

A Review of the Effects of Positive Meditation on Memory in Older Adults

Chao Liu, Na Li, Hui Tan, Yuanmeng Li, Yanan Zhou, Chenfei Qu*

Qingdao Binhai University, Qingdao City, Shandong Province 266555

Abstract: This review explores the effects of positive mindfulness meditation on memory in older adults. The article delves into the definition, origin, and main forms of positive thinking meditation, highlighting its growing recognition in mental health and healing, particularly in Western cultures facing increased academic stress and mental health issues.

The review highlights several factors affecting memory in older adults, including attention, external distractions, and fatigue. It discusses Alzheimer's disease as one of the most common types of dementia affecting memory in this age group. Positive mindfulness meditation has been shown to improve attention, enhance cognitive flexibility and memory retrieval, and reduce anxiety and stress levels in older adults, contributing to better mental health and quality of life.

Moreover, the article reviews studies indicating that mindfulness meditation can enhance attention span, allowing older adults to process information with greater focus, aiding in memory formation and extraction. Emotional health is also closely related to memory capacity, and a positive emotional state fosters memory formation and retention.

Despite the promising results, the review notes that there is insufficient empirical support for the long-term effectiveness of positive thinking interventions in enhancing cognitive performance. Future research should focus on the sustained impact of positive mindfulness meditation on memory and cognitive functioning in older adults, as well as its effects on brain structure and function. The application of positive mindfulness meditation in conjunction with other therapies, such as cognitive behavioural therapy and physiotherapy, is suggested to provide integrated care for older adults.

In conclusion, positive mindfulness meditation shows potential in improving memory and cognitive function in older adults. However, further research is needed to fully understand its mechanisms, long-term effects, and individual differences. The nursing field should actively apply these findings to develop scientifically sound interventions, ultimately enhancing the quality of life and promoting physical and mental health among older adults.

Keywords: Positive Mindfulness Meditation; Memory; Cognitive Functioning

1. Overview of Positive Thinking Meditation

1.1 Definition and Origin of Positive Thinking Meditation

Positive Mindfulness Meditation is a mental training method designed to help individuals focus on present-moment experiences without judging them. Its definition can be traced back to ancient Eastern philosophies, especially the Buddhist and Hindu traditions. The English word mindfulness is derived from the Sanskrit word *smriti*, which means 'to remember' or 'to realise'. Or 'to realise' can be understood as 'remembering to return to the present moment' ^[1].

The origins of mindfulness meditation can be traced back to about 2500 years ago and are deeply rooted in ancient East Asian cultures and philosophies, mainly Buddhist and Hindu practices ^[2-3].

1.2 Main forms of positive thinking meditation

Loving-kindness meditation (LKM) is one of the most widely known forms of meditation. It emphasises observing the experience of the present moment without judgment. LKM is a practice designed to cultivate love and kindness toward oneself and others ^[4-5]. Mantra-based meditation, such as transcendental meditation, involves reciting specific mantras or phrases ^[6].

1.3 Application of Positive Thinking Meditation in Different Cultures

Many psychotherapists and medical practitioners are beginning to recognise the potential of positive thinking meditation in mental health and healing, especially in the relief of anxiety, depression, and stress ^[7]. This practice is particularly popular in Western countries, especially in

the face of increasing academic stress and mental health problems^[8-9]. Studies have shown that mindfulness meditation can enhance attention and information processing, helping older adults better cope with memory loss in their daily lives^[10].

2. Characteristics of Memory in the Elderly

2.1 Factors affecting the skills of the elderly

Attention and external distractions: older adults often face problems with inattention and external distractions, which can directly affect their ability to process information. Fatigue is one of the most important factors affecting memory in older adults^[11].

2.2 Common memory disorders in older adults

Alzheimer's disease is one of the most common types of dementia and usually presents with progressive memory loss^[12].

3. Effects of Positive Mindfulness Meditation on Cognitive Functioning

3.1 Effects of Positive Thinking Meditation on Attention

Positive thinking meditation, as a psychological training method, has received increasing attention in recent years, and studies have shown that it significantly improves attention in older adults^[13-14].

Positive thinking meditation can improve the working memory capacity of older adults and help them process complex information more efficiently^[15].

3.2 Effects of Positive Thought Meditation on Learning and Memory

Studies have shown that long-term positive thinking enhances an individual's cognitive flexibility and memory retrieval, making older adults more efficient in learning new information^[16-17].

3.3 Effects of Positive Thought Meditation on Mood and Stress Management

One study showed that a positive thinking intervention that included breathing exercises significantly reduced anxiety levels in older adults^[18]. Positive thinking meditation has also increased subjective well-being^[19].

4. Application of Positive Thinking Meditation in the Elderly Population

4.1 Barriers and Facilitators to Participation in Positive Thinking Meditation for Older Adults

Older adults often face time management issues, which may affect their ability to engage in positive thinking meditation^[20]. Many older adults may have difficulty with certain meditation practices due to physical health issues^[21-23].

4.2 Design and implementation of the Positive Mindfulness Meditation intervention

Intervention design, Course content, and Implementation process^[24]. Effectiveness Assessment and Analysis. Through a scientifically designed and implemented intervention programme, it not only enhances the cognitive function of older adults but also improves their quality of life^[25].

5. Current state of research on positive thinking meditation for memory enhancement in older adults

Mindfulness meditation can enhance an individual's attention span and allow older adults to process information with greater focus, thus aiding in memory formation and extraction^[26]. Reducing stress helps to improve cognitive functioning, which in turn enhances memory capacity. Emotional health is closely related to memory capacity, and a positive emotional state contributes to memory formation and retention^[27].

A systematic review analysed the effects of positive mindfulness-based interventions on the mental health of older adults. It showed that such interventions can significantly improve mental health, including memory, in older adults^[28].

6. Future Research Directions and Application Prospects

6.1 Future Research Directions

Insufficient empirical support exists for the effectiveness of positive thinking interventions in enhancing cognitive performance, making it difficult to draw definitive conclusions^[29].

Most current studies have focused on short-term interventions, and future research needs to focus on the long-term effects of positive thinking meditation and its sustained impact on memory and cognitive functioning in older adults^[30]. This could help caregivers develop more effective intervention programmes.

There is a need to explore further how Positive Thinking Meditation affects brain structure and function, especially brain regions related to memory and cognition^[31]. Research in this area will help to understand the biological basis of positive thinking meditation and provide theoretical support for clinical application.

Positive thinking meditation can be used in conjunction with other types of therapies, such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and physiotherapy, to provide integrated care. This diversified intervention strategy can support older adults' physical and mental health in a more holistic way^[32].

6.2 Prospects for Application

Positive thinking meditation shows promise in improving memory and cognitive function in older adults. Future research should focus on a more in-depth exploration of mechanisms, long-term effects and individual differences. At the same time, the nursing field should actively apply these findings to develop scientifically sound interventions^[33-34]. By training caregivers, developing individualised programmes, and creating supportive environments, the quality of life of older people can be effectively improved, and their physical and mental health can be promoted.

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