

Abstract of thesis entitled:

Implicit and Explicit Positivity and Negativity: The Effect of Loving Kindness
Meditation in Reducing Depression Symptoms

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Abstract

Loving kindness meditation (LKM) is a meditation practice that aims at directing love and warmth towards oneself and all beings. The present study aimed at investigating the effects of LKM in people's positivity and negativity, as well as its effects in reducing the level of depressive symptoms. Sixty and forty-nine participants were randomly assigned to the LKM condition and the control condition, respectively. Participants were asked to listen to an audio that instructed them to either: (1) direct love towards oneself and others (loving kindness meditation group), or (2) imagine anything that comes to their mind (condition group). Results indicated that after an approximately one-week practice, baseline loving kindness moderated the relationship between conditions and explicit positivity and negativity. In particular, people with higher baseline loving kindness showed heightened explicit positivity and lowered negativity compared to people with lower baseline loving kindness. The increased positivity and decreased negativity were in turn, found to reduce depressive symptoms. Furthermore, results in the present study revealed that there was no significant difference observed in the implicit positivity and negativity across conditions. Findings provided partial support to the effectiveness of LKM in increasing positivity and reducing negativity. In addition, the inconsistent results

drawn from the implicit and explicit measures highlighted the need to incorporate implicit measures so as to reduce the exaggeration of treatment effects.

摘要

慈心修習(loving kindness meditation)是一個嘗試對自己及他人傳達關愛與溫暖的靜修練習。本研究的目的旨在探討慈心修習對人的正面傾向(positivity)和負面傾向(negativity)的影響，同時亦探討它對減低抑鬱症狀(depressive symptoms)的效用。本研究隨機分別分配參加者到慈心修習組(六十位)及對照組(四十九位)。每位參加者分別聆聽一段錄音，指示他們去傳達關愛予自己和他人(慈心修習組)，或指示他們想像任何事情(對照組)。實驗結果顯示經過約一星期的練習，基線慈心調節(moderate)了慈心修習組與顯性(explicit)正面傾向及顯性負面傾向的關係。換言之，與有較低基線慈心的人相比，有較高基線慈心的人展示出較高的正面傾向及較低的負面傾向，從而減低了抑鬱症狀；同時，本研究結果顯示，實驗組和對照組的隱性(implicit)正面傾向及隱性負面傾向皆沒有顯著的分別。研究結果局部顯示出慈心修習對於增強正面傾向以及減低負面傾向的效用；同時，研究亦發現隱性傾向與顯性傾向的測量結果並不一致，因此評估時必須配合隱性傾向的測量工具一併使用，以免高估慈心修習的作用。