

Nurses' Experiences of Using Bergamot Essential Oil (Aromatherapy) on Patients with Dementia Suffering from Depression: A Pilot Study

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Abstract : Introduction: Depression and dementia are the two most common psychiatric disorders of older people. The use of antidepressants does not always have the desired effect and serious side effects are common. Aromatherapists claim that the essential oil of Bergamot has an antidepressant effect. Aromatherapy is defined as holistic or complementary medicine and is rarely used in the Norwegian public health service, but in recent years, there has been an increasing interest in, and use of complementary and alternative therapies (CAM) in the Norwegian population, and aromatherapy is one of the most widely used. Focus for this study: How do nurses experience the use of Bergamot essential oil for patients suffering from dementia and depression? Method: Action research study including 12 patients and 8 nurses. The patients were strategically selected by the nurses and were given Bergamot in a fan diffuser every day for 12 weeks. The patients' mood and behavior patterns were reported daily and the nurse's experiences were reported weekly. Individual interviews with the nurses were conducted at the end of the project. Results: The nurses reported that bergamot had positive impact on patients mood and wellbeing, and was considered as an effective method for six patients, four had uncertain effect and two had no effect. They also reported less use of medication and that the fan diffusers were easy and pleasant to administer. They found the use of natural remedies as Bergamot inspiring and wanted to learn more about aromatherapy and its use in nursing. Some were disturbed by the smell and some had to deal with critical and negative colleagues. Conclusion: Nurses experienced aromatherapy using bergamot oil in fan diffusers as a simple and useful procedure for patients suffering from dementia and depression. The effects were varying. Further research is needed.

Keywords : aromatherapy, bergamot, dementia, depression

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