Scientific Symposium Round 1D: Presentation 3.

School-Based Prevention and Reduction of Depression in Adolescents: Exploring Moderators and Mediators of Effects of Mindfulness Based Training

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Stage of research: Results

Background
Most of the studies on school-based mindfulness programs so far have been outcome-based to understand the efficacy and effectiveness of the programs. An essential step to wide-scale dissemination is to investigate moderators and mediators of intervention effectiveness. We examined the potential moderating effect of severity of symptoms of depression at baseline, gender, age and school-track, and the potential mediating effects of cognitive reactivity and self-compassion.

Method
The study uses data from two consecutive randomized controlled trials testing the effect of a school-based mindfulness program on symptoms of depression in adolescents (13-18 years) in secondary schools in Belgium. The pooled database included 605 students from 9 schools, including general education, vocational and technical schools. In each school parallel classes were randomized to the mindfulness condition or control condition (no intervention, students followed their regular school program). Data were collected one week before and one week after delivery of the training, as well as 6 months later. The moderation of training effect was tested longitudinally with a multilevel model across the three repeated measures and across condition. A moderated time-lagged mediation model was used to test the mediation of training effect.

Results and Discussion
We found no moderation effects of gender, age, and school-track meaning that the training might work equally well for girls and boys, for younger and older students, and across school-tracks. Six months after delivery of the training we found a marginally significant moderation effect for severity of symptoms of depression at baseline with greater decrease in symptoms for students with high levels of depression. Post-treatment changes in cognitive reactivity and self-coldness, an aspect of self-compassion, mediated subsequent changes in symptoms of depression.