

GETTING BETTER WITH AGE: DO MINDFULNESS & PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING IMPROVE IN OLD AGE?

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Introduction: Mindfulness has become an increasingly popular intervention or adjunct therapy but little is known about whether mindfulness attributes normally develop with healthy ageing. Despite many negative stereotypes, evidence is consistently emerging that one of the few benefits of ageing may be enhanced psychological well-being. Although mindfulness has been reported as an important predictor of well-being, research on mindfulness in older adults is scarce. One reason that older adults may improve in psychological well-being which has not been systematically examined is that healthy elders may become more mindful.

Objective: To examine the contribution of ageing and mindfulness to psychological well-being.

Aims:

1. To compare younger and older adults on mindfulness and psychological well-being.
2. To examine the relationship between each facet of mindfulness and psychological well-being.

Methods: Participants comprised 292 healthy adults including a younger group ($N = 122$, aged 17 -35 years) and an older group ($N = 170$, aged 60 -80 years) and completed the Scale of Psychological Well-Being (SPWB; Ryff 1989), and the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ; Baer et. al., 2006).

Results: T-tests revealed that older adults were higher on all facets of mindfulness, and psychological well-being. Correlation analyses showed that all five facets of mindfulness were significantly correlated with psychological well-being.

Conclusions: Older adults were both more mindful and psychologically healthy. Each facet of mindfulness was a significant predictor of psychological well-being. Further research is required to replicate these findings and examine whether the positive relationship between age and well-being is mediated by mindfulness.