Flower Essences and Aromatherapy Studies

Bach Flower Studies

Pain Relief Study
This case study analysis indicated the potential of Bach flower essences as a means of pain relief. Among the 384 subjects studied, forty-one suffered from pain.

Their response to the therapy was surprising: 46% felt the treatment had relieved their pain. In 49% of the subjects, the physical outcome was unknown. The truly astounding finding was that 88% of all subjects, whether they suffered from pain or not, reported an improvement in their emotional outlook.

Lar Do Nenen Children's Shelter
Suzana Loreto Maia (who has a degree in psychology with a specialization in psychomotricity) conducted a two-year study at Lar Do Nenen, a children's shelter in Recife, Brazil. The shelter looks after children from birth to two years old who have either been abandoned or are at risk.

Throughout the two-year period, Maia put flower essences in the children's bath, misted the air with essences, and used them in topical creams. In the beginning, she noticed small changes in their behavior, such as their ability to remain seated while looking at pictures in a book and an improvement in their overall behavior. A few weeks later, she noticed the children having fun organizing games among themselves, something she hadn't observed before.

The analysis of the data was compiled in two ways: the first group was studied throughout the entire period of use. The second group was studied for a beginning period, then again after a six-month period.

In conclusion, Maia observed that the children who had been taking flower essences for almost six months did not feel the need to sit on people's laps as much. They also showed an increased interest in learning games and in listening to music. Those who didn't take flower essences continued to show a lack of interest in learning and playing. Maia also observed that children who took flower essences generally fell ill less often and had fewer skin problems.

Italian Studies
In Italy, Dr. S. Calzolari, a pediatrician, studied the effects of flower essences on 417 children with emotional difficulties. He concluded that they were very helpful and effective. Drs. D'Auria and Pezza also suggested that flower essences are especially effective in helping to control the psychological aspects of pain.

Another Italian study conducted in 1997 included 115 subjects who suffered from anxiety, depression, and stress. The subjects were treated with flower essences over a period of three and a half months.

The results showed positive improvement for 89% of the patients, especially those suffering from anxiety. Children and adolescents tended to respond more quickly to the treatment. Almost 95% of the subjects, who initially declared themselves skeptical about flower essence therapy, also enjoyed improvement in their conditions.

Cardiac Autonomic Balance in Healthy Women
By S Yang, Y Wang
International Research Congress on Integrative Medicine and Health, 2012, Portland, Oregon, USA. 15-18 May 2012

The Rescue remedy has been used as a stress relief formula by practitioners of Bach flower remedies. The objective of the present study is to evaluate the effect of Bach Rescue remedy on cardiac autonomic balance in healthy women.

Methods: In this two-stage crossover trial, seven females (mean age 26±4 years) were randomly assigned to a sequence of two treatments (Rescue remedy and placebo) with a one-month wash-out period. The Rescue remedy consisted of four drops of five flower essences (cherry plum, clematis, impatiens, rock rose and Star of Bethlehem) dissolved in brandy and 250 ml of distilled water. The placebo consisted of four drops of brandy in 250 ml of distilled water. Cardiac autonomic functions were evaluated by frequency domain indices (LF, low frequency power and HF, high frequency power) of heart rate variability at baseline and after the intervention. Percentage changes were calculated and compared between the Rescue remedy and placebo groups using Wilcoxon signed rank sum test.

Results: Both the mean percentage changes of LnLF (natural logarithm-transformed LF) and LF/HF ratio were significantly different between the two groups. The mean percentage change of LnLF in the Rescue remedy group was -15.9+/-7.4% compared with 18.3+/-21.6% in the placebo group. The mean percentage change of LF/HF was -27.8+/-13.0% in the Rescue remedy group compared with 53.2+/-89.1% in the placebo group.

Conclusion: This is the first study using a double-blind randomized crossover design to evaluate the effect of Bach Rescue remedy on heart rate variability in healthy women. Increased parasympathetic activity and decreased sympathetic activity were observed in individuals receiving Bach Rescue remedy. These changes may explain the stress relieving effect of Bach Rescue remedy.

