Abstract
Title: The Effect of Mindfulness-Based Interventions on Weight- and Shape Concerns in Adolescents and Young Adults
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Background: Eating disorders have a relatively high prevalence in the Swedish population, with 1% for anorexia nervosa and 2% for bulimia nervosa. The diseases contribute to increased morbidity and mortality and therefore it is important to prevent eating disorders. The highest risk for developing an eating disorder is between 13 – 30 years and weight- and shape concerns is one of the primary riskfactors. Mindfulness is a method which has shown effect on other psychological diagnoses, such as depression and anxiety. Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) and mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) are two standardized mindfulness-based programs that have been used in research.

Objective: To review and summarize the existing scientific evidence concerning mindfulness-based interventions and if it can prevent weight- and shape concerns in adolescents and young adults.

Search strategy: Data collection was made in the databases Pubmed, Scopus and Cochrane. Key words used in the searches were: mindfulness, prevention, eating disorder, bulimia nervosa, anorexia nervosa, weight concern, adolescents, young adults, young women and young men. In the searches the key terms AND and OR were used to limit the searches.

Selection criteria: Randomized controlled trials, human studies with weight- and shape concerns as outcome measurement. Healthy individuals, 10 – 35 years old, where the intervention was based on MBCT or MBSR. The articles had to be written in English to be included. Studies where mindfulness was used as a treatment for eating disorders were excluded.

Data collection and analysis: A review template from The Swedish Agency for Health Technology Assessment were used to review the quality of the three included studies. An adjusted version of Grading of Recommendations, Assessment, Development and Evaluation (GRADE) was used to assess the strength of evidence in the included studies.
Main results: The strength of evidence for the outcome measurement weight- and shape concern in the three analyzed studies was considered low (++). In the study where the study participants were 13 – 14 years old and the intervention duration was eight weeks, no statistical significant effects were found. In the study where the study participants were 14 – 18 years old and the intervention duration was three weeks, they found statistical significant effects long-term with decreasing weight- and shape concern in the intervention group. The pilot study where the study participants were 17 – 31 years old and the intervention was three weeks long, showed statistical significant effects short-term with decreasing weight- and shape concern in the intervention group.

Conclusions: There is limited evidence concerning the effect of mindfulness-based interventions regarding weight- and shape concerns. Two out of three studies showed positive results regarding mindfulness-based interventions on weight- and shape concerns. This could indicate that mindfulness-based interventions may be a way to prevent eating disorders. More studies are though required to confirm that mindfulness has a positive effect.

Keywords: mindfulness, mindfulness-based intervention, MBCT, MBSR, eating disorders, weight- and shape concern, anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa.