



From Clinic to Community: A Public Health Approach to Mindfulness

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Accepted: 1 March 2025

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During the last few decades, mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) have been established as an effective treatment approach for psychological issues such as stress, anxiety, and depression. The growing evidence for the effectiveness of mindfulness and meditation practices has resulted in the mindfulness literature gaining mainstream acceptance, and MBIs are now recognized as an evidence-based approach not only to address psychological distress but also to improve psychological well-being more broadly (Galante et al., 2023). Mindfulness has therefore increasingly found its way into everyday settings including schools (Roeser et al., 2023) and workplaces (Michaelsen et al., 2023), which prompts a timely question: Can mindfulness effectively scale up to address broader public health challenges?

This Special Issue on mindfulness and public health begins with a lead article by Doug Oman, who critically examines the crossroads between mindfulness and public health (Oman, 2025a). He explores how mindfulness may contribute to mental health, resilience, and well-being at both individual and societal levels. Oman identifies key issues—particularly in epidemiologic research, multi-level interventions, and cultural adaptation—that must be addressed for mindfulness to be effectively integrated into public health strategies. He argues that, for mindfulness to gain traction in this field, research must extend beyond individual-level interventions and align with established public health frameworks, incorporating diverse cultural perspectives and systemic considerations. Oman arranges his discussion in terms of 14 axes to highlight areas of alignment and tensions between mindfulness and public health.

The remainder of this Special Issue presents a thoughtful discussion that had been prompted by this lead article. A series of commentaries responds to Oman's (2025a) perspective, with a range of scholars reflecting on how mindfulness might find its place in wider public health efforts. These contributors explore how to honor cultural differences, uphold strong evidence-based approaches, and navigate the practical challenges of delivering mindfulness beyond small-group settings. They also consider ways to tailor these interventions to local needs while preserving their core principles.

Oman (2025b) concludes with a synthesis that weaves together the commentary insights and offers a path forward. He calls for deeper collaboration among scholars, clinicians, and community leaders to adapt mindfulness responsibly while holding to rigorous standards. His final thoughts serve as both a roadmap and a challenge, nudging us to rethink how MBIs can best support public health on a broad scale.

Incidentally, this Special Issue appears not long after the United Nation's inaugural World Meditation Day on the 21st of December 2024. This milestone resonates with the themes in this Special Issue: As mindfulness garners more attention worldwide, researchers, practitioners, and policymakers have a chance to work together so that these methods benefit people from different walks of life. We therefore invite you to begin with the lead article of this Special Issue, explore the diverse commentaries, and finish with Doug Oman's integrative response. Readers are welcome to continue this lively debate by contributing commentaries for future issues. All articles in the present Special Issue as well as future commentaries about this theme will also be presented together on a separate online page of the journal as a "Special Collection" on mindfulness and public health.

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Author Contribution O.M. and C.K. both equally contributed to writing and editing the manuscript.

Data Availability No datasets were generated or analysed during the current study.

Declarations

Competing Interests The authors declare no competing interests.

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