North American Flower Essences Studies

Various families of flower essences continue to be tested in hospitals, clinics, and private practices throughout the world. The applications are many and varied. These are a small sampling of some recorded studies. Three presentations of the findings of Dr. Jeffrey Cram, Ph.D., during the "2002 North American Flower Essence Society" training session:

Study One: Dr. Cram conducted double-blind studies with flower essences using two FES formulas. In the first study, subjects were exposed to an impossible arithmetic problem during which time their muscle tension was studied. The outcome found that flower essences appeared to help the participants let go of distractions and foster a sense of calm, which enabled them to concentrate on the math problem.

Study Two: A researcher measured the brain waves in subjects under relaxed lighting conditions, then under the stress of harsh fluorescent lights. The first group received one of two different flower essence blends and the second group, a placebo. The group that received the flower essence blends had little reaction to the lights. The group that received the placebo experienced increased activity of the frontal lobes of the brain (the part of the brain responsible for the "fight or flight" syndrome). Dr. Cram concluded that the study may provide evidence of

the ability of flower essences to strengthen emotional equilibrium and equanimity in the face of environmental stresses.

Study Three: Dr. Cram used the Beck Depression Inventory and Hamilton Depression Scale to assess mild-to-moderately depressed individuals. Participants received a flower essence blend based on each client's personal issues (no two clients received the same essence blend). After one month, the depressive symptoms dropped 40%; after two months, there was a 50% drop. The reduction in depressive symptoms remained at 50% after a full three months.

Hospitals and Clinics: Using Various Flower Essences

When you are admitted to a Danish hospital, you can choose to receive secondary treatment from a flower remedy practitioner as an additional treatment option.

Over sixteen hospitals throughout Australia currently offer flower essence treatments to their patients. Several clinics in western Australia that use flower essences in their drug and rehabilitation services found that, while 80% of heroin addicts relapsed quickly after treatment, the relapse rate was significantly reduced after using flower essences.

At the University of Sao Paulo in Brazil, Dr. Katia Kuchler used Australian Bush essences to treat diabetes. She discovered a significant reduction in glucose levels, pain, infection, and insomnia. In their burn unit the flower essence Fireweed is often used to promote healing.

Both the Cancer Care Center in Ft. Worth, Texas, and the Baylor Medical Center in Dallas have cancer support programs in which American Petite Fleur flower essences are given to help patients alleviate many of the adverse reactions to chemotherapy.

In Japan, the Niwa Clinic in Tokyo, and the Ando Clinic in Chiba-kin use flower essences in a variety of capacities.

Australian Flower Essence Studies

Swiss Medical Charity - Green Cross
The Australian combination flower remedy of Electro Essence was used to treat child victims from Belarus affected by the Chernobyl (Russian) nuclear disaster. They discovered that between one-third and one-half of the victims experienced a drop in radiation levels. Another ongoing trial is underway using the Australian Bush remedy She Oak for treating various hormonal issues.

German Studies
A Hamburg psychiatrist and psychotherapist, Dr. Karin Hauffe, has long used flower essences for learning and behavioral problems in children. Dr. Hauffe also commented on the following situation: "I also use them [flower essences] for trauma and bad dreams. Recently, I saw a little boy who had been run over and was frightened of loud noises. After three days of treatment with the Australian Bush flower essences Emergency Essence and Bush Fuchsia, he was fine."

In 1996, a study was conducted at the University Hospital for Women in Heidelberg of twenty-four women in the first trimester of their pregnancies. Two professors, one from the

Heidelberg University Hospital for Women and another from the Institute of Psychology in Tubingen, supervised the study. The twenty-four women were divided into three groups:

Group 1 received flower essences, Group 2 received psychological counseling, and Group 3 received "strict care" by an obstetrician. The results found that: Group 1, which used the flower essences, delivered infants with significantly less assistance than the "obstetrician control group." More significantly, the flower essence Group 1 needed fewer drugs and exhibited less tension, decreased pain, and felt reduced levels of anxiety than did both Group 2 and Group 3. It was concluded that the use of flower essences during pregnancy resulted in an easier delivery among the women studied.

Aromatherapy Studies

Hospice Patients

By Margaret Louis, RN, PhD and Susan D. Kowalski, RN, PhD, Department of Nursing, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Nevada.

Responses of 17 cancer hospice patients to humidified essential lavender oil aromatherapy.

