

Aromatherapy: Treating with Smell in Elderly

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Reprint Request

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Abstract

Aroma means smell. Smell and odors is used as a part of mind body modalities under the alternative system of health care. Aromatherapy is the practice of using natural oils which is extracted from flowers, bark, stems, leaves, roots or other plant parts to enhance psychological and physical well being. Essential oils are extracted from variety of different parts of plants by different methods. It can be used for treating different health ailments. The different essential oils have its peculiarities for the treatment. It is mostly used along with the carrier oils to reduce its irritating effects. The use of aromatherapy can be made by different simple methods like massage, bath etc. But while caring the elderly precautions can be taken in order to maximize its effect as well as reduce the side effects.

Keywords: Aromatherapy; Elderly; Smell; Essential Oil; Carrier Oil.

Aroma means smell. Smell and odors is used as a part of mind body modalities under the alternative system of health care. The use of aromatherapy dates back to ancient times for the purpose of treatment all over the world. Now a day it is widely used in all the streams. Essential oils have been used for therapeutic purposes for nearly 6,000 years. In the history Chinese, Indians, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans used them in cosmetics, drugs, perfumes and also for spiritual, therapeutic, hygienic, and ritualistic purposes. The term aromatherapy was coined by French Chemist Rene-Maurice Gaffefosse in 1928 which shows healing effect on burns by lavender oil.

Aromatherapy is the practice of using natural oils which is extracted from flowers, bark, stems, leaves, roots or other plant parts to enhance psychological and physical well being. The vital element of aromatherapy is the essential oils. Essential oils have been used for the generations to ease symptoms of depression, anxiety, insomnia to boost memory and

mood. The inhaled molecules of aroma react with nerves in the olfactory bulb and relay nerve messages to the limbic system mostly amygdala and hippocampus that serve as storehouses and control area for emotions and memories or are absorbed into the blood stream by thin membranes of the nose, bronchioles and lungs. Some researchers show that they may interact in the blood with hormones or enzymes. It is also now well accepted that essential oil components can be absorbed through the skin to reach internal organs. The limbic system is directly connected to the parts of the brain that control heart rate, blood pressure, breathing, memory, stress levels, and hormone balance. There are several studies that shows oil fragrances may be one of the fastest ways to bring about, physiological or psychological effects.

How It Is Made

Essential oils are extracted from variety of different parts of plant, by distillation, maceration, effleurages and pressing.

Parts Plants Yielding Essential Oil

Parts of Plant	Essential Oil
Flowers	Jasmine, Rose, Ylang, Neroli
Leaves	Citronella, Lemongrass, Palmaroa
Bark	Cinnamon
Roots	Ginger, Vetiver
Entire Plant	Geranium, Lavender, Rosemary
Fruit Peel	Beragmot, Lemon, Lime, Sweet Orange

Common Essential Oil and Its Use

Lavender: said to be calming and to balance emotions. Also antidepressant, insomnia, Alzheimer disease. Used undiluted to treat burns, migraine, infuria. Reduce cortisol levels.

Lemon Balm: (melissa officinalis)-help to calm and relax people who are dealing with anxiety and insomnia.

Pepper Mint: alleviate symptoms of anxiety and depression. Used to stimulate the mind and the calm nerves. Treat absent mindedness, improve memory & mental performance. Boost Energy Level, regulate digestive tract and reduce inflammation.

Rosemary: Reduce cortisol levels. Stimulate body and mind. De- stress after they are related with feelings & contentment. Proven to help with memory and dementia & memory lose.

Bergamot: Mood elevating, Calming, and balancing. Used to relieve anxiety, agitation, mild depression and stress. Used to relieve insomnia.

Ginger: helpful for anyone struggle with digestive issue. Used to treat loss of appetite & constipation. Promote eating habits.

Rose: promote skin cell regeneration. Beauty tool that improve senior complexions. Soften lines and wrinkles of facial skin. Used for antidepressant and mood boosting. Have antiviral and antibacterial properties.

