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3 **Mindfulness- A breakthrough in HIV treatment Significance of**
4 **mindful practices in HIV treatment**

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10 HIV is a well-known cause of immunodeficiency as it suppresses the immune system
11 leading to a plethora of symptoms collectively termed AIDS (Acquired
12 Immunodeficiency Syndrome). Despite rigorous ongoing research and advancement in
13 the associated risk factors of acquiring HIV, diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis,
14 mortality reached the peak at 45% in 2015[1]. However, a recent study conducted in
15 2018 by Kate Hendricks Thomas et al. indicates that mindfulness practices enhance
16 primary prevention practices and ameliorate the self-reported quality of life for
17 patients suffering from chronic illnesses such as HIV and AIDS [2]. Mindfulness is
18 described as complete awareness of our thoughts, bodily sensations, feelings, and the
19 environment that surrounds us in a nurturing manner. Two specific types of
20 mindfulness therapy are usually focused upon; Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy
21 (MBCT) and Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR). This could pave a new
22 path towards efficiently countering the hindrances associated with the diagnosis and
23 treatment of the disease in Pakistan. Pakistan is a high-risk country in terms of the
24 prevalence of HIV [3], and it is high time to take drastic measures to restrict the spread
25 and reduce the disease burden. Mindfulness-based therapies offer a potential solution
26 here. Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) has also proven to improve
27 neurocognitive performance, and psychosocial well-being, and reduce the harmful
28 effects of stress that can increase viral replication, suppress the immune response, and

29 hinder constancy to ART [4] [5]. Despite the surfacing positive factors, there is a
30 scarcity of knowledge and awareness regarding mindfulness in Pakistan. The disease
31 burden in Pakistan due to the stigmas and discrimination associated with the disease,
32 reduced screening practices, and delayed ART regimens. Physicians here play a
33 pivotal role in educating the masses about the above-listed obstacles, and also in
34 educating and providing training regarding mindfulness practices. The government
35 shares an equal responsibility to inform the public about mindfulness therapies and
36 create opportunities for the public to indulge in this practice.

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