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## The use of essential oils and flower essences in palliative care and with dementia and Alzheimer's patients

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Today, 47 million people live with dementia worldwide. This number is projected to increase to more than 131 million by 2050, as populations age. The concern is that those dying with advanced dementia are often not seen as having a terminal condition and are less likely than others to be managed palliatively. Flower essences and aromatherapy can play a valuable role in calming the stressed, angry, demanding or fearful patient. Aromatherapy (the therapeutic use of pure plant essential oils) either applied in a lotion and absorbed by the skin or inhaled and absorbed into the lungs and nasal passages have been found to improve physical and mental health. Case studies show that aromatherapy with essential oil is a safe and effective treatment for clinically significant agitation in people with severe dementia. Aromatherapy is the fastest growing complementary therapy amongst caregivers. In the USA it has recently been recognized as a legitimate part of holistic nursing. Flower essences contain no biochemical component or aroma, but rather, carry the energetic signature of the plant, that may improve the quality of life and death. A limited number of clinical trials have concluded that aromatherapy does provide a potentially effective treatment for Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. It might be thought that aromatherapy providing a pleasing smell, but many patients with advanced dementia have lost their sense of smell. A number of recent, controlled studies have shown that aromatherapy can be useful in the management of patients with dementia: lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*) and lemon balm (*Melissa officinalis*) are two essential oils of particular interest in this area. While lavender is the most widely used essential oil, there is great scope for exploring other oils in synergy with flower essences that may help with the palliative treatment of patients in a hospice or home setting in general.

### Biography

Maggie Smith is an aromatherapist, flower essence practitioner, advanced energy healer, teacher, and lecturer. She has devoted her life to expanding her knowledge of flower essence therapy and aromatherapy in the palliative care treatment of Alzheimer's and dementia. She shares her energy healing gifts as a heart offering to help people of all ages. She formulates and produces aromatherapy and flower essence care products for Hospice organizations, as well as lecturing and facilitating staff training around the US.

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