Vital signs as well as levels of pain, anxiety, depression, and sense of well-being were measured (using 11-point verbal analogs). Each subject was measured on three different days before and after a 60-minute session consisting of (1) no treatment (control); (2) water humidification (control); or (3) 3-percent lavender aromatherapy. Results reflected a positive, yet small, change in blood pressure and pulse, pain, anxiety, depression, and sense of well-being after both the humidified water treatment and the lavender treatment. Following the control session (no treatment), there was also slight improvement in vital signs, depression, and sense of well-being, but not in pain or anxiety levels.

Alopecia Areata (patchy, inflammatory hair loss)

By Hay IC, Jamieson M, Ormerod AD.

Randomized trial of aromatherapy. Successful treatment for alopecia areata. Archives of Dermatology. 134(11): 1349-52, Nov. 1998.

A randomized, double blind, controlled trial was conducted in an outpatient dermatology department over 7 months with follow-up at 3 and 7 months. Eighty-six patients were randomized to two groups: the aromatherapy group massaged essential oils (thyme, rosemary, lavender and cedarwood) in a mixture of carrier oils daily into their scalp while the control group used only carrier oils for their daily massage. Nineteen of 43 patients in the active group (44%) showed improvement compared with 6 of 41 patients in the control group (15%). Results showed treatment with aromatherapy massage was significantly more effective than the control condition and is considered to be a safe and effective treatment for alopecia areata.

Alzheimers

By Jimbo D, Kimura Y, Taniguchi M, et al.

Effect of aromatherapy on patients with. Psychogeriatrics. 9(4):173-9, 2009.

In the present study, the effects of aromatherapy in dementia in 28 elderly people, 17 of whom had Alzheimer's disease (AD) was studied. Aromatherapy was performed over

28 days using rosemary and lemon essential oils in the morning, and lavender and orange in the evening. All patients showed significant improvement in personal orientation related to cognitive function. In particular, patients with AD showed significant improvement in total dementia assessment scores. Result of routine laboratory tests showed no significant changes, suggesting that there were no side-effects associated with the use of aromatherapy. Aromatherapy was found to be an efficacious non-pharmacological therapy for dementia. Aromatherapy may have some potential for improving cognitive function, especially in AD patients.

Antibacterial Activity
By Singh G, Kapoor IP, Pandey SK, et al.
Studies on essential oils: part 10; antibacterial activity of volatile oils of some spices. Phytotherapy Research. 16(7):680-2, 2002.

Essential oils were extracted from the seeds of seven spices, Anethum graveolens, Carum capticum, Coriandrum sativum, Cuminum cyminum, Foeniculum vulgare, Pimpinella anisum and Seseli indicum. They were studied for antibacterial activity against eight pathogenic bacteria that cause infections in the human body. It was found that the oils of Carum capticum, Cuminum cyminum and Anesthum graveolens were very effective against all tested bacteria. These oils were found to be equally or more effective when compared with standard antibiotics, at a very low concentration.

Anxiety and Depression in Cancer Patients
By Wilkinson SM, Love SB, Westcombe AM,et al.
Effectiveness of aromatherapy massage in the management of anxiety and depression in patients with cancer: a multicenter randomized controlled trial. J Clin Oncol. 10; 25(5):532-9, 2007.

Two hundred eighty-eight cancer patients, referred to complementary therapy services with clinical anxiety and/or depression, were allocated randomly to a course of aromatherapy massage or usual supportive care alone. Patients who received aromatherapy massage had significant improvement in clinical anxiety and/or depression compared with those receiving usual care at 6 weeks post-randomization. Patients receiving aromatherapy massage also described greater improvement in self-reported anxiety at both 6 and 10 weeks respectively. Aromatherapy massage is associated with clinically important benefit up to 2 weeks after the intervention.

Dental Anxiety
By Kritsidima M, Newton T, Asimakopoulou K.
The effects of lavender scent on dental patient anxiety levels: a cluster randomised-controlled trial. Community Dent Oral Epidemiol. 38(1):83-7, 2010.

To review the effect of lavender scent on anticipatory anxiety in dental participants. In a randomized-controlled trial, 340 patients with dental anxiety were assessed while waiting for a scheduled dental appointment, either with use of lavender scent or not odor. Analysis showed that although both groups had similar, moderate levels of generalized dental anxiety the lavender group reported significantly lower current anxiety than the control group.

Pre-Surgery Anxiety
By Ni CH, Hou WH, Kao CC, et al.
The anxiolytic effect of aromatherapy on patients awaiting ambulatory surgery: a randomized controlled trial. Evid Based Complement Alternat Med. 2013;2013:927419.

