



SPIRITUALITY AND DEPRESSION: A RANDOMIZED CONTROLLED TRIAL BACKGROUND

Purpose of the Trial

The Canadian Institute of Natural and Integrative Medicine (CINIM) is conducting a study which aims to assess the efficacy of a spirituality teaching programme for unipolar major depression. Using a randomized controlled trial design it will be assessed 1) whether the programme is efficacious in improving depression severity, response rates, remission rates and quality of life and 2) whether the efficacy is maintained long term.

The CINIM Spirituality Programme

The CINIM spirituality teaching programme was developed by a psychiatrist, Dr. Badri Rickhi. Key issues of the spirituality programme are the quest for meaning and purpose, connectedness (with others, nature or the divine) and values (e.g. compassion, love, justice and forgiveness). The program avoids focusing on any particular religion and is applicable to people with various cultural backgrounds. The spirituality teaching programme is home-study based and is delivered through audio tapes. It consists of eight 60-90 minute teaching sessions delivered over a period of 8 weeks and of a daily 20 minute visualization exercise. The eight teaching sessions are to present concepts which help the user understand the influence of spirituality in their daily lives. Using the format of story telling, it is explained how these issues can be applied in simple and easy ways to everyday situations. The purpose of the daily visualization practice is to create daily periods of tranquility and connectedness for the user.

CINIM's First Trial on the Spirituality Teaching Programme

A recently completed randomized trial assessed the Spirituality Teaching Programme among 156 emotionally distressed, self-referred individuals who were recruited on the basis of an elevated mood disturbance score; no psychiatric assessment was performed for this study. The primary outcome, mood disturbance, was measured by the Profile of Mood States (McNair, Lorr, and Droppleman 1992), which also provides sub scores on depression, anger, anxiety, vigour, fatigue and confusion. The spirituality group showed a 41% reduction in total mood disturbance compared to an 11% and 23% reduction respectively in the waitlist control group and the meditation group. In the spirituality group all mood sub-scores improved significantly. The depression score was particularly impacted, decreasing by 53% compared to a 10% reduction in the waitlist control group, and a 32% reduction in the meditation group. Regarding response, 64% of the spirituality participants experienced a drop of at least 50% in their depressive mood score compared to 20% in the control group.

Background Info on CINIM

CINIM is a registered charitable organization (Registration #88875 8315 RR 0001). Projects are funded through private donations and project grants from public funding organizations.