

Perceptions of Mechanical Massage Chair and Mindfulness for Stress Relief: A Qualitative Study

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Introduction. Evidence has shown that, individually, massage and mindfulness exercises impact systolic blood pressure. What has not been studied is how these compare to each other and what effect the order of presentation (mindfulness first or massage first) has on outcomes. This study sought to determine participants' perceptions regarding participation either in first massage, then mindfulness, or first mindfulness, then massage.

Methods. Twenty participants with prehypertension were selected to participate in this study, and each spent six sessions doing one of the interventions (massage chair or mindfulness) then six sessions doing the other intervention. The order in which they did these was randomized. After completion of all 12 sessions, we recorded and reported each participant's interview about their experience with the study.

Results. Six themes were identified regarding participant experience with this study. Many participants enjoyed it and had a positive change in their opinions of massage chairs and mindfulness. They spoke about the relaxation they experienced, plans to incorporate these methods into their daily routines, and suggested improvements to the study design. Participants did not report differences in their experiences when comparing reports between groups.

Conclusions. Qualitative data suggest that participants are eager to participate in studies that have potential to impact on themselves or others and learn new methods for managing stressors in their daily lives. They found their participation to be beneficial to them and appreciated being provided with tools that they can continue to use even after completion of the study.

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