**Introduction**

- People with multiple sclerosis (PwMS) experience increased rates of psychiatric disorders (e.g., Jones et al., 2012; Ponscheur et al., 2011).
- Recently, emotion regulation and emotion dysregulation have been examined as transdiagnostic factors that affect the affective functioning underlying psychiatric disorders (e.g., Romer, Lee, Salteris-Prehnau, Eismann, Ornella, & Memiń, 2009; Glenn & Kloenin, 2009).
- In comparison to healthy controls, PwMS report greater emotion dysregulation (Phillips et al., 2014). Due to the higher prevalence of psychiatric disorders in PwMS, there is a need to target emotion dysregulation in PwMS as a mechanism to potentially ameliorate affective functioning.
- Mindfulness, a non-judgmental present moment awareness, has recently been explored as a factor that improves affective functioning. Higher levels of trait mindfulness in PwMS are associated with lower levels of emotion dysregulation (Schirda et al., 2015).

**Specific Aims**

**Aim 1** Replicate the established negative relationship between trait mindfulness and emotion dysregulation in two novel samples of PwMS.

**Aim 2** Extend the identified relationship to a behavioral correlate of emotion regulation strategy use during a worry and rumination induction.

**Procedures**

**Part 1:** Educate on Emotions and Emotion Regulation

- Definitions of emotion and emotion regulation in various contexts.
- Emotion was divided into subjective experience, physical arousal, and behaviors.

**Part 2:** Situation Generation

- Participants generated 24 situations across various combinations of three contexts: emotion-elicited (anxiety, anger, sadness, happiness), environment (health, social) and intensity (low, moderate, high).
- Eight semi-randomly selected situations presented back.
- Rated strategy use for: acceptance, cognitive reappraisal, problem solving, expressive suppression, self-criticism, thought suppression, and worry/rumination.

**Contextual Emotion Regulation Assessment (Study 1)**

**Worry and Rumination Induction Task (Study 2)**

- Pre-Induction:
  - ER Strategy Use Questions
  - “My latest worry obsessed on not having enough money to pay our bills.”
  - Think about how uncertain everything feels... think about how tense you feel.

- ER Strategy Use Questions
  - “I was ruminating about my relationship with my partner... I wish we were closer.”
  - Think about the way you feel inside... think about why you repeat the way you do.

**Trait Mindfulness Negatively Correlates with Emotion Dysregulation**

- Higher levels of trait mindfulness were associated with lower levels of emotion dysregulation in both Study 1 ($r = -.74, p < .01$) and Study 2 ($r = -.67, p < .01$).

**Analyses**

**Study 1 & Study 2:**

- A factor analysis was completed to establish maladaptive and adaptive strategy composites. Composite scores were created for FFMQ and DERS.
- Composite variables were outlier corrected and tested for normality. Z scores ±2.5 standard deviations from the mean were replaced.
- Bivariate correlations were used to test the relationship between trait mindfulness and measures of emotion dysregulation.
- Exploratory moderations were conducted on significant correlations.

**Results**

**Trait Mindfulness and Emotion Regulation Strategy Use**

**Measures**

- **Study 1**
  - FFMQ
  - Worry Maladaptive
  - Worry Adaptive
  - Rumination Maladaptive
  - Rumination Adaptive

- **Study 2**
  - FFMQ
  - Worry Maladaptive
  - Worry Adaptive
  - Rumination Maladaptive
  - Rumination Adaptive

**Findings**

- Trait mindfulness was associated with maladaptive strategy use such that PwMS showing higher levels of emotion dysregulated fewer maladaptive strategies ($r = -.44$, $p < .01$). Trait mindfulness was not significantly associated with adaptive strategy use.

**Conclusions**

- The current research corroborates the strong negative relationship between trait mindfulness and emotion dysregulation in two novel samples of PwMS.
- Findings suggest the role of depression in the identified relationship is still unclear. The current research suggests depression may moderate the relationship between mindfulness and maladaptive ER strategy use. However, additional research employing a larger sample size is needed to corroborate this finding.
- The cross-sectional design prevents claims regarding causality in the relationship between trait mindfulness and emotion dysregulation. Further explore potential methods to behaviorally operationalize emotion dysregulation.

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