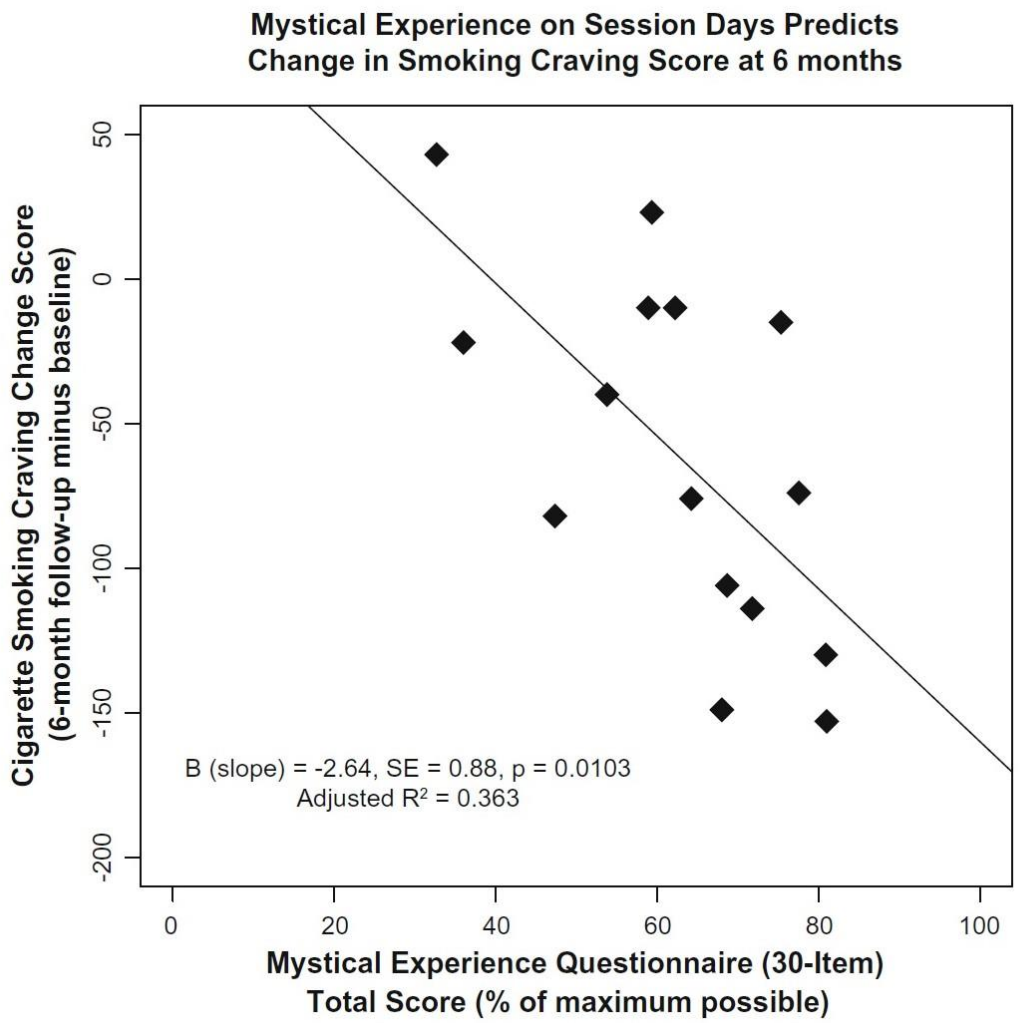
Transpersonal States and Mental Health



Barrett & Griffiths 2017

Classic Hallucinogens and Mystical Experiences: Phenomenology and Neural Correlates

Transpersonal States and Mental Health



Barrett & Griffiths 2017

Classic Hallucinogens and Mystical Experiences: Phenomenology and Neural Correlates

