

# Aromatherapy

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# What is Aromatherapy?

- **Clinical aromatherapy is an alternative medicine therapy that can help and benefit in the inpatient or outpatient setting (A. Farrar & F. Farrar, 2020).**

- **It is the use of oils from plants as a therapy to improve pain, nausea, general well-being, anxiety, depression, stress, and insomnia. (A. Farrar & F. Farrar, 2020).**

- **Studies have shown that these oil fragrances affect a small part of your brain called the amygdala. The amygdala is a part of your brain that is the main contributor of processing emotions. (Taylor, 2022 p....)**

- **Studies and testing have been done in labs and on animals.**

- **They have found that certain oils have “antibacterial, antiviral, antifungal, calming and energizing effects” (Taylor, 2022 p...).**

- **These oils commonly come from “seeds, stems, leaves, needles, petals, flowers, rinds and fruits, woods and resins, roots and rhizomes, and grasses” (A. Farrar & F. Farrar, 2020).**



# History

- Dates back over 6,000 years
- In the 1930's the term was invented by French chemist René-Maurice Gattefossé after he discovered the benefits of lavender oil when it healed his burned hand (S.Hedao & P. Chandurkar, 2019).
  - He then started to analyze the chemical properties of essential oils and how they were used to treat burns, skin infections, gangrene, and wounds in soldiers during World War I ("Aromatherapy," 2023).
  - French army surgeon Dr. Jean Valnet experimented with wounded soldiers and found out that essential oils are excellent antiseptics that detoxified (S. Hedao & P. Chandurkar, 2019).
- Extracted oils from plants with first distillation machines (S. Hedao & P. Chandurkar, 2019).



# Geographic

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- Aromatherapy is a world wide natural therapy but seen more in the Western countries.
- In the UK, aromatherapy is the third most popular out of 28 different therapies.
- After a long cross-sectional study in Australia, the study authors estimated a total of 250 million uses of aromatherapy in the past 12 months.



# Risks and Benefits

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## Risks

- If using undiluted oils over certain areas like the nostrils or sensitive skin, it could irritate the skin and cause burning.
- Some pt. might not know they are allergic then have a allergic reaction.
- The pt. could be highly sensitive to strong fragrances, especially concentrated essential oils.
- Depending on how the oils are processed, some can be more potent than others.

## Benefits

- Boost mood
- Improve sleep
- Reduce inflammation, nausea, and headaches
- Reduces anxiety and pain
- Kill bacteria, funguses, and viruses

# Examples of Aromatherapy

## How to get oils:

- Essential oils are removed from plants material using steam or water distillation.
- Aromatic plant oils should NEVER be ingested because they are toxic.

## Examples of essential oils and what they help:

- Aloe- wound healing
- Chamomile- anti-inflammatory, calming
- Echinacea: enhances immunity
- Garlic: Inhibits platelet aggregation
- Ginger: Antiemetic
- Ginkgo biloba: Improve memory
- Ginseng: Increases physical endurance
- Valerian: promotes sleep, reduces anxiety

## Ways to administer:

- Topical application
- Absorption by inhaling in nostrils
- Oral absorption of oil. ex: gelatin capsules
- Internal absorption, ex: mouthwash,

# Cost of Aromatherapy

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- Cost of the product being used
- Most insurance companies will not cover aromatherapy
- Americans spend approximately \$30.2 billion a year on aromatherapy (Farrar & Farrar, 2020, para. 3)



# Patient Scenario

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- Patient diagnosed with kidney stones and complains of nausea and renal colic/severe flank pain; emetic episodes.
- Aromatherapy recommended as the complimentary therapeutic treatment based on evidence from previous studies

# Rose Essential Oil

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- According to an article from *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, rose essential oil is a soothing treatment and can be used as a natural muscle relaxer
- Used in study for relief of pain from renal colic
- 80 pt. with renal colic, 40 given rose essential oil; VAS values of those using rose oil lower within 30 minutes (Ayan et al., 2013)

# Lavender & Sage

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- Study used lavender and sage to calm pain, nausea, and vomiting from percutaneous nephrolithotomy (Dehghan et al., n.d.)
- Lavender and sage given through inhalation after burning substances
- Patients who were given sage showed significant pain decrease and patients who were given lavender had the least amount of emetic episodes (Dehghan et al., n.d.)

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