



COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES (BMHP5001)

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Assessment1- Aromatherapy

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Introduction

Aromatherapy is a holistic healing treatment that uses natural plant extracts to promote health and well-being. Aromatherapy uses aromatic essential oils medicinally to improve the health of the body, mind, and spirit. It enhances both physical and emotional health (Cronkleton, 2018). Aromatherapy is used as a complementary therapy or as a form of alternative medicine. Complementary therapy can be offered alongside standard treatment, with alternative medicine offered instead of conventional, evidence-based treatments. Aromatherapy is a branch of phytotherapy that uses only one category of plants, namely the aromatic ones. Various preparations are obtained from aromatic plants, from pure volatile oil to massage lotions, from ordinary teas to complex medicinal preparations.

Aromas act on our senses and influence our emotional, mental and physical state. Aromatherapy shows us how to use to our advantage the natural aromas obtained from plants or other existing organic sources in the form of essential oils. A simple aroma can awaken memories from the near or distant past, just as it can make us have different states, calm, relaxation, panic or experience feelings of closeness or antipathy. Aromatherapy helps us to have a positive mood, it creates a favourable atmosphere for us to be more balanced, calmer and at the same time happier.

History

Aromatherapy is a part of complementary therapy. It is essential to ensure that complementary aromatherapy has been invented within China, Egypt, Greek, India and Rome (Goli *et al.* 2020). The history of aromatherapy begins in 3500 BC. At that time the aromatherapy was used for religious purpose along with the invention of perfumes and medicines. This is also important to say that the term 'Aromatherapy' was invented by French Chemist Rene-Maurice Gattefosse. Moreover, he had claimed that he had invented the idea of Aromatherapy after curing people with lavender oil after the occurrence of a burn accident in 1935. As a whole, it can be said that complementary and alternative medicines have been developed in Europe in terms of Homeopathy medicine and was discovered by Samuel Hahnemann in Germany at the end of the 18th century (Brierley-Jones, 2021).

Use

Aromatherapy is a part of complementary therapy whereas aromatherapy has focused on the therapeutic ingredients of some essential oils which have been derived from natural plants with scientific healing based effectiveness. This is because aromatherapy can also be termed essential oil therapy. This is also necessary to say that the medicinal uses of the essential oils help to improve the health of the body, spirit as well as mind (Allard and Katseres, 2018). There are some general benefits which may help to enhance the health of the body. So, the benefits of aromatherapy are the reduction of stress, reliever of anxiety and pain reliever. Apart from that, it reduces the symptoms and the root causes of the depression as well as it also reduces muscle tension. The functions of the essential oil are that the molecules of the oil go to the central portion of our brain from the olfactory nerves and through this way Aromatherapy elevates the mood of human minds.

Essential oil therapy works especially on the mental level. However, some treatments can relieve physical ailments or pain. At the mental level, aromatherapy manages to bring balance, calm, peace of mind, but also to energize, to increase the level of optimism, spontaneity, creativity. Its effects depend on the types of essential oils used. Topical applications - essential oils can be applied directly to the skin when diluted in a carrier oil such as coconut oil and can be used in various areas, temples, feet, wrists, behind the ears. To avoid possible side effects, it is recommended to test the oils on a small surface before application. Inhalation of essential oils is done either after a few drops have been poured on a material, or by steam vapour or spray. Aromatherapy diffusers are devices that diffuse the aromas of essential oils simply and safely to use. When using essential oils it is important to follow the advice of a trained professional. Massage - essential oils can be used to help maximize the effects of massage and to achieve a state of calm, tranquillity, relaxation. Furthermore, it has thereby been established that the used essential oil within aromatherapy can elevate the mood of a depressive person. As well, it has also been recognised that the essential oils and their scent help our body to elevate our mood.

Efficacy and Contraindications

Essential oils do contain active ingredients from the plants from which they are extracted and are very likely to have certain effects. Essential oils are recognized for their therapeutic properties, being effective in relieving dermatological, hepatobiliary, renal, rheumatic diseases and in managing depression, anxiety and stress. However, it can be said that as per the opinion of the National Institute of Health, there is no evidence-based research on aromatherapy. Apart from that, the study has also observed that a scientific study is partially proving the scientific significance of the essential oils within the human body, mind and spirit. Furthermore, the examples of this field are focusing on lemon oil, tea tree oil along with the fish oil etc. This is important to say that the lemon oil decreases the agitation problems within the patient and along with this the tea tree oil reduces the acne issue during the adolescence period (Integrative, 2005). Furthermore, other natural herbs (or the essential oil of the thyme, lavender, rosemary and cedarwood) reduces the problem of hair loss.

On the other side, this has been observed that aromatherapy has both benefits and risks during the implementation of essential oils within the skin. The mild side effects of the essential oils are nausea and headache. As well as the uses of essential oils may be the risk factor for the asthma patient. Furthermore, it has also been recognised that the essential oil may develop skin diseases even if it may cause skin cancer also. The essential oil may cause hay fever and irritations of sensitive skin (Ali *et al.* 2015). Above all, it has thereby been established that children under 5 years are not eligible to take essential oil therapy. Along with this, it has been observed that people who have epilepsy should stay away from essential oils like sage, sweet fennel, eucalyptus and rosemary. As well as, it has been observed that patients with high blood pressure are required to avoid the essential oil (rosemary, eucalyptus, peppermint and thyme) therapy as the essential oil increases adrenaline circulation.

Comparison to traditional treatment

This chapter focuses on the comparison between aromatherapy and traditional treatment. The similarities between complimentary aromatherapy and traditional treatment will be analyzed in the first part, while in the second part the differences between the two therapies will be analyzed.

Similarities:

Aromatherapy is distinguished by the use of essential oils to reduce pain or change the patient's mood for the better.

Complementary aromatherapy reduces the problems such as hair loss problem, acne issues, agitation problems, depression, insomnia, high blood pressure etc.

Traditional treatment is based on the use of different types of drugs dedicated to healing or ameliorating various ailments of the human body.

The traditional treatment has the effect of reducing or completely curing most of the diseases that the human body suffers from.

Differences:

Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) is generally holistic, with a much greater emphasis on the relationship between body, mind and soul than in classical medicine.

The CAM has as an important component the development of a relationship between patient and practitioner, which makes Complementary and Alternative Medicine a method not only of healing but also of building trust (PaCE, 2012).

Traditional treatment has as its main component healing based on scientifically approved treatments that are very effective in treating chronic or mental illness.

Complementary medicine treats the individual with his or her unique personality, while traditional medicine treats the disease and focuses heavily on symptoms and diagnoses.

Conclusion

Aromatherapy is a pleasant form of therapy, painless and relaxing and is addressed to the body, but also the psyche because it is also a pleasant sensory experience. Aromatherapy is one of the most non-invasive and easy to use remedies to combat stress and induce well-being, whether we are stressed or not. It represents the therapeutic use of essential oils extracted from plants that can relieve the symptoms of various diseases.

Although highly valued worldwide, flavours and essential oils should not be seen as a form of healing, as long as studies have not validated the therapeutic efficacy of this practice. As long as we use them for relaxation and the delight of the senses, we can avoid the side effects and unknowns that they can cause us. Aromatherapy can be dangerous, which is why you need to be careful when using essential oils.

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