The aim of this study was to determine if aromatherapy could reduce preoperative anxiety in outpatient surgery patients. A total of 109 preoperative patients were randomly assigned to bergamot essential oil or a placebo (water vapor) and their responses to the State Trait Anxiety Inventory and vital signs were monitored. All those exposed to bergamot essential oil aromatherapy showed a greater reduction in preoperative anxiety than the control groups. Aromatherapy may be a useful part of a holistic approach to reducing preoperative anxiety before outpatient surgery.

Childbirth
By Burns E, Blamey C.
Using Aromatherapy in Childbirth. Nursing Times. 90(9):54-60, Mar. 2-8, 1994.

In this 6-month pilot study, 534 women were treated with a variety of essential oils (10 in all) for anxiety, pain relief, mood, nausea and vomiting, and to increase contractions. Both the midwives and the women assessed the effectiveness of each oil use following the birth and before transference to the delivery suite. Three hundred and sixty-six women (62%) described the essential oils they used as effective. Sixty-seven (12%) described their use as not effective. Sixteen women (3%) described transient unwanted effects. Results indicate a high degree of overall satisfaction with aromatherapy during labor and delivery by both women and midwives which the researchers felt supported further evaluation through a randomized controlled trial.

Cognitive Performance
By Moss M, Hewitt S, Moss L, Wesnes K.
Modulation of cognitive performance and mood by aromas of peppermint and ylang-ylang. Int J Neurosci. 118(1):59-77, 2008.

This study provides further evidence for the impact of the aromas of plant essential oils on aspects of cognition and mood in healthy participants. One hundred and forty-four volunteers were randomly assigned to conditions of ylang-ylang aroma, peppermint aroma, or no aroma control. Peppermint was found to enhance memory whereas ylang-ylang impaired it, and lengthened processing speed. In terms of subjective mood peppermint increased alertness and ylang-ylang decreased it, and significantly increased calmness. These results provide support for the contention that the aromas of essential oils can produce significant and idiosyncratic effects on both subjective and objective assessments of aspects of human behavior.

Colic
By Cetinkaya B, Basbakkal Z.
The effectiveness of aromatherapy massages using lavender oil as a treatment for infantile colic. International Journal of Nursing Practice. 18(2):164-9, 2012.
This study investigated the effect of aromatherapy massage using lavender oil as a treatment for infantile colic in 40 infants between 2 and 6 weeks of age. Infants in the treatment group received abdominal massage by their mothers using lavender oil, while

those in the control group did not receive this treatment. The effect of the massage was measured in terms of changes in the length of time the infants cried per week. The use of aromatherapy massage using lavender oil was found to be effective in reducing the symptoms of colic.

Headache

By Gobel H, Schmidt G, Soyka D.

Effect of peppermint and eucalyptus oil preparations on neurophysiological and experimental algesimetric headache parameters. Cephalgia.14(3): 228-34, 1994.

This double blind, placebo-controlled, randomized clinical trial on 32 healthy subjects tested four different test preparations applied to large areas of the forehead and temples. Their effect was evaluated comparing baseline and treatment measures. A significant decrease in pain sensitivity was produced by a combination of peppermint oil and ethanol. The combination of peppermint oil, eucalyptus oil and ethanol increased cognitive performance and had a muscle-relaxing and mentally relaxing effect but had a small influence on pain sensitivity.

Job Stress

By Chen MC, Fang SH, Fang L.

The effects of aromatherapy in relieving symptoms related to job stress among nurses. Int J Nurs Pract. 2013, Nov 15.

This study examined the effectiveness of lavender oil inhalation in reducing job stress-related symptoms among 53 nurses. Aromatherapy was shown to be effective in the reduction of the number of stress symptoms for 3 or 4 days. The stress symptoms of the lavender group decreased from 6.1 to 2.8 after aromatherapy. This represented a significant decrease in stress, whereas the stress symptoms in the control group increased from 5.6 to 5.8.

Kidney Stones

By Ayan M, Tas U, Sogut E, et al.

Investigating the effect of aromatherapy in patients with renal colic. Journal of Alternative & Complementary Medicine. 19(4):329-33, 2013.

