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The effects of aromatherapy on intensive care unit patients' vital sign: A non-randomized controlled trial**Myung Haeng Hur, Mi Young Lee and Eun Hee Cho**
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Introduction & Aim: Illness and unfamiliarity in the intensive care unit can cause patients to undergo excessive stress. Psychological instability typically occurs when exhaustion starts to accumulate from the sympathetic nervous system. This results in problems such as increased blood pressure, tachycardia and heightened tension. This situation has both physiological and psychological effects and can negatively impact patients' treatment and recovery. This study utilized aromatherapy as a nursing intervention with intensive care unit patients. We examined if the aromatherapy alleviated patients' stress and reduced systolic blood pressure, diastolic blood pressure and heart rate and provided data that can be utilized in clinical settings. This was an experimental study that used a non-randomized, pre- and post-test design. Participants included lucid adult patients who were admitted to the intensive care unit and had spent more than two nights there. The experimental group and control group comprised 30 individuals each who have satisfied inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Method: This research is a non-randomized controlled trial. The experimental treatment required participants to engage in deep breathing with essential oils as part of the aromatherapy. To verify the effects of aromatherapy, 3 drops of a Lavandula officinalis were applied to an aroma stone. After the test, participants deeply inhaled the aroma essential oil 10 times; the stone was hung within 10 cm on the railing of the participants' bedside and they were instructed to go to sleep. The control group was instructed to go to sleep without receiving the lavender aroma oil. Systolic blood pressure, diastolic blood pressure and heart rate were measured within 1 hour of admission and before bedtime as pre-test measurements. Systolic blood pressure, diastolic blood pressure and heart rate were also measured over the course of the first and second days as post-test measurements after the experimental treatment when the participants fell asleep. To verify the effects of the experimental treatment, systolic blood pressure, diastolic blood pressure, heart rate was measured. SPSS Win 23.0 was used for homogeneity test between the two groups. Systolic blood pressure, diastolic blood pressure and heart rate were evaluated by t-test and the experimental effects were analyzed by repeated measures of ANOVA.

Results: The experimental group and control group showed a significant difference in systolic blood pressure ($F=10.51$, $p=0.002$), heart rate ($F=5.71$, $p<0.001$), but not diastolic blood pressure ($F=1.70$, $p=0.164$).

Conclusion: The results revealed that aromatherapy decreased systolic blood pressure, heart rate in intensive care unit patients after 2 days of the experimental treatment. These results demonstrate that aromatherapy have effects to stabilize vital sign, thus indicating its value in nursing interventions.

Biography

Myung Haeng Hur has her expertise in women's health nursing, nursing research and CAM (Complementary and Alternative Medicine), especially aromatherapy. She is a Professor and has her interest in women's health nursing. She has been into experimental research and has carried out many studies on subjects such as women's health, hypertension, stress relief, sleep enhancement and immune enhancement. She is an Aromatherapist and trained in IFPA. She has published more than 60 papers in reputed journals and has been serving as a Reviewer Member of Journal of Korean Academy of Nursing.

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