

A Randomized Controlled Trial on Effects of the Transcendental Meditation Program on Blood Pressure, Psychological Distress, and Coping in Young Adults.

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Background Psychological distress contributes to the development of hypertension in young adults. This trial assessed the effects of a mind-body intervention on blood pressure (BP), psychological distress, and coping in college students. Methods: This was a randomized controlled trial (RCT) of 298 university students randomly allocated to either the Transcendental Meditation (TM) program or wait-list control. At baseline and after 3 months, BP, psychological distress, and coping ability were assessed. A subgroup of 159 subjects at risk for hypertension was analyzed similarly. Results: Changes in systolic BP (SBP)/diastolic BP (DBP) for the overall sample were -2.0/-1.2 mm Hg for the TM group compared to +0.4/+0.5 mm Hg for controls ($P = 0.15$, $P = 0.15$, respectively). Changes in SBP/DBP for the hypertension risk subgroup were -5.0/-2.8 mm Hg for the TM group compared to +1.3/+1.2 mm Hg for controls ($P = 0.014$, $P = 0.028$, respectively). Significant improvements were found in total psychological distress, anxiety, depression, anger/hostility, and coping (P values < 0.05). Changes in psychological distress and coping correlated with changes in SBP (P values < 0.05) and DBP (P values < 0.08). Conclusions: **This is the first RCT to demonstrate that a selected mind-body intervention, the TM program, decreased BP in association with decreased psychological distress, and increased coping in young adults at risk for hypertension. This mind-body program may reduce the risk for future development of hypertension in young adults.**

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