Pharmacological and Behavioural Ways to Transpersonal States

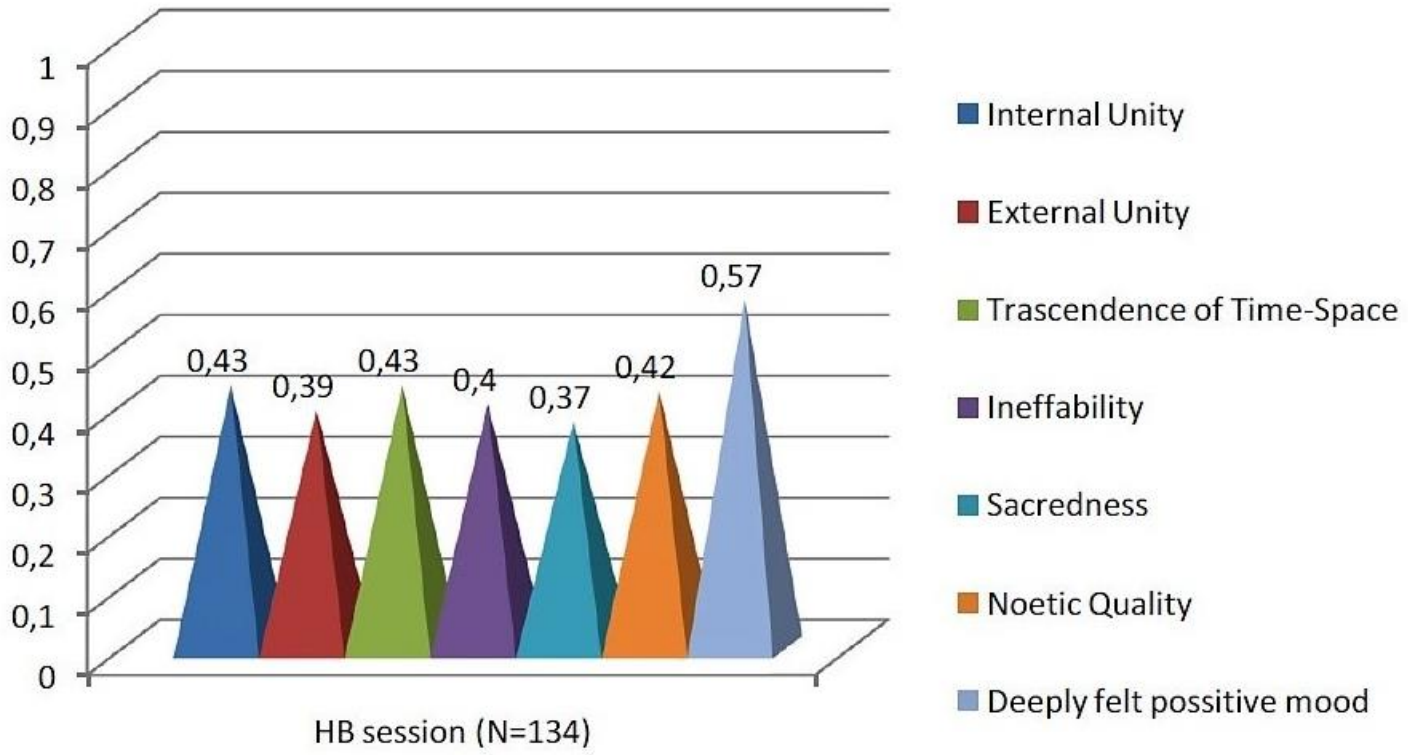


Table 3.*Comparison between volunteers ratings on the SCQ after their HB session and the ratings for the 5mg/70kg and 10mg/70kg psilocybin doses obtained by Griffiths et al (2011) in their dose-response study.*