This study investigated the usefulness of rose essential oil as a supplementary therapy for the relief of renal colic (a sharp pain in the lower back associated with passage of a kidney stone). Eighty people diagnosed with renal colic in the emergency room were included in the study, ages 19 to 64 years. Half of the patients were treated with conventional therapy (diclofenac sodium, 75 mg intramuscularly) plus placebo (physiological serum, 0.9% NaCl), while the other half were given aromatherapy (rose essential oil) plus conventional therapy. Pain severity prior to the start of therapy, and 10 and 30 minutes after therapy were 8.18, 5.60, and 3.75 for the conventional therapy plus placebo group, and 8.63, 4.25, and 1.08 respectively for the conventional therapy plus aromatherapy group. Pain scores 10 or 30 minutes after starting therapy were statistically lower in the group that received conventional therapy plus aromatherapy. Rose essential oil therapy in addition to conventional therapy effectively reduced renal colic pain.

Labor Pain
By Kaviani M, Azima S, Alavi N, Tabaei MH.
The effect of lavender aromatherapy on pain perception and intrapartum outcome in primiparous women. Brit J Midwifery. 2:125-8, 2014.

In this randomized controlled trial, 160 participants were divided into two groups. The aroma group received 0.1 ml of lavender essential oil mixed with 1 ml of distilled water via tissues attached to their gowns close to their nostrils. The control group received only 2 ml of distilled water in a similar way. Pain intensity in the aroma group was lower than that of the control group at 30 and 60 minutes after the intervention. Aromatherapy decreased labor pain, but did not affect the duration of labor.

Migraine
By Sasannejad P, Saeedi M, Shoeibi A, et al.
Lavender essential oil in the treatment of migraine headache: a placebo-controlled clinical trial. European Neurology. 67(5):288-91, 2012.

Forty-seven patients with migraine headache were divided into two groups: 1) inhaled lavender essential oil for 15 min or 2) used liquid paraffin for the same time period. Patients were asked to record their headache severity and associated symptoms in 30-min intervals for a total of 2 hours. From 129 headache attacks in the lavender group, 92 responded entirely or partially to lavender. In the control group, 32 out of 68 headache attacks responded to placebo. The percentage of responders was significantly higher in the lavender group than the placebo group. Results suggest that inhalation of lavender essential oil may be an effective and safe treatment modality in acute management of migraine headaches.

Mood and Alertness
By Diego MA, Jones NA, Field T, et al.
Aromatherapy positively affects mood, EEG patterns of alertness and math computations. International Journal of Neuroscience. 96(3-4): 217-24, 1998.
In this randomized controlled trial 40 adults received three minutes of aromatherapy using lavender or rosemary and were given simple math computations before and after therapy. The lavender group showed increased beta power, suggesting increased drowsiness, on EEG (a test recording electric current from nerve cells in the brain), reported feeling more relaxed, showed less depressive mood, and performed the math computations faster and more accurately after aromatherapy. The rosemary group showed decreased frontal alpha and beta power on EEG, suggesting increased alertness. They had lower state anxiety scores, reported feeling more alert and relaxed, and were faster but not more accurate at completing the math computations after the aromatherapy session.

Scent and Mood
By Burnett KM, Solterbeck LA, Strapp CM.
Scent and mood state following an anxiety-provoking task. Psychological Reports. 95(2):707-22, 2004.

Measures of external temperature and heart rate were taken in 72 participants prior to introduction of an anxiety-eliciting task and exposure to lavender, rosemary, or water scents. Physiological changes in temperature and heart rate did not differ based on scent

exposure, but mood ratings differed by scent condition. Results suggest that, when individual perception of scent pleasantness is controlled, scent has the potential to moderate different aspects of mood following an anxiety-provoking task.

Nausea

Study One:

By Hodge NS, McCarthy MS, Pierce RM.

A prospective randomized study of the effectiveness of aromatherapy for relief of postoperative nausea and vomiting. J Perianesth Nurs. 29(1):5-11, 2014.

This study compared the effectiveness of aromatherapy (QueaseEase, Soothing Scents, Enterprise, AL) vs. an unscented inhalant in relieving post-operative nausea and vomiting (PONV) in 121 patients with who were randomized into a treatment group receiving an aromatic inhaler and a control group receiving a placebo inhaler. Initial and follow-up nausea assessment scores in both treatment and placebo groups decreased significantly, and there was a significant difference between the two groups. Perceived effectiveness of aromatherapy was significantly higher in the treatment group. Aromatherapy was favorably received by most patients and represents an effective treatment option for postoperative nausea.

