Aromatherapy for Pediatrics: Elequil Aromatabs Reduce Queasiness and Anxiousness in Dialysis and Infusion Centers

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Clinical Aromatherapy Gains Ground

The use of aromatherapy in clinical settings has been gaining ground in recent years. Not only is it used as a non-pharmacological solution for patients, but healthcare workers are using aromatherapy as well to help them through stressful situations. As an example, traveling nurses were known to have used clinical aromatherapy during the pandemic.

Aromatherapy is just one type of holistic therapy that is being introduced into hospital settings. In fact, some clinicians, such as myself, are receiving training and certification specifically in Holistic Nursing.

Bringing aromatherapy into a medical facility typically requires a well-thought-out game plan and a champion. An interdisciplinary team consisting of healthcare professionals including nurses, doctors, respiratory therapists, and other specialists such as child life specialists if it's a pediatric institution, is often involved in reviewing the products and looking at the potential benefits.

> ***Lavender-Peppermint is the perfect combination to address both queasiness and anxiousness. Lavender is great for the anxiousness, especially for painful procedures such as IV starts and lab draws, and peppermint helps with queasiness. It's a perfect all-in-one.***

Elequil Aromatabs Best Suited for Children

Our freestanding pediatric hospital in Florida was exploring the use of clinical aromatherapy. Of the two alternatives considered, Elequil Aromatabs® aromatherapy (Beekley Medical®, Bristol, CT) was determined to be the better option for pediatric patients:

- Elequil Aromatabs are in the form of an adhesive tab rather than a small, hard plastic disk which younger patients might put in their mouths or that could fall into bed sheets and possibly result in pressure injuries.
- Elequil Aromatabs can be quickly and easily applied to the patient's gown or clothing using the adhesive backing that, once applied, do not require any additional effort to stay in place.
- Users can easily adjust the strength of the aroma using the pre-set minimum and maximum aroma exposure levels.

After choosing Elequil, a clinical study was designed to determine if it would be helpful for pediatric patients in the dialysis and infusion centers. The Lavender-Peppermint aroma was specifically chosen because it could address both queasiness and anxiousness.



Key Findings

- **88%** of patients experienced reduction in queasiness
- **48%** reduction in antiemetic medications
- **100%** of patients experienced reduction in anxiousness
- **90%** reduction in anxiolytic medications

Aromatherapy Clinical Study

Objectives

A clinical study was conducted at our freestanding pediatric hospital in Florida to see if aromatherapy could improve queasiness and anxiousness for pediatric patients in the outpatient dialysis and infusion centers.

Study Methods

Parents as well as patients were approached and given information on the product. A Patient Information Sheet was provided explaining aromatherapy, why it is effective, and describing how Elequil Aromatabs are used. Parents were given the option as to whether or not they wanted their child to participate.

The study was conducted May – September 2023:

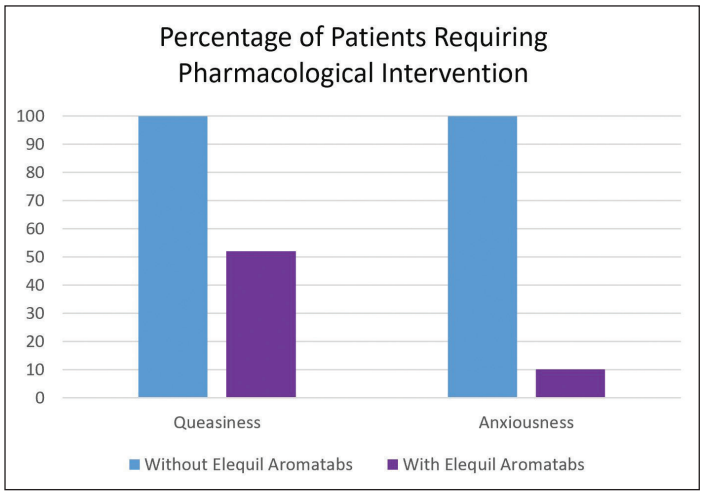
- Participants were male and female patients between the ages of 8 and 20
- A total of 45 patients in outpatient dialysis and infusion centers participated
  - 25 patients participated in the study to determine improvement in queasiness
  - 20 patients participated in the study to determine improvement in anxiousness
- Elequil Aromatabs Lavender-Peppermint applied to patient's clothing or gown
  - Started at minimum aroma exposure level initially to make sure the patient and family were comfortable with the aroma
  - Increased to maximum aroma level as requested

Patients were verbally asked about their symptoms using age-appropriate language. The parents were involved in the conversations, and simple "Yes/No" responses were obtained.