Eucalyptus: It is an antiseptic, aids in circulation and oxygenation. Guards against respiratory infection. Natural treatment of sinusitis and headache.

Lemon: effect like anti depressant. Best natural choice for those who are stressed, tensed or suffering from anxiety. Helps to lower blood pressure, reduces cellulites.

Carrier Oil

Carrier oil otherwise called as base oil is used to dilute essential oils before they are applied to the skin in massage and aromatherapy.

It is mostly derived from the fatty portion of a plant, usually from the seeds, kernels or the nuts. It is essential to use some carrier oil for the use of essential oil because the concentrated form of essential oil is harmful to body which causes severe irritation, sensitization, redness or burning or other reactions in some individuals.

Almond Oil, Aloe Vera Oil, Apricot Oil, Avocado Oil, Grape seed Oil, Hazelnut Oil, Jojoba Oil, Olive

Oil, Walnut Oil etc are the most commonly used carrier oils.

Methods of Use

Essential Oils are mostly inhaled and absorbed into the lungs.

Also can be applied to skin

- Facial Oil
- Body Oil
- Bath/Shower
- Body lotion
- Foot/Hand Bath
- Hair Care
- Sitz Bath
- Ambient diffusion
- Compress
- Massage
- Misting
- Pillow Talk.
- Direct Inhalation-Scented Candles
- Compressor.

Precautions for Elders

- Use under the guidance of a specialist.
- Elders who have respiratory problems use it precautionary as the exposure can predispose attacks of asthma and allergy.
- Use essential oil directly along with a carrier oil/ blending oil.
- A precaution with each oil is different. So use wisely.
- As elders are frail use a lower dilution state for essential oil.
- It can interact with some medication. So judicious with its use.
- While giving massage always give gently as skin of elders are thin.
- Keep in safe custody because dementia is a major problem in elderly. So mistakes can happen.
- Essential oils are highly volatile and flammable so they should never be used near an open flame.

Health Issues and Essential Oils that Can Be Used for Elderly

Restlessness and poor sleep-	Lavender, Marjoram Sweet Lemon.
Loss of Appetite-	Cardamom, Rosemary, Lemon, Ginger.
Constipation-	Ginger, Rosemary, Orange.
Diarrhea-	Peppermint, Geranium.
Indigestion.	Mandarin, Lemon, Peppermint.
Anger, Aggression, Irritability-	Lavender, Melissa.
Anxiety, Agitation-	Neroli, Lavender, Geranium.
Apathy-	Rose.
Depression-	Bergamont, Geranium, Grapefruit, lavender,
	Lemon, Orange, Rose, Rosemary.
	Lavender, Chamomile Roman.
Headache-	Rosemary, Lemon.
Memory-	Lavender, Juniper Berry.
Muscle Contraction-	Lavender, Eucalyptus, Lemon.
Common Cold-	Lavender, Lemon, Roman Chamomile.
Arthritis-	Lavender.
Dry Cracked Skin-	

Scientific Evidence for Treatment

- Bed ridden or wheel chair bound persons can benefit from aromatherapy massage.
- Lavender helps in the improvement in quality of sleep.
- Lavender Aromatherapy reduces falls in elderly nursing home residents.
- Aromatherapy massage reduces pain, physical function, sleep disturbance and depression in elderly women with osteoarthritis.
- The effect of lavender aromatherapy on cognitive function, emotion, and aggressive behavior of elderly with dementia.
- Aromatherapy helps to reduce the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease.
- Aromatherapy massage helps to relieve anxiety, constipation among elderly.
- Aromatherapy helps in alleviating problems related with arthritis.
- Aromatherapy helps in relieving problems related with arthritis.

Conclusion

Aromatherapy is very effective for elders both in physical symptom relief and psychological effect. It is important to know well in advance before start treating with nature's medicine. When used properly aromatherapy is safe, simple and effective for many at home and also for caregivers.

Key Messages

Aromatherapy is the use of smell and essential oil

for the different health ailments. Its use is widely increasing in the modern world. With efficient practice it can be applied for the elderly people so that they will be benefited with this during the stage of discomforts.

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