



# Open University Research Sessions 2021 (OURS 2021)

16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> September 2021



## INVESTIGATING QUALITY OF LIFE AND TRAIT MINDFULNESS OF SKILLED MEDITATORS: A CASE CONTROL STUDY

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Meditation refers to a set of techniques which facilitates a calm and stable mind, attention, awareness, and tranquillity by continuous practice. Meditation increases the skill-level of a meditator which leads to physiological, genetic, and psychological benefits. Searching for mental health effects of meditation would add new knowledge to the growing body of research on meditation. The aim of this present study was to investigate the association of long-term meditation with the quality of life (QOL) and the mindfulness level. This study is a Matched case control study where the sample consisted of meditators and controls who were above 18 years of age (n=21). Individuals who were pregnant, breastfeeding, smokers or diagnosed of having a psychiatric disorder were excluded. Meditators who have practiced meditation for more than three years (n= 144) were screened with a validated screening tool and 21 skilled meditators, along with 21 age, gender and educational level matched controls were recruited. The mindfulness level and the quality of life (QOL) were measured using Five Facet Mindfulness questionnaire (FFMQ) and QOL questionnaire respectively. Comparison of the mindfulness and QOL between two groups was done by student sample T-test using SPSS software. To evaluate the relationship between QOL, and mindfulness level and population characteristics Pearson correlation was performed. The majority 71.4% (30/42) of the participants were male and mean age of the meditators and controls were 42.78±9.80 and 42.83±9.78 years, respectively. Mean duration of the meditation practice of the meditators was 6.46 ± 2.89 years and they have meditated for a mean frequency of 8.91 ± 4.57 hours per day. Meditators had significantly higher total mindfulness level (meditators: mean±SD=149.5±21.29; non-meditators: mean±SD=127.3±9.7; p=0.007) than the non-meditators. QOL was not significantly different between meditators and controls (meditators: mean±SD=97.58±9.5; non-meditators: mean±SD=93.3±9.6;p=0.307). Total QOL was significantly correlated with the trait mindfulness level (r=0.463; p=0.013) and total QOL was only significantly correlated with the age (r=0.542; p=0.003). The findings of this study suggest that long-term meditation practice has beneficial effects on the level of mindfulness and may influence sub-scale of QOL.

Keywords: Meditation, Mindfulness, Quality of life, Skilled meditator

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