

Table 3: Characteristics of the included studies

Study	Country of the study	Study design	Study setting	Meditators*	Sample size/sample size calculation	Comparison group*
Hoge et al., 2013	USA	Case-control study	Vipassana meditation centers and retreat centers in New England	Experienced meditators over the age of 18, who practiced loving-kindness meditation for more than 4 years regularly and attended at least one overnight meditation retreat.	37/not specified	Control participants were also aged more than 18 and they were not experienced with any meditation and yoga practice. Comparison group matched with mean age (± 5 years), gender, education level and levels of depression history.
Alda et al., 2016	Spain	Case-control study	Soto Spanish Buddhist community	Zen Experienced meditators aged between 18-65 years, who practiced continuous Zen meditation for more than 10 years with a mean at least of 60 min/per day of formal practice during the entire period.	40/not specified	Controls were relatives, and/or friends of the cases who had a similar lifestyle with the age range between 18-65 years and matched by the age (± 2 years), gender and ethnic group.
Le et al., 2019	USA	Randomized controlled trial	Durham and Orange county of North Carolina	Healthy midlife adults aged between 35-64 years, who had home internet access, little to no meditation experience, and no current chronic illnesses or disabilities. These participants received the loving-	176/not specified	Waitlist control group, who also had home internet access, little to no meditation experience, and no current chronic illnesses or disabilities. They were also aged between 35-64 years and they did

				kindness/mindfulness meditation training.		not receive any meditation training.
Puhlmann et al., 2019	Germany	Randomized controlled trial	The European Community's Seventh Framework program under the ReSource Project	Healthy individuals with the age range of 20-55, who were meditation naïve, and extensively screened for mental and physical illnesses. These participants received the presence, affect, and perspective meditation trainings.	332/not specified	Retest control group with a age range of 20-55 years, who were also meditation naïve, and extensively screened for mental and physical illnesses. They did not underwent all the tests but no meditation training.
Mendioroz et al., 2020	Spain	Case-control study	Mindfulness program at the University of Zaragoza and Spanish Association of Mindfulness	Long-term meditators who practiced continuous mindfulness meditation for more than 10 years with a mean at least of 60 min/per day of formal practice during the entire period.	34/not specified	Controls were relatives, and/or friends of the cases who had a similar lifestyle and matched by the age (± 2 years), gender and ethnic group.

PCR – Polymerase Chain Reaction

*All Participants were healthy adults