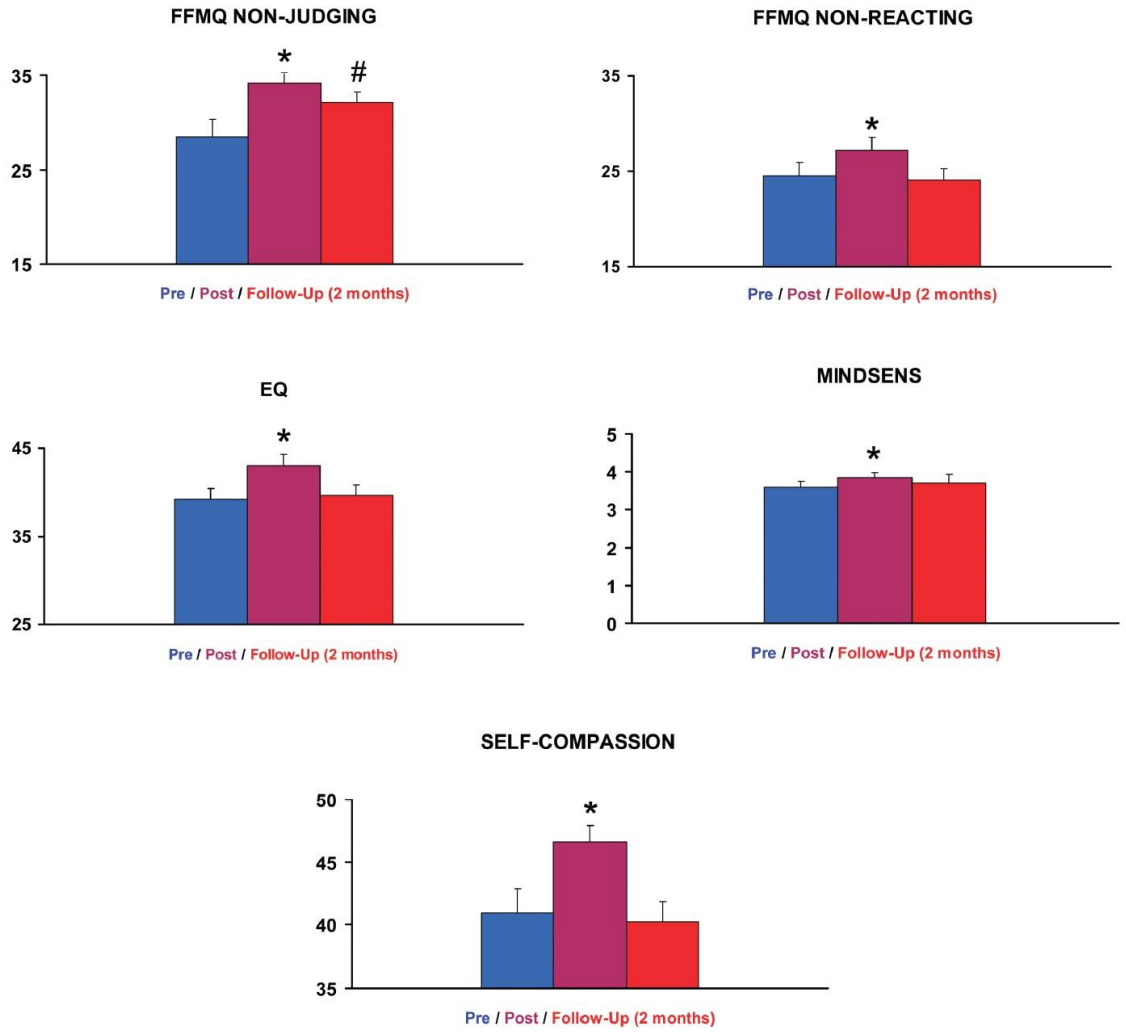
SCQ sub-dimensions and total score	HB session (N=134)	Psilocybin 5mg (N=18)	Psilocybin 10mg (N=18)
Internal unity	0.43	0.38	0.45
External unity	0.39	0.32	0.35
Transcendence of time and space	0.43	0.40	0.44
Ineffability	0.4	0.48	0.59
Sacredness	0.37	0.49	0.54
Noetic quality	0.42	0.47	0.54
Deeply felt positive mood	0.57	0.48	0.57
"Complete" mystical experience	13 (9.7%)	N=1 (5.6%)	N=2 (11.1%)

Note: For the seven sub-dimensions of the States of Consciousness Questionnaire, data are expressed as a proportion of the maximum possible score, fixed in 1.

Puente 2014

Holotropic Breathwork Can Occasion Mystical Experiences in the Context of a Daylong Workshop

