

Aromatic Dentistry

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Abstract: Aromatherapy aids in providing calmness and relaxation to many people. It is harmless and effective in inhibiting and managing of emotional distress. Use of such therapy for apprehensive patients undergoing dental treatment has proven to have a positive effect. Aromatherapy is useful in treating oral ulcers and toothaches.

Keywords: Aroma, Aromatherapy, Dental fear, Dentistry

I. Introduction

Aromatherapy comprises of plant extracts, essential oils, herbs, single or in combination. These are helpful in lessening emotional stress and encouraging a good well-being. Essential oils can be used in different ways. There are various anxiety-causing factors in a dental clinic, such as the needles, instruments, smell, etc. Researches have concluded that aromas can lessen awareness, temperament, and activities. It has been observed that there is an influential link between aromas and commemorations, because of due to major bodily acquaintances prevailing between brain such as the hypothalamus and limbic system that are involved in feeling and memory.¹

The Past

In 1937, a French Chemist named Rene Gattefosse coined the term "Aromatherapy". He experimented with variety of oils, and ultimately categorized them according to their "healing" properties: antitoxic, antiseptic, stimulating, relaxing, etc. The book named "Aromatherapie" was published by Gattefosse. Marguerite Maury, was the first to alter certain oils for achieving health needs of an individual. A French man named 'Jean Valnet', a doctor and scientist, used aromatic oils for treating patients suffering psychiatric and health disorders.^{1,2} (Fig 1).



Fig 1: Father of Aromatherapy³

The Theory

Researches reveal that smell, are the most important among body senses, and have a commanding effect on body and mind. The scents from essential oils are believed to activate olfactory nerve cells in the nasal cavity, which then send impulses to the limbic system, the area of the brain associated with emotions and

memory. Proponents of aromatherapy believe that the aromatic oils work both emotionally and physically. Emotionally, they may help to relieve certain conditions by stimulating the immune, circulatory or nervous systems.(Fig 2)^{1,2,3}

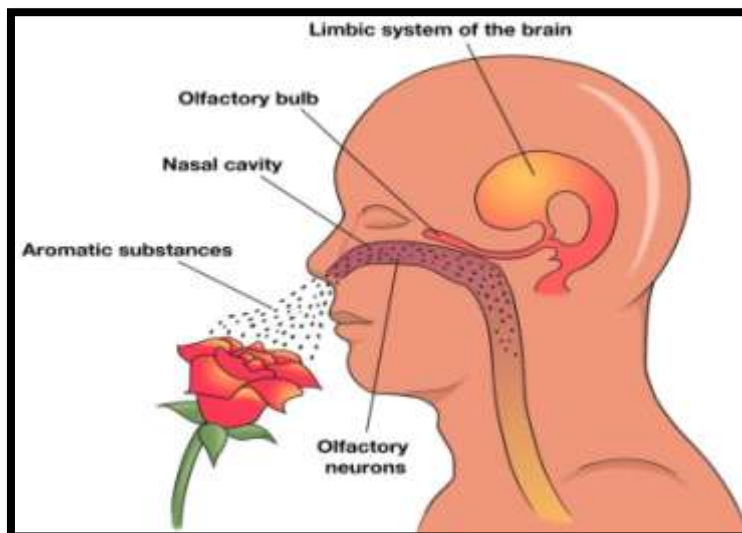


Figure 2: Aromatherapy And Brain

II. HOW DOES AROMATHERAPY WORK? (Fig 3)

Aromatherapy works by affecting our sense of smell. Fragrance bonds us with our sentiments, feelings, imagination and consciousness. Aroma can help us to recall prevailing feelings. Beautiful perfumes can stabilize our mood, lift our spirits and moreover our emotions, essential oils have been used in the field of medicine to heal the body when infected by bacteria, viruses and fungi. The essential plant concentrates (essential oils) with the human body within 4 distinct modes of action:

- Pharmacological (as photo pharmaceuticals),
- Physical (physically and chemically),
- Emotional (affecting mental states and procedures),
- Incorporeal (divine).

