

# Psycho-Aromatherapy: A Review

**Language:** English

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**Introduction**

Aromatherapy is defined as "the art of healing of Mind, Body and Spirit" with the essential oils (EO's), the scented natural remedies found in aromatic plants. It is a form of complimentary alternative medicine that uses volatile liquid plant materials, known as EO's and other aromatic compounds of plants for the purpose of affecting a persons mood or health. AMA classifies aromatherapy as "Psycho-Somatic". Aromatherapy is currently used worldwide in the management of psychiatric disorders like chronic pain, depression, anxiety and, some cognitive disorders, bipolar disorders, stress-related disorders and sleep disorders. Aromatherapy is not a cure but it can improve mood and decrease stress.

History:

- It dates back thousands of years, and was initially used as a spiritual practice.
- Ancient Chinese, Indian, Greek, Roman and Egyptian cultures used aromatic scents and oils to attract gods and ward off evil spirits.
- Valnet essential oil was used on wounds in Indo-China war.
- Rene-Maurice Gattefosse in 1920 coined the term "Aromatherapy".
- In 19th century, citrus plant oil was used for mood alteration in china.
- In late 20th century, Basil oil was used for strngthening and supporting nervous system, Bergamot oil was used to relieve depression and for relaxation.

**Material and Methods**

Aromatherapy is a complementary therapy that uses plant extract essential oils that are either inhaled, used as massage oil, or occasionally ingested. The concentrated oils are aromatic and volatile. They are extracted, usually by steam distillation, from flowers, leaves, roots, grasses, peel, resin or bark. There are over 400 essential oils extracted from plants all over the world. Popular oils used include chamomile, lavender, rosemary and tea tree. Aromatherapy carrier oils are used for mixing blends of essential oils in order to make bath oils or massage oils. They are mainly extracted from nuts and seeds.

**Results**

The pharmacology of the essential oils and/or their single chemical constituents, therefore, remains largely undiscovered. However, accumulating evidence that inhaled or dermally applied essential oils enter the blood stream and, in relevant molecular, cellular or animal models, exert measurable psychological effects, indicates that the effects are primarily pharmacological. Two basic mechanisms explains the mechanism of action of aromatherapy:

1. Influence of aroma on brain especially the limbic system through the olfactory system (Figure 1).
2. Direct pharmocological effects of essential oils.



Fig. 1: Mechanism of action via Limbic System through Olfaction

Popular essential oils used for Psycho-Aromatherapy were as follows:



Fig. 2: Basil Oil – It sharpens concentration, has uplifting effect in depression. It relieves headache and migraine



Fig. 3: Bergamot Oil – It relieves depression and has calming properties



Fig. 4: Black Pepper – It has stimulating effect and it relieves muscular pain



Fig. 5: Chamomile Oil – It relieves depression, insomnia and stress



Fig. 6: Clary Sage – It is muscle relaxer, relieves pain



Fig. 7: Fennel – te relieves hicups



Fig. 8: Frankincense – Reduces anxiety and nervous tension



Fig. 9: Geranium Has cooling and calming effect for anxiety and tension



Fig. 10: Ginger – It enhances memory, cheers one up and relieves pain. Has uplifting effect in depression



Fig. 11: Lavender Oil – It relieves depression, stress, headache, muscleache, muscle spasm and insomnia

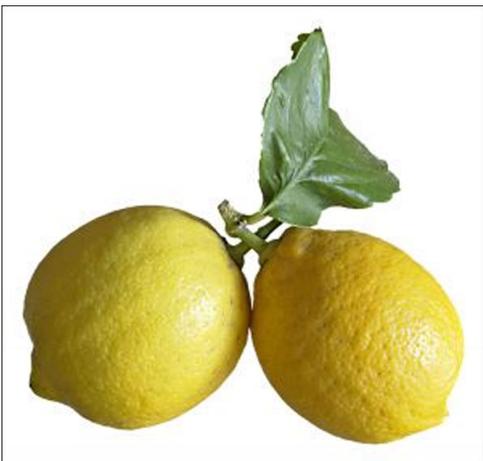


Fig. 12: Lemon Oil – Relieves stress and has uplifting effect in depression



Fig. 13: Marjoram – Effective for headache, muscleache, muscle spasm, sprain and strains



Fig. 14: Peppermint Oil – It relieves headache, muscle pain and migraine



Fig. 15: Rosemary Oil – Reduces depression, relieves pain, improves memory skills and concentration



Fig. 16: Tarragon Oil – It calms nerves and relieves stress and menstrual and menopausal symptoms



Fig. 17: Valerian – It is muscle relaxer, relieves sleeplessness



Fig. 18: Ylang-Ylang – It relieves depression, insomnia, tension and relaxes nervous system



Fig. 19: Rose Oil, Jasmine, Sandal Wood – Reduces depression and sadness. It is aphrodisiac

## Conclusions

Aromatherapy provides a potentially effective treatment for a range of psychiatric disorders especially psycho-somatic disorders. In today's stressful life, people are choosing alternative and complimentary therapies like Aromatherapy to enhance their health care and well being. In addition, taking into account the available information on safety, aromatherapy appears to be without the adverse effects of many conventional psychotropic drugs. Since there is very little information about this topic in literature, contribution is needed by everyone of us to get it into day-to-day life.

