The Challenge:

Ankylosing spondylitis (AS) is the second most common inflammatory arthritis after rheumatoid arthritis. The inflammation associated with the condition can result in the permanent fusion of the spine and greatly reduces mobility and quality of life for the individual. People with AS often live with great levels of pain, stiffness and fatigue.

The Research:

A team of Farr Institute CIPHER researchers examined the impact of mindfulness based stress reduction (MBSR) for people with arthritis. MBSR uses a combination of mindfulness meditation, body awareness, and yoga. MBSR programs have been used for a wide variety of conditions including stress and pain reduction.

193 people with arthritis were invited to take part in an 8 week mindfulness stress reduction course. The study examined the number of visits participants made to the GP before and after the 8 week course. As a comparison non participants were also studied.

The Results:

The results of the study showed a significant reduction in GP visits in the group that took part in the mindfulness course compared to the group who didn’t take part.

The Impact:

This study suggests that mindfulness based stress reduction could be effective in reducing the number of visits to the GP for people with arthritis – potentially resulting in considerable savings for the NHS.

It also suggests, that with less visits to the GP, the patients taking part in the mindfulness course are experiencing positive effects on their health and wellbeing.

The findings from this research suggest that a full study and cost effective exercise would be beneficial.

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