

Prof. Doug Oman
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Bio

Prof. Doug Oman is a professor at the University of California at Berkeley's School of Public Health, having taught there since 2001. His research focuses on positive factors in health and well-being, especially spirituality, religion and meditation. He teaches on spirituality and public health, has directed a training program on the topic, and edited *Why Religion and Spirituality Matter for Public Health: Evidence, Implications, and Resources* (Springer, 2018). His 100+ professional publications have ranged from epidemiologic studies of longevity to theoretical papers on learning from spiritual exemplars and empirical studies of *mantram* repetition, and he has led two randomized trials of spiritual meditation. He is a past president of the Society for the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality (Division 36 of the American Psychological Association). He received the 2018 William C. Bier award for integrating the psychology of religion/spirituality with other disciplines. Website: <http://dougoman.org>

Keynote Address on:

Psychology, Mindfulness and Public Health

Abstract

Public health seeks to prevent disease and promote health, including mental health, among the population as a whole. Its concern for promoting mental health aligns it with positive psychology. One positive psychology approach that would seemingly hold promise for global, national, and regional public health strategies for promoting mental health is mindfulness, which now has accumulated an extensive research base of more than 16,000 publications. Yet mindfulness is conspicuously absent from most public health literature and practice, suggesting unfulfilled potential. This talk provides highlights from a recent analysis of the mindfulness field from a public health perspective, focused on identifying evidential and conceptual bases, methods, potential consequences, and formulation initial research and action agendas for greater integration of mindfulness approaches into global, national, and local public health efforts. The mindfulness field was found substantially lagging on multi-level interventions (e.g., both individual and collective levels), cultural and religious adaptations, and epidemiologic underpinnings. Both mindfulness and public health fields need efforts to promote intercultural, interreligious, and inter-contemplative competencies, to develop interventions to address pathogenic factors in the collective attentional environments in society, and to attend to religious and spiritual factors. Implications for positive psychology in India and elsewhere are discussed.

