

Mindfulness in Medical School

Swati Pandruvada, Thomas McMaster, Shivam S. Shah, Jamie Dowling PhD, Kristi Skeel Williams MD, Randall G. Worth PhD, Chandani Lewis MD
The University of Toledo College of Medicine and Life Sciences



COLLEGE OF MEDICINE
AND LIFE SCIENCES

THE UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO

Introduction

- Physician and trainee burnout can lead to exhaustion, inefficacy, and cynicism (1)
- Suicide and burnout rates in medical students exceed their age-matched group within months of starting medical school (2)
- Mindfulness practice has been shown to be effective in reducing burnout in physicians (3)

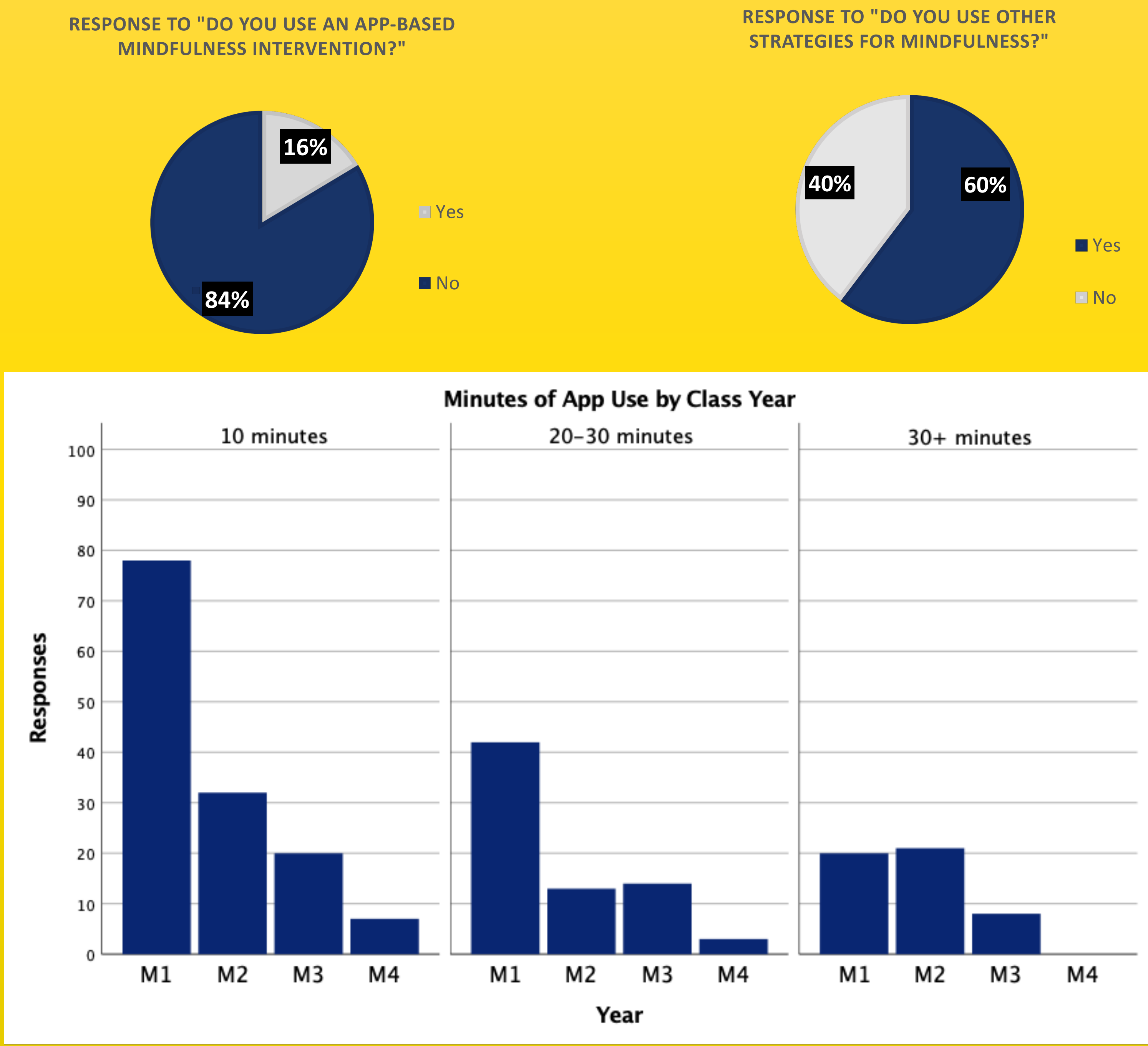
Purpose

The purpose of this study is to survey mindfulness techniques among medical students at The University of Toledo College of Medicine and Life Sciences (UTCOMLS), with focus on the use of mindfulness apps.

Methods

- A comprehensive survey of medical students was conducted five times per year over two academic years, the questions used for this study include the following:
 - Do you use an app-based mindfulness intervention?
 - How many minutes a week do you use an app-based mindfulness intervention?
 - Do you use other strategies for mindfulness?
- SPSS version 27 was utilized for data analysis
- The responses were analyzed to see how many medical students reported use of mindfulness apps or other mindfulness strategies, and how many minutes per week they used an app (distinguished by sex and year in medical school)

Results



Discussion

- Stress experienced by medical students is well-documented
- Our research indicates that mindfulness apps are not a popular method of stress management at UTCOMLS
- Other studies have analyzed online mindfulness interventions as a wellness tool for medical students and found poor adherence and no change in burnout from baseline (4)

Conclusion

Our research indicates that mindfulness apps are not a popular method of stress management. While there may be some benefits to mindfulness apps, it may be more important to collaborate with students to learn their preferred forms of mindfulness. Future research could help identify other mindfulness methods commonly used by medical students to strengthen their coping skills while navigating the stress of medical school.

References

1. Maslach C, Schaufeli WB, Leiter MP. Job burnout. Annu Rev Psychol. 2001;52:397-422. doi: 10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.397. PMID: 11148311.
2. Kalmoe MC, Chapman MB, Gold JA, Giedinghagen AM. Physician Suicide: A Call to Action. Mo Med. 2019;116(3):211-216.
3. Romani M, Ashkar K. Burnout among physicians. Libyan J Med. 2014 Feb 17;9:23556. doi: 10.3402/ljm.v9.23556. PMID: 24560380; PMCID: PMC3929077.
4. Danilewitz M, Koszycki D, Maclean H, et al. Feasibility and effectiveness of an online mindfulness meditation program for medical students. Can Med Educ J. 2018;9(4):e15-e25. Published 2018 Nov 12.