

**CHRIST**(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)
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Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Mr Sheikh Mohammad Asif, Registration Number: 2071021, PhD Scholar at the School of Psychological Sciences, CHRIST (Deemed to be University) will defend his PhD thesis at the public viva-voce examination on Monday, 22 June 2026 at 11.00 am in Room No. 044, Ground Floor, R&D Block, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru - 560029, Karnataka, India.

- Title of the Thesis** : **Mindfulness-Based Exposure and Response Prevention in Individuals with Comorbid Obsessive-Compulsive and Major Depressive Disorders: A Randomized Controlled Trial**
- Discipline** : **Psychology**
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The members of the Research Advisory Committee of the Scholar, the faculty members of the Department and the School, interested experts and research scholars of all the branches of research are cordially invited to attend this open viva-voce examination.

Registrar (Academics)

Place: Bengaluru
Date: 11 June 2026

ABSTRACT

Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) frequently co-occurs with major depressive disorder (MDD), a comorbidity associated with greater symptom severity, emotion dysregulation, and reduced treatment responsiveness. Standard exposure and response prevention (EX/RP) may inadequately address shared transdiagnostic mechanisms such as cognitive inflexibility and experiential avoidance. Mindfulness-based exposure and response prevention (MB-EX/RP) integrates mindfulness practices within exposure-based protocols to target these processes. This randomized controlled trial examined whether MB-EX/RP yields superior outcomes compared with standard EX/RP among individuals with comorbid OCD and MDD. Fifty-four adults were randomly assigned to MB-EX/RP or standard EX/RP, with assessments at baseline, posttreatment, and 4-month follow-up. Per-protocol analyses were conducted on 40 treatment completers using mixed-design analyses of variance (ANOVA). Both interventions produced significant reductions in OCD and depressive symptoms over time ($p < .01$). However, participants receiving MB-EX/RP demonstrated greater improvements over time than those receiving standard EX/RP in OCD symptom severity ($\eta^2p = .04$), obsessive beliefs ($\eta^2p = .11$), mindfulness ($\eta^2p = .18$), and mental well-being ($\eta^2p = .07$). The interaction effect for depressive symptoms was not statistically significant ($\eta^2p = .03$). Treatment gains were maintained at the 4-month follow-up. Additional analyses indicated that psychotropic medication status did not significantly moderate treatment outcomes for OCD symptom severity or depressive symptoms. These findings suggest that MB-EX/RP may represent a mechanism-informed intervention that confers sustained clinical benefits for individuals with comorbid OCD and MDD. Trial registration: CTRI/2021/10/037545 (Registered on October 25, 2021). Details are available at <http://ctri.nic.in>

Keywords: obsessive-compulsive disorder, major depressive disorder, mindfulness, exposure and response prevention, randomized controlled trial

Publications:

1. **Sheikh, M. A., & Alfonso, T. (2025).** Mindfulness in treatment-seeking adults with comorbid obsessive-compulsive and major depressive disorders: Mediating effects of obsessive beliefs and mental well-being. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, 67(5), 513– 521. https://doi.org/10.4103/indianjpsychiatry.indianjpsychiatry_102_25
2. **Sheikh, M. A., & Alfonso, T. (2025).** Can mindfulness-based EX/RP improve comorbid OCD–MDD treatment in South Asian mental health settings? *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 71(8), 1661–1663. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00207640251350893>
3. **Sheikh, M. A. (2025).** Reclaiming the ethical foundations of mindfulness: Toward a dharmaguided clinical paradigm. *Mindfulness*, 16(11), 3348– 3357. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-025-02684-8>
4. **Sheikh, M. A. (2025).** Parsing the promise of mindfulness for obsessive-compulsive disorder: From heterogeneous evidence to mechanistic precision. *Mindfulness*, 16(11), 3358– 3364. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-025-02688-4>
5. **Sheikh, M. A. (2025).** Telehealth-delivered mindfulness-based exposure and response prevention for sexual obsessive-compulsive disorder with comorbid depression: Feasibility and clinical outcomes. *Clinical Case Studies*, 25(1), 3– 24. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15346501251405859>
6. **Sheikh, M. A. (2026).** Comment on: “A short review on practice of mindfulness as treatment in obsessive–compulsive disorder” by Borgohain (2024). *Journal of Applied Consciousness Studies*, 14(1), 41–42. https://doi.org/10.4103/jacs.jacs_63_25