

Aromatherapy in the PACU: Amazing Scents with Pleasing Benefits

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Introduction: Aromatherapy use is a natural and safe remedy becoming more prominent in the hospital setting. This research was to investigate the use of aromatherapy by itself or as an adjunct to post op nausea and vomiting. The current adjunct that the PACU was using is Reglan or Zofran.

Identification of the problem: Post operative nausea is a common event associated with surgery and anesthesia. Our study included the use of aromatherapy as the first line of defense, given by the PACU nurse. This is done without a Dr. order which starts recovery of PONV sooner.

Purpose of Study: The purpose of this research study was to determine if the use of Aromatherapy, or Essential Oils/ Therapeutic Inhaled Essential Oil (TIEO) products, for the adult patient it can be used by itself or as adjunct for nausea/vomiting.

Methodology: A total review of 404 patients were given an option for aromatherapy to help nausea and vomiting. The population of these patients are from all services offered at this VA hospital. Patients with nausea were assigned the product of a clip-on tab with the scent of peppermint, ginger, spearmint, and lavender combined for the relief of nausea/vomiting.

Results: Out of 47 patients, 26% stated their nausea was gone with the aromatherapy. Also, of those 47 patients 21% were very satisfied with the administration of aromatherapy.

Discussion: Aromatherapy are appealing for the use in PONV because administration allows use by either medical staff or patients. It is non-invasive and with low cost it offers greater accessibility to patients. Aromatherapy /essential oils are not a drug so there is no need for orders or pharmacy involvement.

Conclusion: Aromatherapy is one way to manage PONV. The aroma of peppermint, ginger, spearmint, and lavender are pleasing to smell for most patients.

Implications for peri anesthesia nurses and future research: Peri anesthesia nurses are dedicated to helping the patient during the hospital recovery and having the latest research studies. Having these studies available is helpful to nurses practice to continue to help with nausea and vomiting. Ongoing research and studies will have to continue to be evaluated. Aromatherapy is a nursing application, noninvasive and pleasing way to help the discomfort of nausea and vomiting after surgery.