Mindfulness and emotional factors contributing to intuitive decision-making in the medical setting

Results:

Participants were unknowingly exposed to complex grammatical regularities in a working memory task. The existence of implicit knowledge was subsequently inferred from a preference for stimuli with similar regularities. Several affective traits have been shown to influence Artificial Grammar Learning performance positively, many of which related to a tendency for automatic responding. We therefore tested whether the mindfulness trait predicted a reduction of grammatically congruent preferences, and used emotional primes to explore the influence of affect. Mindfulness was shown to correlate negatively with grammatically congruent responses. Negative primes were shown to result in faster and more negative evaluations. This effect was negatively correlated with the ability to accurately describe the grammar, suggesting that affective heuristics are used in the absence of explicit knowledge. We conclude that grammatically congruent preference ratings rely on habitual responses, providing empirical evidence for the mindfulness trait.

Published Works:

Whitmarsh, S., Uddén, J., Barendregt, H., & Petersson, K. (2013). Mindfulness reduces habitual responding based on implicit knowledge: evidence from artificial grammar learning. *Consciousness and Cognition, 22*(3), 833-845. doi: 10.1016/j.concog.2013.05.007

Area(s) of interest:

Artificial Grammar; Implicit Learning; Unconscious learning; Mindfulness; Meditation.

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