The population of Catholic clergy is one vulnerable to health disparities, including cardiovascular disease.

- One study of 3,000 clergy found higher incidence of hyperlipidemia and hypertension than that of the general population (Koller, Blanchfield, Vavra, Andrusyk, & Alsler, 2012).
- A separate study of general clergy revealed a higher number of self-reports than the general population of chronic disease related to hypertension and angina (Proeschold-Bell & LeGrand, 2010).
- There is a paucity of research exploring priests’ physical and mental health, and interventions to meet specific medical needs of Catholic clergy (Koller et al. 2012).

### Purpose and Aims

- **Aim:** Understand the effect of modified mindfulness practice on blood pressure and stress reduction.
- **Purpose:** Offer low-cost and feasible methods of enhancing blood pressure in communities in which access to medical care may be inconsistent.

### Evidence & Benefit

- MBSR has been shown to decrease BP in multiple populations (Palta et al., 2012).
- Research promotes MBSR as an affordable, simple, and effective way to reduce psychological symptoms, and in doing this reduce BP and autonomic responsiveness (Ditto, Eclache, and Goldman, 2006; Campbell, et al., 2012; Palta, et al., 2012).

### Implementation

- Priests were recruited on a volunteer basis to participate in two mindfulness sessions followed by daily home practice.
- Over an eight-week implementation period, participants completed a Perceived Stress Score (PSS) and BP screening before and after mindfulness training. BP and mindfulness practice were documented weekly.
- The two one-hour mindfulness seminars were lead by an expert mindfulness practitioner and author, and focused specifically on harnessing the breath and the body to achieve a physiologically relaxed state.
- The mindfulness goal: daily practice for three minutes, three times a day.

### Results

**Table 1**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>ES</th>
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<tr>
<td>PSS Pre Score</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSS Post Score</td>
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### Discussion

Findings promote the use of simple, brief, mindfulness practices to reduce BP and stress levels.

- Challenges to internal validity: BP checks at different times of day, small sample size, wide age range of participants.
- Self-reported mindfulness minutes increases the risk of variance in reports and less accurate reporting.

### Recommendations

- Mindfulness vs. Prayer and other Grounding
- Spiritual Practices: What is the Gain?
- BP Screening as an Opportunity to Detect other health threats.
- Implications: Nurse Practitioners (NPs) may work with patients with limited resources.

### Lessons Learned

- This pilot study demonstrated the unique power of frequent, brief moments of mindfulness as short as three minutes, three times daily, in reducing stress and blood pressure.
- This study provides an opportunity for the University of Portland School of Nursing (UPSON) to promote wellness in this priest community and it informs future initiatives.
- The wellness theme established by this community is Aging in Place. The UPSON can promote this goal through increased contact with undergraduate and graduate nursing students in future projects.
- For sustainability, establishment of a consistent care professional through UPSON, such as a faculty DNP in need of clinical hours, performing home visits in this community, is recommended.

References available per request