

## EVALUATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MINDFULNESS, SELF-COMPASSION, AND MENTALIZATION AMONG MEDICAL FACULTY RESIDENTS

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**BACKGROUND AND AIM:** Medical faculty residents work under intense stress and pressure in addition to their professional responsibilities. These conditions emphasize the importance of psychological skills impacting individual well-being and professional performance. Mentalization is a critical competency for effective interpersonal interactions, enhancing professional and personal quality of life. Research has shown that mindfulness and self-compassion positively contribute to mentalization capacity. The aim of this study was to investigate the relationships among these three concepts in medical faculty residents.

**METHODS:** Residents from Ataturk University Faculty of Medicine were invited to participate via institutional email lists. Participants then completed an online survey consisting of the Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (FMI), the Short Form of the Self-Compassion Questionnaire (SCQ-SF), the Mentalization Scale (MentS), and a sociodemographic data form. Ethical approval was obtained on 27.12.2024/B.30.2.ATA.0.01.00/725.

**RESULTS:** Out of the 100 participants, 65 were female and 35 were male. The mean age was  $29.76 \pm 3.75$  years. Positive correlation was observed between MentS score and FMI score ( $r=0.416$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), MentS score and SCQ-SF score ( $r=0.405$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and SCQ-SF score and FMI score ( $r=0.723$ ,  $p<0.001$ ).

In the regression analyses, FMI score was significantly associated with MentS score ( $b=0.674$ ,  $p=0.004$ ). Further subgroup analysis comparing surgical and medical specialties showed no statistically significant differences in MentS, FMI, or SCQ-SF scores between these groups ( $p>0.05$ ). According to the mediation analysis, no direct relationship was identified between the SCQ-SF score and MentS score ( $b=0.001$ ,  $p>0.005$ ). However, the SCQ-SF score was found to have a positive indirect effect on the MentS score through increased FMI score ( $b=0.454$ ,  $p=0.001$ ).

**CONCLUSIONS:** This study found that mentalization capacity in medical faculty residents is associated with mindfulness and self-compassion. Mediation analysis revealed that the effect of self-compassion on mentalization occurs indirectly through mindfulness. This finding underscores the need to support self-compassion with mindfulness-enhancing strategies to improve individuals' mentalization capacity. The literature highlights the critical role of mentalization capacity in enhancing both professional and personal quality of life. In conclusion, a holistic approach is needed to support mentalization as a key factor in coping with professional stress.

**Keywords:** Mentalization, mindfulness, self-compassion