

Title:

Effects of Aromatherapy Massage on Pregnant Women's Stress and Immune Function: A Randomized Controlled Trial

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Session Title:

Alternative Practices in Women's Health

Slot:

S 01: Monday, 31 July 2017: 11:45 AM-12:30 PM

Scheduled Time:

11:45 AM

Keywords:

aromatherapy, cortisol and immunoglobulin A

References:

Bershady, S., Trumpfeller, L., Kimble, H. B., Pipaloff, D., & Yim, I. S. (2014). The effect of prenatal Hatha yoga on affect, cortisol and depressive symptoms. *Complementary therapies in clinical practice*, 20(2), 106-113.

Hur, M. H., Song, J. A., Lee, J., & Lee, M. S. (2014). Aromatherapy for stress reduction in healthy adults: a systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized clinical trials. *Maturitas*, 79(4), 362-369.

Igarashi, T. (2013). Physical and psychologic effects of aromatherapy inhalation on pregnant women: a randomized controlled trial. *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 19(10), 805-810.

Abstract Summary:

This study examined the effects of aromatherapy massage on women's stress and immune function during pregnancy. The study's evidence guided clinicians in incorporating aromatherapy massage into prenatal care to improve maternal and fetal health.

Learning Activity:

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE
The learner will be able to know the effects of aromatherapy massage on women's stress during pregnancy.	1. Aromatherapy Massage Intervention 2. Stress measurement 3. Women's stress during pregnancy
The learner will be able to know the effects of aromatherapy massage on women's immune function during pregnancy.	1. Immune function measurement 2. Women's Immune function during pregnancy

Abstract Text:

Purpose: Good maternal health can help predict public health challenges for families, communities, and health care systems by preventing preterm birth or child disability and enabling children to reach their full potential. Therefore, it is essential for clinicians to pay special attention to women's health, especially during pregnancy. The study's aims are to examine the effects of aromatherapy massage on women's stress and immune function during pregnancy.

Methods: This longitudinal, prospective, randomized controlled trial recruited 52 healthy pregnant women from a prenatal clinic in Taipei using convenience sampling. The participants were randomly assigned to the intervention ($n=24$) or control ($n=28$) group using Clinstat block randomization. The intervention group received 70 minutes of aromatherapy massage once biweekly for 20 weeks; the control group received only routine prenatal care. In both groups, participants' salivary cortisol and immunoglobulin A levels were collected before and after the intervention group received aromatherapy massage (every month from 16 to 36 weeks gestation) and were analysed using enzyme-linked immunoassay.

Results: The pregnant women in the intervention group had lower salivary cortisol ($P < 0.001$) and higher immunoglobulin A ($P < 0.001$) levels immediately after aromatherapy massage than those in the control group, which did not receive massage treatment. The findings suggest that differences in the pretest salivary immunoglobulin A levels at 32 ($P = 0.002$) and 36 ($P < 0.001$) weeks gestation were significantly higher than those at 16 weeks gestation between the two groups.

Conclusion: Complementary therapies are being incorporated into current medical practice. This study presented evidence that aromatherapy massage could significantly reduce stress and enhance immune function in pregnant women. Our study evidence can guide clinicians or midwives in providing aromatherapy massage to pregnant women throughout the pregnancy. To promote maternal and foetal health, it is essential for clinicians to incorporate aromatherapy massage into prenatal clinical practice. Maternity health care teams could work with personnel certified in aromatherapy massage and provide individualized stress-relief interventions to pregnant women based on their needs. The educational programme for midwifery could include training on complementary therapies and educate more midwives in providing aromatherapy massage or other complementary therapies to help promote health in pregnant women.