Mega Analysis of Positive Psychology Interventions

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Research Paper

Carr, A., Finneran, L., Boyd, C., Shirey, C., Canning, C., Stafford, O., ... & Burke, T. (2024). The evidence-base for positive psychology interventions: a mega-analysis of meta-analyses. The Journal of Positive Psychology, 19(2), 191-205.

Overview

This mega-analysis synthesised evidence from 198 meta-analyses on the efficacy of Positive Psychology Interventions (PPIs), encompassing 4,065 primary studies with over 500,000 participants.

The study evaluated various PPIs, including mindfulness, mind-body, and exercise-based interventions, on their impact on well-being, quality of life (QoL), and mental health outcomes like depression, anxiety, and stress.

Key Findings

Effectiveness: PPIs had a small to medium effect on improving well-being, QoL, and strengths, as well as reducing depression, anxiety, and stress.

Longevity: Benefits were partially sustained at a 7.5-month follow-up.

Intervention Type: Mind-body PPIs, such as yoga, showed particularly strong effects.

Delivery Format: Face-to-face programs were more effective than self-help formats

Broader definition: Activities such as mind-body practices like yoga, should be considered positive psychology interventions.

	Effect size on Stress
Multiple PPIs	0.35
Mindfulness	0.42
Mind-body	0.72
Exercise	0.27
Face to face	0.40
Self-help	0.41
< 8 sessions	0.37
8+ sessions	0.45
Inactive	0.53
Active	0.29

Methods

Meta-analyses were rigorously selected and assessed using AMSTAR-2 criteria for methodological quality.

The data analysis involved calculating standardized mean differences for various outcomes and conducting moderator analyses to identify factors influencing PPI effectiveness.

Insight

This comprehensive analysis supports the broad applicability of PPIs in enhancing well-being and mental health, highlighting the need for high-quality, face-to-face, and longer-duration interventions for maximal impact.

The findings underscore the importance of including diverse intervention types to cater to different needs and contexts.