## Literature

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## Abbreviations

EO's - Essential oils

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# PSYCHO-AROMATHERAPY: A REVIEW

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Aromatherapy is defined as "the Art of Healing of Mind, Body and Spirit" with essential oils (EO's), the scented natural remedies found in aromatic plants. It is a form of complimentary alternative medicine that uses volatile liquid plant materials, known as EO's and other aromatic compounds from plants for the purpose of affecting a persons mood or health. AMA classifies aromatherapy as "Psycho-Somatic". Aromatherapy is currently used worldwide in the management of psychiatric disorders like chronic pain, depression, anxiety disorders, some cognitive disorders, bipolar disorders, stress-related disorders and sleep disorders. Aromatherapy is not a cure but it can improve mood and decrease stress. This poster reviews about 'psycho-aromatherapy' in relation to psychiatric disorders, along with mechanistic, neuro-pharmacological effects.

## HISTORY

- It dates back thousands of years, and was initially used as a spiritual practice.
- Ancient Chinese, Indian, Greek, Roman and Egyptian cultures use smoke, aromatic scents and oils to attract Gods and ward off evil spirits.
- Valnet - used EO on wounds in indo-china war.
- Rene - Maurice Gattefosse (1920) - coined the term
- In early 19<sup>th</sup> century, citrus plant oil was used for mood alteration in china.
- In late 20<sup>th</sup> century, Basil oil was used for strengthening and supporting nervous system and Bergamot oil was used to relieve depression and for relaxation.

## MODES OF APPLICATION

- ▲ Inhalation (Direct/ Aerial diffusion)
- ▲ Topical application (massage, bath, compress)
- ▲ Intensively (Orally, rectally, vaginally)

## SAFETY CONCERNS

- ◆ Concentrated EO's - irritate skin.
- ◆ Photo-toxic reactions - due to citrus peel oils / lemon.
- ◆ Gynacomastia - due to lavender / tea green.
- ◆ Pregnant, lactating women and Children.
- ◆ Poisoning due to ingestion.
- ◆ Liver damage

## COST / PRICE

Varies based on the amount of harvest, country of origin, type of extraction i.e., steam distillation, CO2 extract.

## METHODOLOGY

The basis of this therapy lies in the essential oils contained in plant materials. These can be found in leaves, flowers, roots, seeds, bark and resin. These oils are highly concentrated and when extracted, can either be used in a pure form or diluted and blended with other oils to produce the required strength. There are over 400 essential oils extracted from plants all over the world. Popular oils used include chamomile, lavender, rosemary and tea tree.

## MECHANISM OF ACTION

Two basic mechanisms explain the theory.  
 a. Influence of aroma on brain especially the limbic system through the olfactory system. (Fig.-1)  
 b. Direct pharmacological effects of essential oils.



## POPULAR ESSENTIAL OILS USED FOR PSYCHO-AROMA THERAPY

<b>Basil Oil</b>		Sharpens Concentration, Uplifting effect in depression, Relieves Headache and Migraine.	<b>Lavender Oil</b>		Relieves Depression, Stress Headache, Musclesache, Muscle Spasms and insomnia
<b>Bergamot Oil</b>		Relieves Depression and calming properties	<b>Lemon Oil</b>		Relieves Stress and Uplifting effect in depression
<b>Black Pepper</b>		Stimulating effect and relieves muscular pain	<b>Marjoram</b>		Effective for Headache, Muscular Pain, Spasm, Sprains and Strains
<b>Chamomile Oil</b>		Relieves Depression, Insomnia and Stress	<b>Peppermint Oil</b>		Relieves Headache, Muscle pain and Migraine
<b>Clary Sage</b>		Muscle Relaxer and Relieves pain	<b>Rosemary Oil</b>		Reduces depression Relieves pain, Improves memory skills and Concentration
<b>Fennel</b>		Relieves Hicups	<b>Tarragon Oil</b>		Calms nerves and relieves stress and menstrual & menopausal symptoms
<b>Frankincense</b>		Reduces Anxiety and Nervous Tension	<b>Valerian</b>		Muscle Relaxer and relieves sleeplessness
<b>Geranium</b>		Cooling and Calming effect for Anxiety and Tension	<b>Ylang-Ylang</b>		Relieves depression, Insomnia, Tension and relaxes nervous system
<b>Ginger</b>		Enhances Memory, Cheers one up and relieves pain, Uplifting effect in depression	<b>Rose Oil</b>		Reduces Depression & Sadness Aphrodisiac
			<b>Jasmine</b>		
			<b>Sandal Wood Oil</b>		

**CONCLUSION :** In todays stressful life, people are choosing alternative and complementary therapies like aromatherapy to enhance their health care and well being. Since there is very little information about this topic in literature, contribution is needed by everyone of us to get it into day-to-day practice.