Reviewer’s report

Title: A Pilot Study on Mindfulness Based Smoking Cessation

Version: 1 Date: 9 November 2006

Reviewer: Amy Lazev

Reviewer’s report:

General

This study is a pilot test of a mindfulness based smoking cessation intervention. While the intervention is quite intensive (weekly meetings, daily meditation practice, and a 7-hour "day of mindfulness"), the results of this pilot test are promising and supportive of further study.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

1. Page 3, 3rd paragraph: "Negative affect is well established as a powerful stimulus for drug-seeking behavior, and is one of the most reliable markers of relapse vulnerability in." Did the authors intend to say "in smokers"? Please clarify.

2. The section on meditation compliance (3.4) is rather brief and it is recommended that it be expanded. Is the average time spent meditating reported based on the number of days when the participant meditated or on the total number of study days (in which they were supposed to be meditating)? Based on the data reported it is impossible to know if some or all of the participants were meditating some or all of the time, and how long they meditated for. It is suggested that the authors report averages for each of 3 categories: non-compliant, those who meditated less than 45 minutes per day on average, and those who meditated at least 45 minutes per day on average. Given the prior findings of a linear relationship between time spent meditating and outcome, this would be important categorization. Additionally, The last two lines of the paragraph need clarification - when did the decrease in meditation occur? (was there an increase for the first 3 weeks and then a gradual decrease form weeks 3 to 6?).

3. In the predictors of abstinence section (4.2) there is no mention of time spent meditating. Was time predictive of abstinence?

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

1. In the recruitment section (2.1) the authors note that smokers were recruited using a pre-existing trial list. Does this mean that they were not eligible for another trial? Additionally, did they respond to advertising for another trial and then get offered the mindfulness intervention? Given that this pilot speaks to feasibility issues including adherence to a very intensive intervention, this would be useful information to know (e.g., if they were not eligible for other trials they may therefore not represent the general populstion of smokers seeking treatment).

2. Do the authors have data on how many people attended the orientation meeting? It appears that the sample size (n=18) represents those who consented to participation. It would be useful to know how many people were eligible but did not consent to participate.

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.