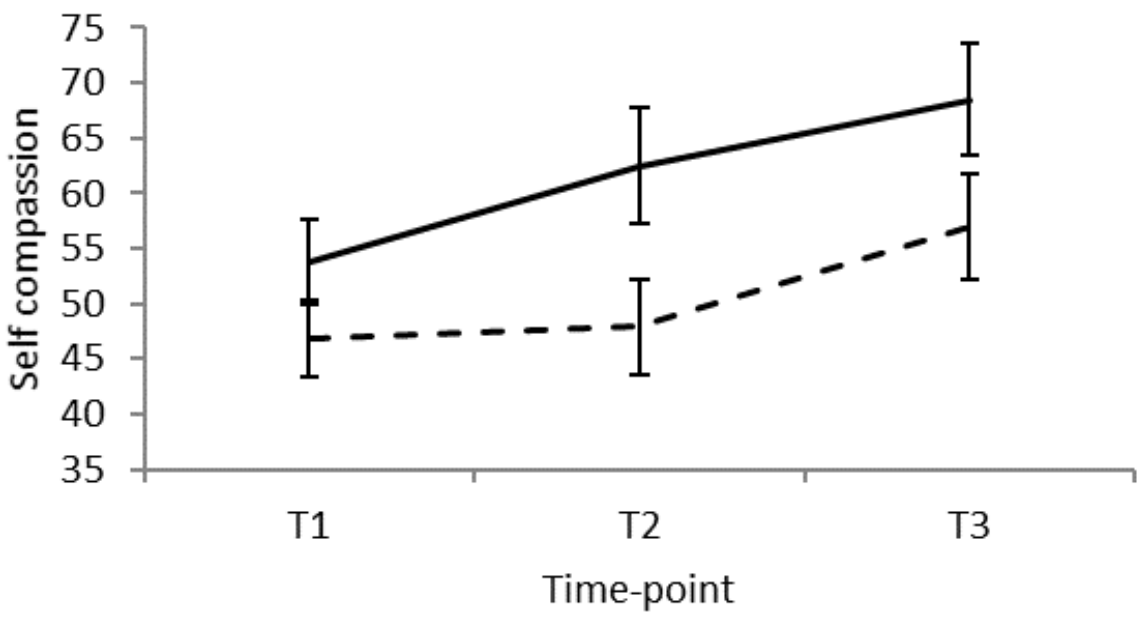
Pharmacological and Behavioural Ways to Mindful States

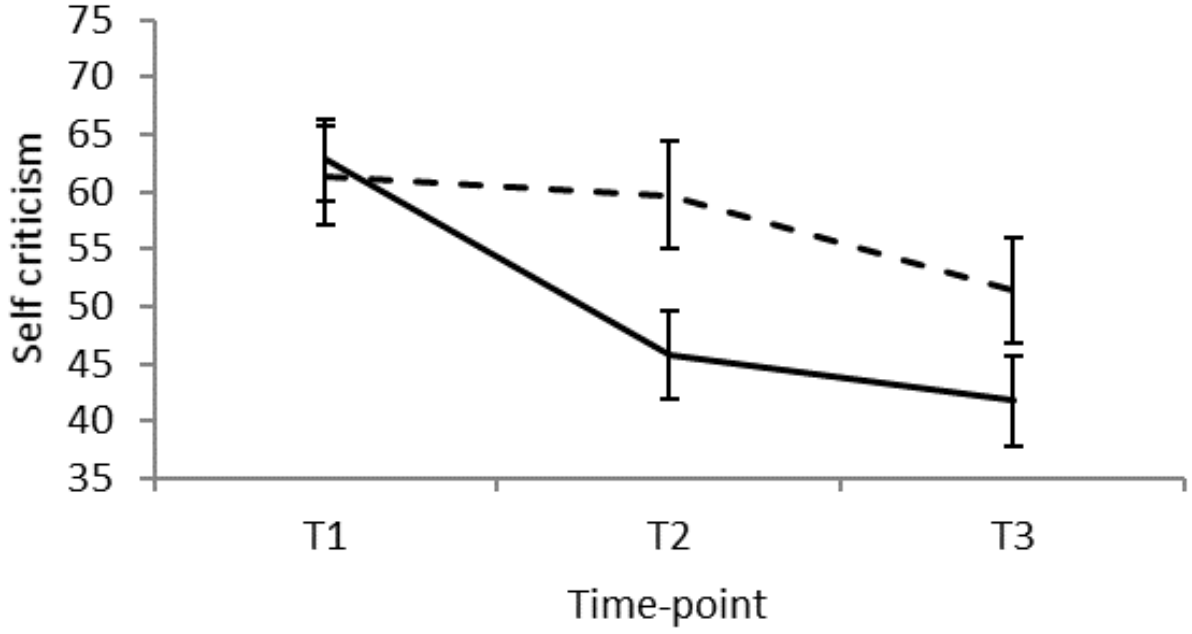


Sampedro et al. 2017

Assessing the Psychedelic 'After-Glow' in Ayahuasca Users: Post-Acute Neurometabolic and Functional Connectivity Changes are Associated with Enhanced Mindfulness Capacities

Pharmacological and Behavioural Ways to Mindful States





Kamboj et al. 2015
Recreational 3,4-Methylenedioxy-N-Methylamphetamine (MDMA) or 'Ecstasy' and Self-Focused Compassion: Preliminary Steps in the Development of a Therapeutic Psychopharmacology of Contemplative Practices

