



Research Article

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Aromatherapy in Pregnancy



Dnyaneshwar K Jadhav^{1*} and Santosh Dagadu Thorat²

¹Assistant Professor of department of Kaychikitsa, Shri Dhanwantari Ayurved medical college and research center, India

²Assistant Professor of department of Kaumarbhritya-Balrog, Shri Dhanwantari Ayurved medical college and research center, India

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***Corresponding author:** Dnyaneshwar Kantaram Jadhav, MD Kaychikitsa, Assistant Professor of department of Kaychikitsa, Shri Dhanwantari Ayurved medical college and research center, Mathura, India

Abstract

The pure essence of aromatic plants has been prized for thousands of years for their health giving properties and heady scents. Discover the ancient art of aromatherapy, refined over the centuries and learn how to harness the therapeutic power of essential oils in relaxing, restorative massage that combines the senses of smell with the healing value of touch. Use the beneficial properties of the oils to treat common ailments, promote good health and emotional wellbeing, and to enhance every aspect of our life. These potent, volatile essences are nature's gift to mind and body. The value of natural plant oils has been recognised for more than 6000 years, for their healing, cleaning, preservative and mood enhancing properties, as well as for the sheer pleasure of their fragrances. Today, properties of fragrance oil are being rediscovered to restore the balance which was lost in modern day life. Sedentary lifestyle effects on our bodies and spirits. The art of aromatherapy harnesses the potent pure essence of aromatic plants, flowers, and resins, to work on the most powerful of senses-smell and touch. It restores the harmony of body as well as mind. Pregnancy is one of the most exciting times of woman's life. Triangle of exercise, good diet and rest, essential oils can play an important role in helping a woman cope with the stresses of nine months of pregnancy and the pain of labour and post natal recovery. In this review research paper, I try to gather all information regarding Aromatherapy and its use in pregnancy.

Keywords: Aromatherapy; Pregnancy; Common illness; Stress; Essential oil

Introduction

The term "Aromatherapy" was first used in 1928 by a French chemist, whose name is known as Rene-maurice Gattefosse. He described the therapeutic action of aromatic plant essences. His work was taken up by Dr. Jean Valnet who found the essences remarkable regenerative and antiseptic properties effective for healing the wound of world war-2 soldiers [1]. Today, these properties are being rediscovered as we look to the wisdom of past eras and civilizations to restore the balance that has been lost in modern day life. Stress, pollution, unhealthy diet, and hectic but sedentary lifestyle- all these factors have effects on our bodies and spirits. The art of aromatherapy harnesses the potent pure essence of aromatic plants, flowers, and resins, to work on the most powerful of senses- smell and touch- to restore the harmony of body and mind [2].

Pregnancy can be one of the most exciting and fulfilling time of woman's life. The joy of bringing another human being

into the world creates a tremendous feeling of contentment and anticipation, but it is time of great physical and emotional upheaval. Together with the ever important trio of exercise, good diet and rest, essential oils can play an important role in helping a woman cope with the stresses of nine months of pregnancy, the pain of labour and post natal recovery [3].

Material and Methods

For the present review detailed literary study is performed. The detail content and references are analysed from available books, research articles available from internet.

Backache

The lower back region takes a lot of strain during pregnancy. Firm massage with four drops each of lavender and sandalwood in **two** teaspoons of base oil give relief from backache. Six drops of lavender in bath will help to soothe away the aches [4].

Morning sickness

Morning sickness is most common illness found in pregnancy. In some cases, its worst in first three months of pregnancy. Eat little and often during the day. Avoiding junk food and heavy meals late at night. Choose fresh food which is free from preservative and chemicals. Try herbal tea infusions such as chamomile, peppermint, or orange blossom which are good for digestions.

Heartburn

Avoid heavy meals and particularly rich, spicy foods. Peppermint tea infusion helps in relief from heartburn. Rubbing on solar plexus with blend of two drops each of lemon and peppermint essential oil in one teaspoon of base oil.

Sore breast

These need extra care and attention during pregnancy. Gentle massage of three drops each of rose and orange oil in one teaspoon of almond oil will give best relief. If breasts are swollen, then make cool compress with rosewater and place over the breast while having afternoon rest. Sweet almond oil itself best in sore, cracked nipple during breast feeding. Never use pure essential oil on breast during this period as they can easily transfer to the baby while feeding.

Constipation

Constipation is one of the major problem in pregnancy. Its due to the increasing progesterone hormones that relax the intestinal muscle, which hamper process of peristaltic movements of intestine. In such condition take diet contains plenty of fresh and high fibre food, drink plenty of water. Tension is one of the contributing factor for constipation. Try to relax bathing with three drops of lavender and four drops of rose. Massage to abdomen and the small of the back with a blend of four drops of chamomile or orange in one teaspoon of base oil [5].

Sleep problems

In the last few months of pregnancy, with the baby kicking and other discomforts, its often difficult to get good night's sleep. A relaxing bath with neroli and rose give soothing and sedative effect. Two drops of rose or lavender on the edge of the pillowcase will help to induce sleep.

Stretchmarks

After pregnancy when the stretched skin returns to the normal shape it can leaves tiny, jagged scars. A daily massage around the hips and expanded tummy, using five drops of lavender in one teaspoon of jojoba, wheat germ or primrose oil, will help to keep skin smooth. It can start around the fifth month of pregnancy and continue after the birth until body return to its normal weight.

Swollen Ankles

These can be reduced with cool to warm footbath of benzoin, rose and orange. Add two drops of each directly to bowl or mix

with one teaspoon of base carrier oil such as sesame seed. Rest with feet raised on cushion or pillows.

Caution of Aromatherapy [6]

a) The following oils should be avoided during pregnancy (particular first five months) because of their strong diuretic properties or tendency to induce menstruation- Bay, basil, clary, comfrey, fennel, hyssop, juniper, marjoram, Melissa, myrrh, rosemary, thyme, sage.

b) Use of all essential oils in half usual quantity during pregnancy and take extra care in handling them.

c) Ensure that the oil you are using are pure essential oils, as adulteration blends or synthetic oils can sometimes have less predictable effects.

d) Lady with history of miscarriage should avoid use of chamomile and lavender for first few months, although these are excellent oils for pregnancy.

Discussion

Today there is a world wide revival in the art of aromatherapy and contemporary research is beginning to understand the scientific foundation of oils properties and applications, discovered by trial and error over thousands of years. Pregnancy is important part of three human being. Aromatherapy is useful in many symptoms like backache, morning sickness, heartburns, sore breast, constipation, sleep problem, stretchmarks, and varicose vein.

Conclusion

Pregnancy can be one of the most exciting and fulfilling time of woman's life. Aromatherapy is useful in common illness in pregnancy. With use of aromatherapy, we can protect woman as well as infant from side effect of harmful chemical medicine.

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