Study Two:

By Hunt R, Dienemann J, Norton HJ, et al.

Aromatherapy as treatment for postoperative nausea: a randomized trial. Anesth Analg. 117(3):597-604, 2013.

This study examined aromatherapy as a treatment for patients experiencing postoperative nausea after ambulatory surgery. Two types of aromatherapy were used (1) essential oil of ginger and (2) a blend of essential oils of ginger, spearmint, peppermint, and cardamom and compared to isopropyl alcohol or placebo. Patients with a nausea level of 1 to 3 on a verbal descriptive scale (0-3) received a gauze pad saturated with a randomly chosen aromatherapy agent and were told to inhale deeply 3 times; nausea was then measured again in 5 minutes. A total of 303 patients reporting nausea were enrolled (26.3%) and 301 were analyzed (26.2%). The change in nausea level was significant for the blend and ginger. The number of anti-nausea medications requested after aromatherapy was also significantly reduced with ginger or blend aromatherapy. Further research evaluating aromatherapy is warranted as it is a promising inexpensive and noninvasive treatment for postoperative nausea that can be administered and controlled by patients as needed.

Study Three:

By Lane B, Cannella K, Bowen C, et al.

Examination of the effectiveness of peppermint aromatherapy on nausea in women post C-section. J Holist Nurs. 30(2):90-104, 2012.

This study examined the effect of peppermint aromatherapy on postoperative nausea. A peppermint group inhaled peppermint essential oil, a placebo aromatherapy control group inhaled an inert placebo, and the standard therapy control group received standard anti-nausea medication, usually intravenous ondansetron or promethazine suppositories. Thirty-five participants became nauseated post-

operatively. The nausea levels of participants in the peppermint aromatherapy group were significantly lower than those in the other two groups 2 and 5 minutes after the initial intervention. Peppermint essential oil may be a useful addition to the treatment for postoperative nausea.

Post-operative Pain

Study One:

By Olapour A, Behaeen K, Akhondzadeh R, et al.

The effect of inhalation of aromatherapy blend containing lavender essential oil on Cesarean postoperative pain. Anesth Pain Med. 3(1):203-7, 2013.

Sixty pregnant women who were admitted for cesarean section were divided randomly into two groups. After cesarean, the Lavender group inhaled about 3 drops of 10% Lavender oil essence and the placebo group inhaled 3 drops of placebo for 5 minutes at the start of postoperative pain, 4, 8, and 12 hours later. Patients in the Lavender group had less postoperative pain in 4, 8, and 12 hours after first medication than the placebo group. The decreased heart rate and patients' level of satisfaction with analgesia were significantly higher in the Lavender group. In the placebo group, the use of a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug for pain relief was also significantly higher than the Lavender group. The inhaled Lavender essence may be used as a part of the multidisciplinary treatment of pain after cesarean section, but it is not recommended as the sole pain management.

Study Two:

By Kim JT, Ren CJ, Fielding GA, et al.

Treatment with lavender aromatherapy in the post-anesthesia care unit reduces opioid requirements of morbidly obese patients undergoing laparoscopic adjustable gastric banding. Obes Surg. 17(7):920-5, 2007.

A prospective randomized placebo controlled study was carried out on 54 patients undergoing laparoscopic surgery. Patients in the study group were treated with lavender oil, which was applied to the oxygen face mask; the control group patients received nonscented baby oil. Postoperative pain was treated with morphine. Pain was measured at 5, 30, and 60 min. Significantly more patients in the baby oil group required pain medication for postoperative pain (22 out of 27, 82%) than patients in the Lavender group (LAV) (12 out of 26, 46%). The lavendar patients required significantly less morphine post-operatively than the baby oil patients: 2.38 mg vs 4.26 mg, respectively. Results suggest that lavender aromatherapy can be used to reduce the demand for opioids in the immediate postoperative period.

Postpartum Depression and Anxiety

By Conrad P, Adams C.

The effects of clinical aromatherapy for anxiety and depression in the high risk postpartum woman — a pilot study. Complementary Therapies in Clinical Practice. 18(3):164-8, 2012.