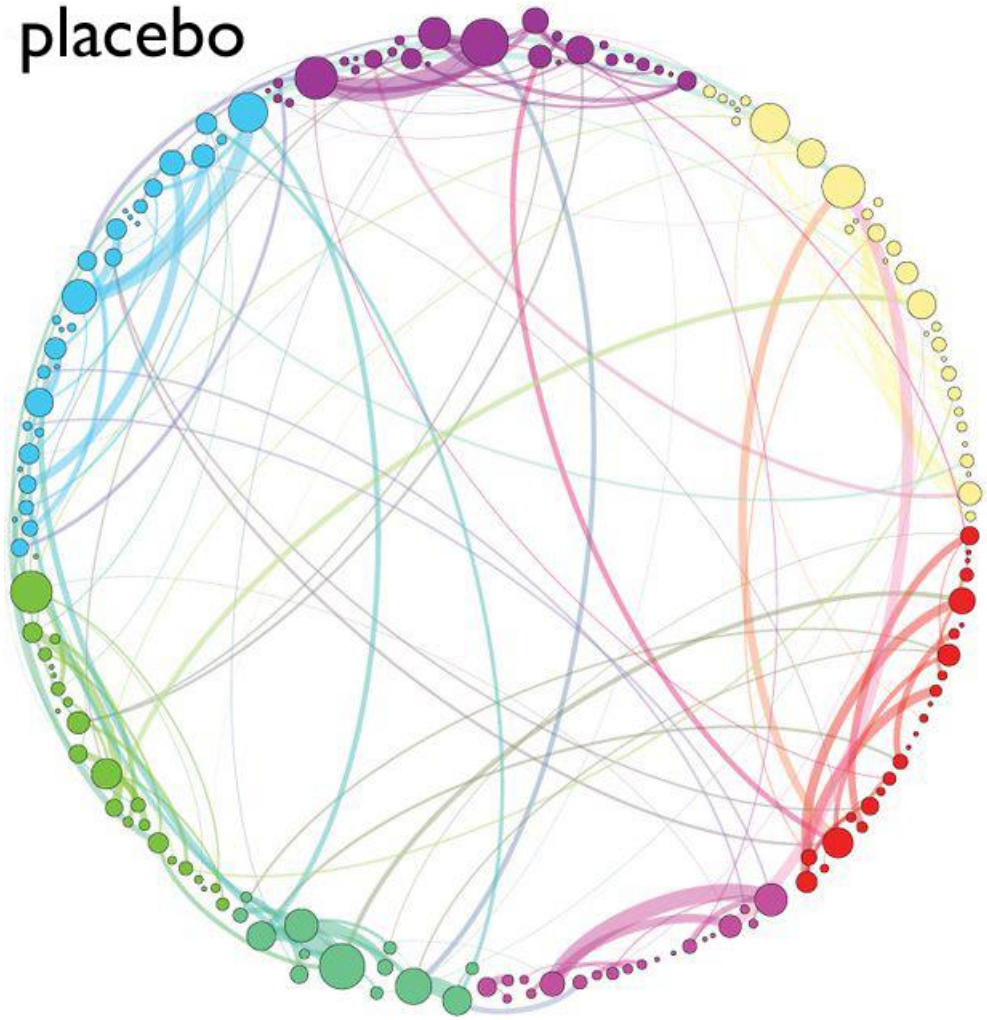
Mechanisms of Action

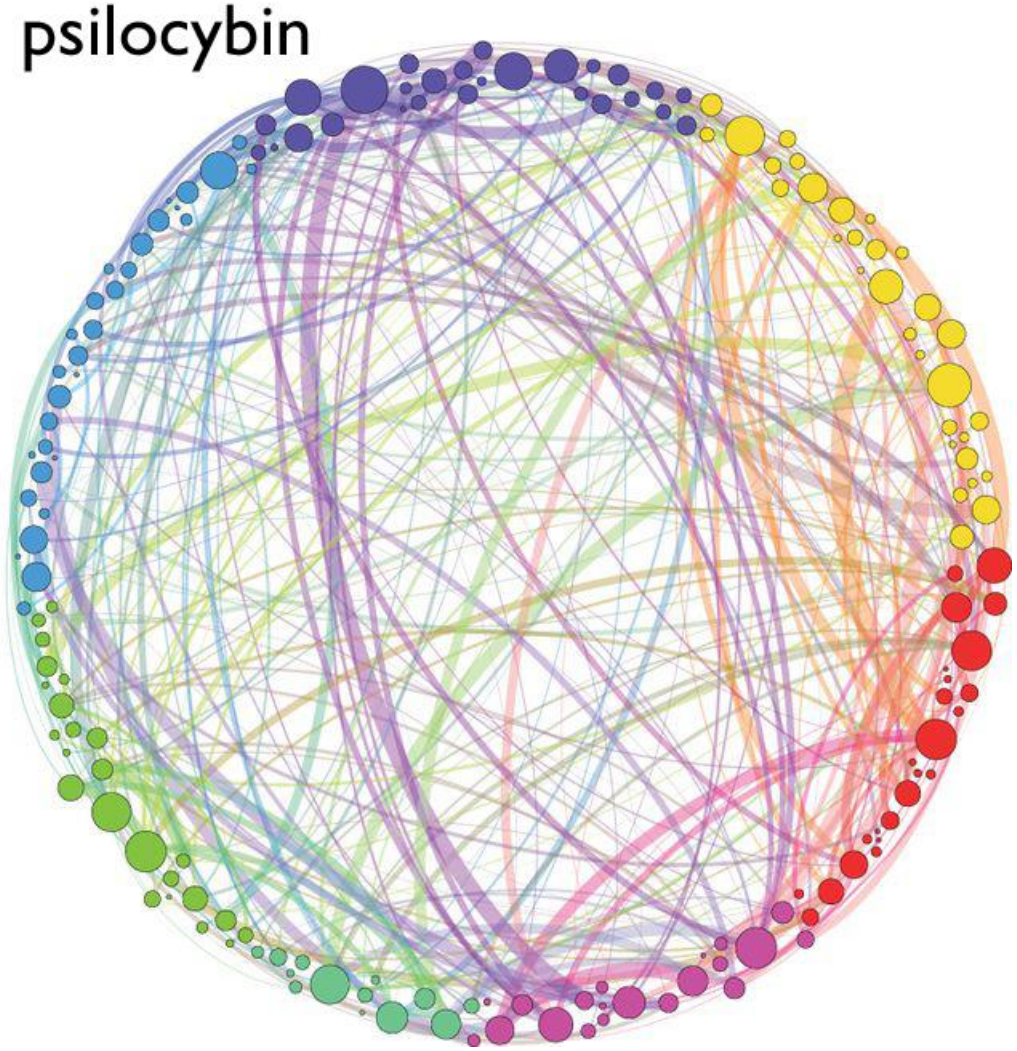
	Meditation Instructions	Experimental Findings	Associated Brain Regions
1. Attentional Control	*Resting attention on a chosen object; when attention drifts, redirecting attention.*	Heightened attentional performance: executive attention, orienting, alerting, reduced attentional blink	Anterior cingulate cortex (ACC)
2. Somatic Awareness	*Focus of attention is an object of inner sensation: breath, feelings, bodily sensations.*	Increases in domains of "observe" subscale of the mindfulness questionnaire (FFMQ), narrative accounts of heightened somatic awareness	Insula Temporoparietal junction
3.1. Emotional Regulation: Reappraisal	*Emotional sensations are related to differently: non-judgemental, with acceptance)*	Increase in positive reappraisal (cognitive emotion regulation questionnaire)	(Dorsal) Prefrontal cortex (PFC)
3.2. Emotional Regulation: Exposure and Exctinction	*Turning towards and opening to whatever arises in the field of awareness, abstaining from inner reactivity.*	Increase in non-reactivity to inner experience	Ventromedial PFC Hippocampus Amygdala
4. Changes in Self-experience	*Letting go of a fixed identification with a "self.*	Reported changes in self-concept	Medial PFC, posterior cingular cortex, insula, temporoparietal Junction

Hölzl et al. 2013

Mechanisms of Mindfulness: Conceptual and Neuronal Perspectives

Mechanisms of Action





Prosocial Behaviour

Donald et al. 2018
Does your mindfulness benefit others? A systematic review and meta-analysis of the link between mindfulness and prosocial behaviour

Millière et al. 2018
Psychedelics, Meditation and Self-Consciousness

Proenvironmental Behaviour

Lyons et al. 2018
Increased nature relatedness and decreased authoritarian political views after psilocybin for treatment-resistant depression

Howell et al. 2011
Nature connectedness: Associations with well-being and mindfulness

Thanks for your attention!

… want to become involved?

Please join our project of the EUROTAS Youth Council:

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