

**Mindfulness in The OR: A Pilot Study Investigating the Efficacy of an Abbreviated Mindfulness Intervention on Improving Flow and Mindfulness State for Physicians in the Operating Room**

Terri-Ann Wattsman, MD, Laurie Seidel MSN, BSN, Francis C Dane PhD, FRSS,  
Gary Simonds, MD

*Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine and Fralin Biomedical Research Institute*

**Objectives:** Research on mindfulness in the medical community has shown positive results on stress, burnout, and quality of life. However, due to the seemingly subjective nature of the benefits of mindfulness as well as the lengthy time requirements, researchers have had difficulty conducting experiments with adequate sample sizes and controls in surgical specialties. We believe that mindfulness practices will teach OR physicians a healthy, effective skillset to remain focused, decrease anxiety, and improve performance in the OR.

**Methods:** 60-participants completed a Pre-Experiment debrief and a Mindfulness Awareness and Attention Scale (MAAS). Participants performed three categories of surgery cases for the control condition, a routine-elective case, complex-elective case and add-on case. Surveys addressing Flow and perceived stress were completed before and after each case. Later, each participant was given a 25-minutes mindfulness training teaching the benefits of mindfulness as well as how to properly utilize a 4-minute mindfulness skill that served as the intervention. Each participant performed three more surgeries for the intervention. Prior to each intervention case, participants performed the 4-minute mindfulness skill and completed surveys before and after each case.

**Results:** Data collection is near complete; however, interim analysis has shown that this mindfulness intervention is compatible with the workflow of participating OR physicians.

**Conclusion:** We have developed a brief mindfulness intervention that has been shown to be compatible with the busy workflow of operating room physicians and shows promise for increasing the mindful state of participants as well as improving factors that are associated with stress and distractions.