This study looked at aromatherapy for anxiety and/or depression in women at high risk postpartum. Twenty-eight women, 0-18 months postpartum, were randomized to either the inhalation group or aromatherapy hand massage technique. Treatment consisted of 15 minute sessions, twice a week for four consecutive weeks. An essential oil blend of

rose otto and lavandula angustifolia @ 2% dilution was used in all treatments. All subjects completed the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) and Generalized Anxiety Disorder Scale (GAD-7) at the beginning of the study and then at midpoint and at the end of the study. Midpoint and final scores indicated that aromatherapy had significant improvements greater than the control group on both EPDS and GAD-7 scores. There were no adverse effects reported. The pilot study indicates positive findings with minimal risk for the use of aromatherapy as a complementary therapy in both anxiety and depression in the postpartum woman.

Sleep

Study One:

By Lytle J, Mwatha C, Davis KK.

Effect of lavender aromatherapy on vital signs and perceived quality of sleep in the intermediate care unit: a pilot study. Am J Crit Care. 23(1):24-9, 2014.

A randomized controlled pilot study was conducted in 50 patients. Control patients received usual care. The treatment group had 3 mL of 100% pure lavender oil in a glass jar in place at the bedside from 10 pm until 6 am. Vital signs were recorded at intervals throughout the night. At 6 am all patients completed a questionnaire to assess quality of sleep. Blood pressure was significantly lower between midnight and 4 am in the treatment group than in the control group. The treatment group had a decrease in blood pressure and the control group had an increase; however, the difference between the 2 groups was not significant. Mean overall sleep score was higher in the lavender oil group than in the control group, but the difference was not significant. Lavender aromatherapy may be an effective way to improve sleep in an intermediate care unit.

Study Two:

By Goel N, Kim H, Lao RP.

An olfactory stimulus modifies nighttime sleep in young men and women. Chronobiology International. 22(5):889-904, 2005.

In this study, 31 young healthy sleepers completed 3 consecutive overnight sessions in a sleep laboratory. Subjects received an intermittent presentation (first 2 min of each 10 min interval) of an olfactory (lavender oil) or a control (distilled water) stimulus. All subjects reported higher vigor the morning after lavender exposure. Lavender also increased stage 2 (light) sleep, and decreased rapid-eye movement (REM) sleep and the amount of time to reach wake after first falling asleep in women, with opposite effects in men.

Stress

By Buckle, J.

Aromatherapy: Does it matter which lavender essential oil is used? Nursing Times.89(20): 32-35, 1993.

In order to answer the question of whether the effect of topical aromatherapy is due to touch, massage or placebo, a randomized, double blind trial of two different species of lavender were applied through massage of the feet, legs, hands, arms and forehead to 28 post-cardiotomy patients on the second and third post-operative days. All patients were wearing oxygen masks to avoid inhalation of the essential oils. The emotional and

behavioral stress levels were measured before and after treatment. One lavender essential oil was almost twice as effective in alleviating anxiety as the other lavender oil. Mood and coping abilities were similar. This trial showed that different lavender oils produced different effects, that aromatherapy has measurable therapeutic effects, and that these effects are not simply due to massage, touch or placebo.

Anxiety
By Kite SM, et al.
Development of an aromatherapy service at a cancer centre. Palliative Medicine. 12(3): 171-80, 1998.

Fifty-eight patients completed six session of aromatherapy and were evaluated using the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS). There were significant improvements in HADS scores in all patients completing the course of therapy (anxiety dropped from 8.9 to 6.2, depression dropped from 6.1 to 4.0, and combined scores dropped from 15.0 to 10.2). Fifty percent or more reported a significant improvement in the eight most commonly assessed symptoms. Results indicate that aromatherapy massage has a role to play in reducing psychological distress and improving symptom control in cancer patients.

Palliative Care
By Wilkinson S, Aldridge J, Salmon I, Cain E, Wilson B.
An evaluation of aromatherapy massage in palliative care. Palliative Medicine. 13(5):409-17, 1999.

This clinical study evaluated the effects of massage and aromatherapy massage on 103 cancer patients in a palliative care setting. Patient were randomly assigned to receive either massage using a neutral carrier oil or massage using a carrier oil plus the Roman chamomile essential oil. Three outcome measurements were used. Massage alone or with essential oils produced a statistically significant reduction in anxiety. The addition of an essential oil enhanced the effect of massage and improved physical and psychological symptoms and overall quality of life.