

Aromatherapy Lavender Patch Intervention for Anxiety Trial

Team Leaders: Kim Nowland RN, Susan Parker BSN RN IV CNOR

Team Members: Charmei Smith MSN-ed RN CPAN CAPA, Ericka Osborn BSN RN,
Jane Talento, Nurse Director
Kaiser Permanente, Rancho Cordova, CA

Abstract Background Information: Preoperative anxiety is a prevalent concern among surgical patients and may negatively impact both patient experience and clinical outcomes. While pharmacological interventions are effective, they are not always desirable or accessible. Consequently, non-pharmacological strategies, such as aromatherapy, have gained increasing attention as complementary approaches to anxiety management. The Care Experience Toolkit, which integrates comfort and diversionary tools, includes the use of lavender patches known for their calming properties. This quality improvement project evaluated the effectiveness of lavender patches in reducing preoperative anxiety among adult patients scheduled for elective eye surgery under local anesthesia.

Objectives of Project: The primary objective of this project was to evaluate the effectiveness of lavender patches in decreasing preoperative anxiety and promoting relaxation. The project sought to identify a simple, low-cost, and non-invasive intervention aligned with the holistic and patient-centered principles of perianesthesia nursing practice.

Process of Implementation: Eligible adult patients scheduled for elective eye surgery were invited to participate following verbal consent. Inclusion criteria required patients to experience mild to moderate preoperative anxiety and to be capable of providing informed consent. Exclusion criteria included known allergies to lavender, respiratory sensitivities, or skin reactivity. Participants selected preferred patch placement on either the chest or wrist, nursing staff monitoring any adverse reactions. Anxiety levels were assessed before and after application using standardized measures.

Statement of Successful Practice: Implementation of the lavender patch intervention resulted in a measurable decrease in anxiety levels, with approximately 60% of participants reporting a beneficial effect. The intervention was well-tolerated, easily applied, and required minimal time or resources. Allowing patients to choose patch placement promotes comfort, autonomy, and engagement in care.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: Findings support the integration of aromatherapy as a feasible, cost-effective, and patient-centered intervention within preoperative settings. Lavender patches represent a low-risk adjunct that aligns with the holistic principles of perianesthesia nursing by addressing emotional as well as physiological needs. Continued research with larger, controlled studies is recommended to further validate outcomes and refine best practices in anxiety management.