Peppermint Oil

Evaluating efficacy on nausea in patients receiving chemotherapy in the ambulatory setting

Curlissa P. Mapp, APRN, MSN, ACNS-BC, Darlene Hostetler, RN, OCN®️, Jill F. Sable, MSN, RN-BC, OCN®, Catherine Parker, RN, MSN, OCN®, Elizabeth Gouge, RN, BS, OCN®, Margaret Masterson, RN, OCN®, Michelle Willis-Styles, RN, Claudine Fortner, RN, BSN, OCN®, and Melinda Higgins, PhD

BACKGROUND: Nausea is one of the most commonly reported side effects in patients receiving chemotherapy. Patients who experience nausea during chemotherapy may also experience depression, metabolic imbalances, dehydration, decreased ability to function, and treatment delays, which can ultimately affect outcomes.

OBJECTIVES: This study aimed to determine the efficacy of a cool damp washcloth with peppermint essential oil versus a cool damp washcloth alone on the self-reported intensity of nausea in patients receiving chemotherapy in the outpatient ambulatory setting.

METHODS: 79 adult patients receiving chemotherapy were recruited from an outpatient ambulatory infusion center in the southeastern United States. Patients were separated into two groups (no scent and peppermint) and asked to rate the intensity of their chemotherapy-induced nausea at pre- and postintervention using the Baxter Retching Faces pictorial scale.

FINDINGS: The results demonstrated that the use of peppermint oil was effective in decreasing the intensity of nausea experienced by patients compared to a cool washcloth alone.

KEYWORDS
aromatherapy; chemotherapy-induced nausea; essential oil; peppermint; cancer

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