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A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science

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Knowledge, Attitudes, and Beliefs Towards the Therapeutic use of  
Mindfulness Amongst Psychotherapists in New Zealand

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## Abstract

Mindfulness has infiltrated psychology in the last two decades, and clinical efficacy in utilising mindfulness is increasing worldwide. Very little research has explored what mental health professionals know about mindfulness, and their attitudes towards its therapeutic use. Understanding practitioners' knowledge and attitudes towards clinical tools is essential in future integration within therapy. The current study explored knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs surrounding various aspects of mindfulness among New Zealand psychotherapists, to identify whether knowledge of mindfulness was related to attitudes towards its use. A total of 53 psychotherapists completed a questionnaire that elicited quantitative responses about personal mindfulness, attitudes towards alternative therapies, and beliefs surrounding perceived competencies with use of mindfulness clinically. Psychotherapists are in agreement with proposed competencies, have positive attitudes towards its use, and are personally highly mindful. ANOVA revealed attitudes and competencies towards the use of mindfulness are related to religious affiliation and professional specialisation. Most had previous mindfulness education and believed it benefits their daily life, but suggested they would consider clinical use if their knowledge was greater. Psychotherapists' personal mindfulness was not associated with attitudes towards, or competencies with its use. Despite a number of limitations, possible implications of the findings suggest future clinical utilisation of mindfulness within New Zealand, is reliant on understanding its current location within the minds of mental health professionals. A lack of education about mindfulness may be the reason for low utilisation, and this research may provide insight into areas of deficiencies. Knowledge in therapeutic mindfulness is pertinent in the improvement of future utilisation and infiltration within mental health professions, in turn accomplishing its clinical potential.

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