

# The Impact of Guided Meditation on Implicit Attitudes

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## Abstract

This research investigates how guided meditation can impact implicit racial biases. Past research indicates that meditation can decrease implicit attitudes towards a variety of stigmatized groups. Participants in this study were placed in one of three conditions: a control, an auditory guided meditation, or an Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) guided meditation group. Each participant took the Implicit Associations Test (IAT) before watching a 10-minute video, the video was determined by their condition. Following the recording, participants retook the IAT and filled out a demographic questionnaire. Results did not reveal a difference between conditions. Future research should focus on responses to ASMR.



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## Introduction

- Guided meditation quiets the mind and brings awareness to each part of the body.
- Singh & Modi (2012) linked meditation to increased awareness, stress management skills, and focus on the present.
- Lueke and Gibson (2015) found that a brief, 10-minute meditation could decrease implicit age and race bias.
- Lueke and Gibson (2016) found that participants who listened to a 10-minute mindfulness audio recording were less biased than the control group during a trust game, trusting blacks and whites almost identically.
- Fredborg, Clarke, and Smith (2018) investigated the relationship between ASMR and mindfulness. Participants who watched ASMR consistently performed highly on the Mindful Attention and Awareness Scale, which assesses ability to attend to the present moment.
- **Research Questions:** Can guided meditation decrease implicit attitudes on race? Are there differences in the effects of an ASMR and auditory guided meditation?

## Method

**Participants:** Drawn from undergraduate Intro to Psych classes.

- 48 students (8 excluded from data analysis)
- 10 males, 29 females, 1 nonbinary
- 18-23 years old ( $M = 18.68$ ,  $SD = 0.944$ )

**Materials:**

- Implicit Association Test (IAT) on race run through the Inquisit 5 software.
- 10-minute video recordings (recorded via an iPhone)

**Condition 1:** Auditory guided meditation

**Condition 2:** Automatic sensory meridian response (ASMR) meditation

**Condition 3:** Control – Auditory Greek history

- Manipulation check: The Toronto Mindfulness Scale

1. I experienced myself as separate from my changing thoughts and feelings.	0	1	2	3	4
2. I was more concerned with being open to my experiences than controlling or changing them.	0	1	2	3	4

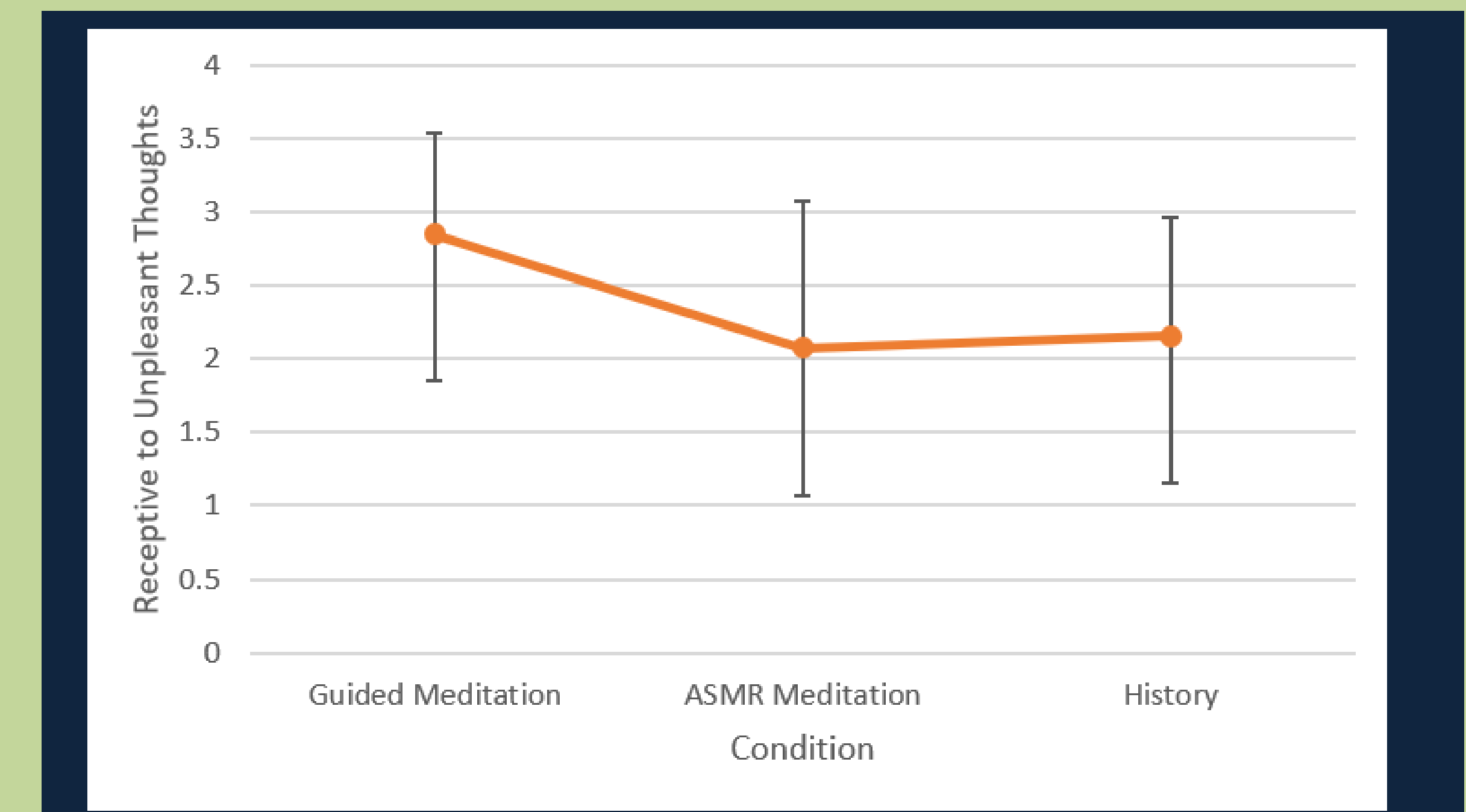
- Demographics Questionnaire

**Procedure:**

Participants were read the informed consent. They took the IAT before listening to a 10-minute recording, which depended on their condition. They then took the Toronto Mindfulness Scale before re-taking the IAT. Lastly, they took a brief demographics questionnaire. The study took approximately 30 minutes.

## Results

- No significant difference between mindfulness conditions,  $F(2, 42) = 0.41$ ,  $p = 0.67$ . No significant difference on manipulation check,  $F(2, 42) = 1.36$ ,  $p = 0.27$ .
- Significant difference on the statement, "I was receptive to observing unpleasant thoughts and feelings without interfering with them,"  $F(2, 42) = 3.35$ ,  $p = 0.045$ . Guided meditation condition ( $M = 2.73$ ,  $SD = 0.70$ ) scored significantly higher than the ASMR condition ( $M = 2.00$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ).



## Discussion

- Guided meditation did not decrease implicit attitudes.
- There was no significant difference found between the ASMR and guided meditation conditions.

**Implications:**

- A 10-minute guided meditation may not be long enough to produce the desired effects.

**Limitations:**

- The manipulation may not have been strong enough.
- Small sample size.
- The environment was not calming or relaxing.
- Participants were not invested in the meditation.

**Future studies:**

- Lengthen the guided meditation to 20- minutes.
- Study people's responses to ASMR. Why do people have such aversive reactions to it?

## References

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