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Aromatherapy to Reduce Anxiety

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BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

- RHCM has a high percentage of patients experiencing situational anxiety related to serious illness
- As a cardiac unit, many of our patients also experience anxiety related to interventions and procedures
- The use of aromatherapy has been shown to reduce anxiety as a more gentle alternative to pharmacological interventions (Perry et al., 2010, p. 825).
- The possible utilization of aromatherapy was suggested as a topic of interest by the director of RHCM

PURPOSE

This EBP project will focus on determining how aromatherapy compares with no intervention in reducing patient anxiety in a progressive care setting.

PICO QUESTION

In adult patients in a progressive care setting, does aromatherapy compared to no intervention reduce anxiety?

EVIDENCE

“Aromatherapy shows a positive anxiolytic effect for patients with anxiety symptoms, and more importantly, it is a safe intervention” (Lee et al., 2011, p. 106)

”Aromatherapy is relatively free of adverse effects compared with conventional drugs” (Lee et al., 2011, p. 101)

“Inhalation aromatherapy had positive effects on reducing anxiety in patients before surgery which is recommended as a new and easy alternative for nurses in order to reduce anxiety in the patients” (Fayazi et al., 2011, p. 282)

“Nikfarjam indicated that lavender, like benzodiazepines, exerts its anxiolytic effects through increasing the levels of GABA in amygdala...moreover, the narcotic and sedative effects of linalool and linalyl acetate compounds contained in lavender can relieve anxiety” (Najafi et al., 2014)

A “comparative trial by Woelk and Schlafke (2010) found that lavender was as effective as the anxiolytic drug lorazepam” (Perry et al., 2012, p. 833)

IMPLEMENTATION

- Developed work group with Kristina Higgins, PCS and Christine Hafner, Director, RHCM
- Idea for project presented to IRB
- Informed that the project is a human research study per network policy
- Acquired supplies for future implementation including single patient use inhalers and lavender essential oil

NEXT STEPS

- Present proposed project to Nurse Research Council
- Create consent form for participating patients
- Implement research study and measure outcomes
- Develop policy and procedure for use of aromatherapy for anxiety reduction in the inpatient population of RHCM

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