

Assignment One

The Supporting Paper of The Micro Teaching on Aromatherapy for Group 2 Essential Oils (Lavender Oil)



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Introduction

Aromatherapy is a healing therapy in which essential oils or other scents are inhaled to achieve its curative potentials. Davis (2021). It has been in use for centuries and is becoming more popular, getting the recognition it deserves as a very important and effective way of healing individuals. It does have a cool and calming effect on individuals. Hippocrates the father of modern medicine supported the use of aromatherapy (Farrar and Farrar, 2020). It can either be used on its own or in conjunction with traditional medicine therefore used quite often in households due to its accessibility and affordability.

This supporting paper focusses on lavender oils, its history, usage and efficacy is an assignment based on the micro-teaching on aromatherapy held on the 16th of April 2020. The effectiveness of lavender oils as a form of healing therapy will be discussed and comparison will be made with traditional treatments. It will also highlight the contra - indications of this kind of therapy, while presenting an evaluation of the overall effectiveness of lavender treatment and conclude with some recommendations.

History of Lavender Oils

Aromatherapy means fragrance and treatment (Ali et al, 2015). Essential oils such as lavender are used to heal the mind, body and soul. It was also stated that The Greeks used Lavender to treat insomnia and backaches (Vaishnavi, 2020). It has been in existence for many years and was used in various parts of the world such as Egypt, China and India.

History equated a pound of lavender to the monthly wage in Rome.

The name lavender is a Latin word, 'Lavare' which means to wash. It originated from the popular aromatic plant of the Lamiaceae family (Harmeyer et al, 2017). Apart from the medicinal properties of the Lavender plant, it is also used for other various useful things such as in shampoo, facial cleaners and hand soap. Jersey Lavender (2015) explain that Roman doctors treated wounds with lavender, even though they could not explain its efficacy, they saw its good effect. Lavender oils also have calming, balancing, sedating, relaxing pain relieving and anti-bacterial properties. During the Black plague of the 16th century, it was used to ward off the 'dreaded disease'. The plant was sold in the streets to mask the smell of dead bodies.

Preethi et al (2020) found 70% of the 100 participants of a survey on the understanding and recognition of the benefits of lavender oil were aware of the benefits, 48% of which were male and 53% women. These findings can be said to demonstrate the popularity of lavender essential oil, its accessibility and affordability which makes it desirable to patients and individuals

The Uses of Lavender Oils

Lavender oils can be used in a variety of ways such as food flavouring, inhaling and could also be used as aromatherapy massage oil. It is also used as a pain relief. Essential oils if used properly in the clinical setting can affect patients' health and wellness positively (Lowring, 2019).

Lavender oil is very potent and has been proven to be helpful in treating patients with Alzheimer's disease, and sleep disorders. National Library of Medicine (2020) explains that clinical aromatherapy is a form of treatment that can be useful in treating patients in and out of the hospital, for the treatment of pain, nausea, and general well-being.

Contra Indications of Lavender oil

Essential oils such as Lavender oils can be dangerous and toxic if not used properly. Lavender oil can cause skin irritation or allergic reaction in some individuals. It can be flammable resulting in chemical burns, nausea, vomiting or headache. In extreme cases it can cause death (Wong, 2020). National Library of Medicine (2020) states that essential oils can be lethal and poisonous. Lavender oils have also been known to lower blood pressure, hence herbal supplements that cause hypertension should not be used together. Pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers need to be cautious and are advised to seek medical advice before using lavender as not enough research has been carried out to know its effect on babies.

Efficacy of Lavender Oils

Samuelson et al (2020) highlighted that lavender essential oils are effective in wound healing, but standardization of the chemical composition and additionally high quality human clinical trials are needed to further evaluate the safety and efficacy. The safety of any aromatherapy treatment is of utmost importance for both for the person delivering the treatment and the person receiving it. This is because Aromatherapists are still bound by the law of the land not to do harm when treating their patients. Antonell and Donelli (2020) also

stated that evidence is not adequate to conclude on the efficacy of lavender therapy in clinical practice. However, Antonelli and Donelli (2020) highlight that lavender essential oil when used as a massaging oil, may be efficient as a treatment for various conditions such as psychological disturbances and the treatment of pain. Individuals are able to go to the internet to research on the safety of aromatherapy to enable them make informed decisions on choice of treatment based on their findings.

How Lavender Oil Therapy Compares to Traditional Treatment

Long term use of sleeping tablets could make patients become dependent on them. There is also evidence of other side effects such as poor quality of sleep in some patients. There is therefore need for alternative methods to be explored. Erland and Mahmood (2016) explain that conventional treatments that include sedatives could induce prolonged sleep, and side effects such as dependence may be psychological.

Use of essential oils may be an area to explore as a form of treatment in some infections where some bacteria no longer respond to antibiotics. Tariq et al (2019) confirms that scientists are now trying to discover alternative forms of treatment because some of the various common antibiotics used in the treatment of some bacterial pathogens are no longer responding to the variety of antibiotics, resulting in the increasing severity of diseases.

Tariq et al (2019) further went on to add that inhaling essential oil vapour is a better method in the treatment of some diseases than the oral route of medicines. Inhalation of some medications can be more effective than oral medication as it gets into the bloodstream quicker because the nasal passage is lined with capillaries and scent receptors that can move the essential oils straight into the bloodstream, however when it comes to the oral route, the drug needs to survive the digestive system and the liver. The nasal passage has a lot of capillaries and scent receptors that are able to carry the medication to the bloodstream efficiently. Bagheri-Nagami et al (2019) undertook a randomised trial on hemodialysis patients and it demonstrated, that aromatherapy with lavender essential oil and orange essential oil might reduce fatigue in them.

Questions Asked After the Micro Teaching Session

In response to the only question following the micro-teaching session, on what should be expected at an aromatherapy appointment, individual clients would be asked about past medical history and regular medications. The rationale behind these questions is to make sure that, the individual is not taking medications that are contraindicated to aromatherapy treatment. The vital signs of the individual will also be checked. For example, if the individual has low blood pressure caution would need to be applied when using lavender oil therapy as it could further lower blood pressure.

Conclusion

There are pieces of evidence that points to the successful use of aromatherapy as effective treatment in some cases, there are however not enough research papers that demonstrates its effectiveness. This scepticism and bias could be, as a result of limited knowledge in the western world, such as the United Kingdom and the United States. Naz et al (2018) explain that there is not enough evidence that essential oils can effectively treat any chronic disease or other illnesses hence it will take a while for people to resort to this form of treatment as a first line treatment.

Aromatherapy has been in existence before biomedicine came into existence, it is therefore important that more quantitative research be carried out to increase confidence in this form of healing in the western world especially in The United Kingdom. Presently, most of the available research are qualitative research which this could be responsible for the doubt in the authenticity and efficacy of aromatherapeutic treatments.

This supporting paper has demonstrated the strengths and weaknesses of lavender essential oil. It has shown if used in the right context could be very beneficial, however like any other healing therapy, caution has to be undertaken and understanding, what could go wrong when not used properly is of utmost importance in order for it to be avoided. It cannot be stated that aromatherapy is better than orthodox treatment as each one has its place as regards the treatment of people.

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