

Symposium | AI&IT : [Symposium 29] Trends in mental health in Japan from the perspective of social changes

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(Conference Room C)

[Symposium 29] Trends in mental health in Japan from the perspective of social changes

Moderator: Masato Masuda (Department of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine, Fukuoka University), Rika Tanaka (Studio Rika Clinic)

[SY-29-03] Mindfulness and Stress Care Unit of Shiranui Hospital : From History to the Future

*Mayumi Shimamatsu¹ (1. Shiranui Hospital (Japan))

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Since 1989, the fully open “Ocean Ward” at Shiranui Hospital has admitted 6,544 patients with mood disorders. Through years of clinical development, the ward has pursued a unique therapeutic model based on supportive and insight-oriented therapy, positioning mindfulness as a core treatment modality. The ward’s design incorporates natural sensory stimuli—ocean tides, wind, and light—to activate the five senses and promote healing. Patients with depression often experience cognitive rigidity and low self-esteem. Mindfulness helps enhance present-moment awareness, emotional regulation, and cognitive flexibility. In 2023, mean HAM-D scores improved from 24.7 at admission to 10.4 after one month, and 7.7 at discharge. These findings are consistent with data presented at the 2022 APA Annual Meeting. Introducing mindfulness, particularly in treatment-resistant depression or those with traumatic experiences must be approached with caution. Careful attention is required not to prematurely dismantle avoidance or denial mechanisms that may serve as psychological defenses against traumatic memories. The establishment of trust and psychological resilience is essential to ensure emotional safety and therapeutic efficacy. A multidisciplinary team—including nurses, occupational therapists, aromatherapists, psychologists, and mental health social workers—provides comprehensive and individualized care. Psychological assessments of over 200 participants were analyzed before and after mindfulness-based group therapy. As a result, a strong correlation was found between improvements in FFMQ scores and reductions in trait anxiety measured by the STAI, based on Pearson’s analysis. This suggests that greater mindfulness acquisition is associated with lower anxiety sensitivity. As psychiatric care trends toward shorter hospitalizations amidst growing socio-economic challenges, the ward aims to enhance not only inpatient recovery but also post-discharge continuity of care. Integration of long-term support systems and communities is key to responding to changing patient needs.