> ***"I've used Elequil Aromatabs the last three times I've had my port accessed. Each time it has gotten better and helped me with the anticipation of being accessed and made me calmer. I am seeing the difference and feeling more relaxed, and I love the smell of lavender!"***
>
> ~ Pediatric Patient

Results

- Queasiness
  - 88% of patients reported an improvement in symptoms
  - 52% (vs. 100%) required antiemetic medications after aromatherapy (48% reduction)
- Anxiousness
  - 100% of patients reported an improvement in symptoms
  - 10% (vs. 100%) required anxiolytic medications after aromatherapy (90% reduction)



Nurses Speak Out about Elequil Aromatabs Aromatherapy

One of our patients is an 8 year old with inflammatory bowel disease. She always had a lot of anxiety and stress related to her IV starts. We use a cream to numb the spot but still have to wrap her up and call in additional staff to help hold her still. The first time we used Elequil Aromatabs with her, there was a marked difference in how she handled the IV start. She focused on breathing in the Lavender aroma and it was the smoothest her IV start ever went. Her mom was overwhelmed at how well the aromatherapy helped ease her anxiousness.

An 11 year old patient with Crohn's disease presented to the infusion center with medication-induced nausea and anxiety about getting an infusion. She was reluctant to try the aromatherapy as she was convinced "nothing would work" but she did consent to trying it. I am happy to report

that both her queasiness and anxiousness decreased. She wanted to make sure other kids knew about the product and that she gave it a "huge thumbs up."

A pediatric patient was coming to our infusion center for chemotherapy treatment for her brain tumor. She had been given medications for nausea but would still get nauseous. She would also get anxious about having her port accessed. Adding aromatherapy to her medication regimen alleviated her queasiness and anxiousness, which allowed her to open up to the nurses about her love of horses and equestrian sports.

Another patient who was being treated for a brain tumor had struggled daily with anxiety related to chemotherapy, having her port accessed, and the family dynamics at home. She suffered from anticipatory nausea and would be nauseous at times upon arrival to the infusion center. The addition of Elequil Aromatabs aromatherapy to her regimen helped relieve her symptoms of queasiness as well as decrease her anxiousness for her port access and chemotherapy infusion, making her time spent in the infusion center more enjoyable.

> ***"I love that you are piloting the Aromatabs in the infusion center. I only wish it would have been in place when we were going through treatment. The patients and families are going to love them!"***
>
> ~ Mother, Patient and Family Advisory Council Member

Next Steps: Hospital-Wide Rollout

The positive results of this study led to plans for a hospital-wide rollout. Unit educators are creating a brief computer-based training to educate the nurses in advance of the rollout. Multiple clinicians will be conducting hands-on training during the huddles.

Once the rollout begins, boxes of Elequil Aromatabs will be placed in the supply rooms where the medications are kept. This will make it easy for the nurses to get the Aromatabs along with the survey and the Patient Information Sheet when they get medications for their patients. It will be a quick and easy yet extremely powerful nurse-driven intervention for our facility.

Conclusions

There were several important discoveries resulting from this study:

- Elequil Aromatabs aromatherapy was very well-received by patients, parents, and nurses.
- Parents and patients were excited about Elequil being offered and having something different to try. A lot of these children go through medical treatments all day, every day, and the same sorts of medications are traditionally offered to help with their queasiness and anxiousness. It was significant that these patients now had choices.
- It is important to involve both the children and the parents in the care and, when appropriate, have them participate in procedures.
- The nurses were extremely enthused about using Elequil Aromatabs, especially in the infusion center where patients are constantly getting chemotherapy and other infusions.

Ultimately, the study showed significant improvement in patients' symptoms and a reduction in administration of medications. Reducing pharmacologic interventions is important for many reasons, including reducing potential side effects such as drowsiness, low blood pressure, or nausea. These are all things we want to avoid.

About the Author



Joshua Evans, BSN, RN, CPN, HNB-BC is a bachelor's prepared, board-certified pediatric nurse with 10 years of experience in pediatric care. His background includes critical care, dialysis, and education. In addition to pediatrics, he is passionate about incorporating complementary and holistic care into his practice. Josh received his post-baccalaureate certificate in Holistic Nursing from Pacific College of Health and Science and is a board-certified holistic nurse. Josh is also a member of the Psi Upsilon Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing.

Elequil Aromatabs® Aromatherapy

Elequil Aromatabs aromatherapy is a simple non-pharmacological intervention that uses 100% pure essential oils. Elequil Aromatabs aromatherapy has a unique controlled delivery system with easy hands-free application, adheres to the patient's gown or clothing, and allows minimum and maximum aroma exposure.



Lavender-Peppermint
Lasts up to 8 hours

Lavender-Peppermint promotes relaxation during pain, helps comfort and calm anxiousness, and soothes queasiness





Lavender
Lasts up to 8 hours

Lavender-Sandalwood
Lasts up to 24 hours

Lavender and Lavender-Sandalwood promote relaxation during pain, help comfort and calm anxiousness





Orange-Peppermint
Lasts up to 8 hours

Orange-Ginger
Lasts up to 8 hours

Orange-Peppermint and Orange-Ginger uplift and can soothe queasiness

The use of peppermint essential oil is not recommended for children under 3-years-old.

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