The Effect of Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction on Stress, Depression, Self-esteem and Mindfulness in Thai Nursing Students: A Randomised Controlled Trial

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

The thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to the final version of my thesis being made available worldwide when deposited in the University’s Digital Repository, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

Signed...............................................................

(Napaporn Aeamla-Or)

Date.................................................................
DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis and degree to my beloved parents –

Perm Wongyai and Sangnin Wongyai (เพิ่ม วงศ์ใหญ่ และ แสงนิล วงศ์ใหญ่).

Their unconditional love and endless loving-kindness
gave me strength and encouragement to complete the journey.
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ABSTRACT

It is well recognised that nursing students may experience high levels of stress over the course of their university studies, leading to depression, lowered self-esteem and decreased academic performance. There is evidence in the professional literature that participation in a mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) program can decrease stress and depression and increase mindfulness in university student populations including nursing students. However, to date evaluations of the effectiveness of MBSR have largely been conducted in educational and health service contexts in Western countries. Little research addressing MBSR has been conducted in Asian countries. The present study aimed to investigate whether the standardised MBSR program can reduce perceived stress and depression as well as enhance self-esteem and mindfulness in Thai nursing students. A randomized controlled trial was conducted using consenting nursing students (n=127) recruited from a university in northern Thailand. Participants were randomized to either an experimental group (n=63) receiving an 8-week, researcher conducted MBSR program, or a control group (n=64) receiving usual care. Measures included the Thai versions of the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10), the Centre for Epidemiology Studies - Depression Scale (CES-D), the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), and the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS), with data being collected at baseline, and weeks 8, 16 and 32 from baseline. Data were analysed using linear mixed modeling. The results demonstrated a significant difference between participants in the experimental and control groups for changes over time in stress ($p = .0190$), self-esteem ($p = <.0001$) and mindfulness ($p = .0002$). However, there was no statistically significant difference for depression scores between groups ($p = .1904$). Qualitative data collected using a focus group interview with nine consenting experimental group participants indicated that the MBSR program was personally, professionally and culturally acceptable to the participants. The findings of the study demonstrate the utility of MBSR in helping nursing students to enhance mindfulness and self-esteem; and to more effectively cope with stress. Sustained benefits overtime of MBSR may also contribute to improved academic performance, quality of nursing care, and the wellbeing of future nurses.