Our body utilizes aromatic molecules (essential oils):-

- Through our olfactory system which is coupled to the limbic system in the brain where our most primordial feelings, and emotions exist.
- By inhalation and skin absorption of the low weight molecular organization of essential oils.^{1,2,3,4}

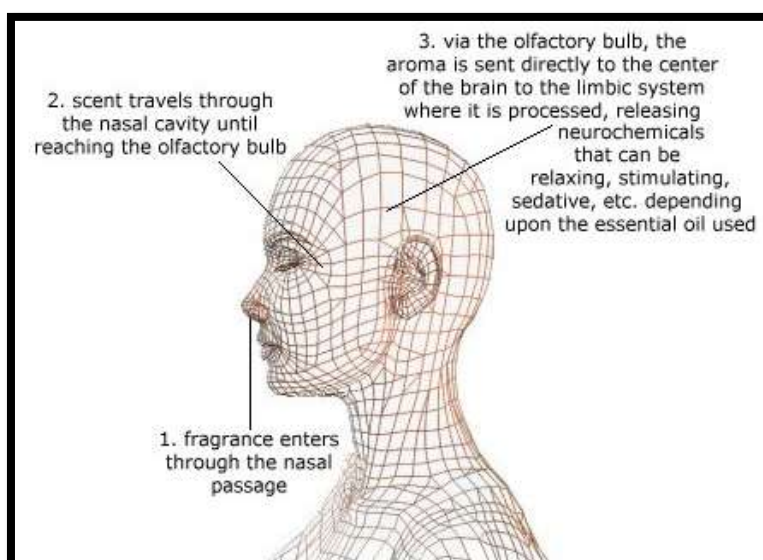


Fig 3: Working of Aromatherapy

III. TREATMENT

Aromatherapy can be a very helpful and effective adjunct to numerous treatment plans, but it is infrequently the primary approach of therapy. Therefore, a consultation with an aroma therapist will be needed in the situation of other medical treatment. The practitioner may also be an herbalist, or a homeopath. Aromatherapy is also often practiced at home, because the essential oils are stress-free and pleasant to use. Fig 4 summarizes the most commonly recommended Aromatherapy.



Fig 4: Most commonly recommended Aromatherapy

IV. HOW TO USE ESSENTIAL OILS PRECAUTIONS WHILE USING AROMATIC OILS?⁴ (Fig 5)



Fig 5 : How to Use Essential oils⁵

Precautions

- Essential oils should never be taken internally.
- To prevent allergic reactions, first test any essential oil on a small patch of clear skin.
- If patient becomes sensitive to oils after using it for a while, stop using it. If patients have asthma, consult physician before doing aromatherapy, because few aromatherapy oils can trigger bronchial spasms.
- It is best to avoid using it during pregnancy. The essential oils of basil, thyme, clary sage, calamus, mugwort, pennyroyal, sage, rosemary, juniper, and wintergreen can harm the fetus, if taken internally or even probably if applied externally.
- Contact with essential oils for a long time can cause headaches, nausea and feeling of nervousness; confirm sufficient ventilation, drink ample of water and take regular interruptions.⁴

V. AROMATHERAPY IN DENTAL TREATMENT^{6,7}

Aromatherapy has a relaxing effect for many people. It is effective for patients undergoing dental treatment. Research studies conducted at Case Western Reserve University have concluded that the use of aromatherapy has a significant positive consequence on dental anxiety patients. Dentists are concerned about patients' well-being. Patient should be provided with aromatherapy in dental clinic to reduce dental anxiety. Aromatherapy is also very effective in treating mouth ulcers, halitosis, and gingivitis (Fig 6).

Periodontal abscess	Clove, helichrysum, melaleuca, frankincense, Roman chamomile, or wintergreen
Aphthous ulcers	Melaleuca, oregano, Roman chamomile, myrrh, basil, or orange
Bruxism	A combination of lavender, sweet marjoram, Roman chamomile, ylang ylang, sandalwood, or vanilla bean extract
Candida	Melaleuca, oregano, clove, peppermint, thyme, lavender, eucalyptus, or rosemary
Caries prevention	Melaleuca, peppermint, eucalyptus, or cinnamon
Gingiva/gingivitis	Myrrh, lavender, melaleuca, helichrysum, or Roman chamomile
Halitosis	Peppermint, patchouli, or lavender
Herpes simplex	Peppermint, melaleuca, helichrysum, clove, lavender, eucalyptus, lemon, cypress, rose, or bergamot
Periodontal disease	Melaleuca, helichrysum, myrrh, or rose
Teething	A combination of lavender, sweet marjoram, Roman chamomile, ylang ylang, sandalwood, or vanilla bean extract
Toothache	Clove, melaleuca, or Roman chamomile
All oils can be used with any application method preferred by clinician or patient. Topical application will be the quickest and most effective method to utilize in the dental setting.	

Fig 6: Dental uses of Essential Oils⁸

VI. CONCLUSION

Aromatherapy is a complementary therapy. It should not be considered as an auxiliary for the medical advice of your own doctor or health care professional. While aromatherapy is commonly quite safe, it is important to remember that it is a complementary therapy and not a standby for conventional medical care. Although aromatherapy is simple and safe enough to be practiced at home, consulting a trained practitioner may help to select the accurate essential oils for the effects.

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