

# Improving the Patient Experience with Elequil Aromatabs: A Review of the Clinical Evidence

Maria Shonyo, President  
Vela Technologies, LLC

## Why Patient Experience Matters

As healthcare becomes increasingly consumer-driven, the importance of patient experience and patient satisfaction continues to grow. Patient experience can have a significant impact on clinical outcomes and can also affect healthcare facilities financially. Patient satisfaction scores, word of mouth, online reviews, and social media can influence a facility's reputation, competitive position, and the likelihood that a patient will choose a facility or return for future care. Patient experience and patient satisfaction scores, including HCAHPS scores, contribute to hospital quality assessments and may affect reimbursement rates. In addition, the CMS Overall Hospital Quality Star Rating includes patient experience as one of its five measure groups,<sup>1</sup> giving hospitals another reason to prioritize patient experience, as there may be associated financial impacts.

A patient's experience is often shaped by the anxiety, anxiousness, pain, and uncertainty they feel before, during, and after medical care, as well as their perception of the care received. Anxiety and psychological distress can impair decision-making and negatively affect sleep, pain perception, and physiologic recovery, all of which may increase the risk of post-discharge complications and subsequent readmission.

### Elequil Aromatabs: A Simple, Patient-Centered Intervention

Elequil Aromatabs® have been used across multiple departments in more than 3,600 hospitals and healthcare facilities across the country and are the subject of dozens of studies and publications. Some of the key statistics from these studies and papers include:

- Approximately **71%** of the total 709 patients across eight clinical studies and quality improvement projects and one patient survey experienced an improvement in anxiety/anxiousness, comfort, or overall patient experience after receiving Elequil Aromatabs.
- **72%** of patients surveyed who received Elequil Aromatabs during their MRI exam, surgical procedure, emergency room visit, or hospital stay said they would be more likely to choose a medical facility that offers clinical aromatherapy.
- **90%** of pediatric patients who received Elequil Aromatabs did not require anxiolytic medications.
- **92%** of women in a pilot randomized controlled trial who received Elequil Aromatabs following cesarean birth reported they enjoyed using the clinical aromatherapy.

A positive patient experience and reduced anxiety may contribute to better recovery and a lower risk of preventable readmissions by enhancing patient engagement, treatment adherence, and care transitions. Patients who feel supported and cared for by their healthcare team are more likely to understand discharge instructions, adhere to medication regimens, attend follow-up appointments, and feel comfortable asking questions. In addition, reducing patient agitation and aggression can decrease burdens on healthcare staff and make patient care easier.

## Patient Experience Challenges

There are many facets to patient experience. Some of the most common challenges include:

- **Anxiousness, anxiety, stress, and feeling overwhelmed.** For example, preoperative anxiety is a common problem in hospitals and other healthcare facilities and has been shown to negatively impact patient satisfaction, postoperative recovery, and clinical outcomes.<sup>2,3</sup>
- **Pain and discomfort.** Pain is common in many populations of hospitalized patients<sup>4</sup> and inadequate pain control is associated with delayed recovery, decreased patient satisfaction, longer hospital stays, and increased healthcare costs. Pain can limit quality of life and daily activities.<sup>5</sup>
- **Nausea and vomiting.** Nausea and vomiting are among the most common and distressing symptoms experienced by hospitalized patients, particularly following surgery, anesthesia, and certain medical treatments. Beyond causing significant discomfort, these symptoms can delay recovery, prolong hospital stays, increase readmission risks, and reduce patient satisfaction.<sup>6</sup>
- **Not feeling heard.** Seriously ill persons in particular often feel silenced, ignored, and misunderstood. Promoting healthcare environments where patients feel heard and understood by those caring for them is essential for maintaining dignity, supporting good decision-making, and alleviating suffering.<sup>7</sup> It is an important component of patient-centered care that can influence a patient's perception of their overall experience.

## Clinical Evidence for Elequil Aromatabs

Numerous publications provide evidence that Elequil Aromatabs® can improve the patient experience by reducing anxiousness, enhancing comfort, decreasing reliance on medications, and improving procedural tolerance. In some clinical settings, they may also reduce procedure time or length of stay.

The evidence summarized below includes peer-reviewed clinical studies, quality improvement projects, pilot studies, white papers, and patient surveys, reflecting the breadth of published experience with Elequil Aromatabs across diverse healthcare settings.



### Reduced Anxiety and Improved Comfort for Surgical and Perioperative Patients

- In a study of patients undergoing outpatient surgery, 75% reported a decrease in their anxiety score after 30 minutes of lavender aromatherapy using Elequil Aromatabs. The researchers concluded that lavender aromatherapy proved to be an effective method in reducing anxiety scores and reducing use of anti-anxiety medications in this patient population.<sup>8</sup>

- In a pilot randomized controlled trial of women recovering from cesarean birth, participants received either lavender aromatherapy or a placebo during their inpatient postpartum stay. The results showed that individuals who received the Aromatabs® reported significantly higher levels of comfort when compared with those who received the placebo. In the aromatherapy group, 66.6% of participants stated that the Aromatabs either moderately or very much improved their comfort. By comparison, only 23% in the control group reported that the placebo tab either moderately or very much improved their comfort. Of those who received the aromatherapy tab, 91.7% reported they enjoyed using the aromatherapy.<sup>9</sup>
- In a study of ambulatory surgery patients in which the experimental group received inhalation lavender aromatherapy in the preoperative waiting area and the control group received standard nursing care, with both groups reporting their anxiety using a visual analog scale upon arriving at the preoperative waiting area then again upon departure to the operating room, the results showed a mean reduction in anxiety greater in the experimental group than in the control group. The researchers concluded that lavender aromatherapy reduced preoperative anxiety in ambulatory surgery patients. In addition, a majority (77%) of the subjects reported that they felt calmer, and 92% found the lavender aroma pleasant.<sup>10</sup>
- In a study of orthopedic surgery patients using aromatherapy in the immediate postoperative phase, the majority of patients reported positive feedback and improved comfort. The researchers concluded that aromatherapy can promote comfort and improve a patient's experience in this phase of their care.<sup>11</sup>
- A study of outpatient surgery patients showed aromatherapy reduced medication use and decreased length of stay by providing a comforting and calm environment that helped reduce patient preoperative anxiousness. The researchers concluded that aromatherapy can serve as a beneficial complementary alternative medicine and nursing intervention to assist patients with management of preoperative anxiousness.<sup>12</sup>
- Patients who used Elequil Aromatabs® pre- and post-operatively reported decreased anxiousness, with 74% saying their anxiousness was managed very well. Patients also reported increased comfort, with 72% saying their comfort was managed very well.<sup>13</sup>
- Research showed a majority (85%) of surgical oncology patients experienced a decrease in their anxiousness score with the use of Elequil Aromatabs, with participants adding that the aromatherapy contributed to making them feel more relaxed.<sup>14</sup>

*“Aromatherapy may offer a simple, low-risk, and cost-effective method of managing preoperative anxiety.”<sup>15</sup>*

## Reduced Anxiety During Various Interventional Procedures

- In a study of patients undergoing interventional spinal procedures (epidural steroid injection, medial branch block, or radiofrequency ablation), with patients using the six-item State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI-6) scale, lavender aromatherapy was shown to reduce pre-procedure anxiety. Participants who received lavender aromatherapy showed a statistically significant reduction in post-treatment anxiety scores compared with the control group, with the researchers concluding that lavender-based aromatherapy is effective in reducing pre-procedural anxiety before interventional spine procedures.<sup>16</sup>
- In a study of patients undergoing mandibular third molar extraction who received lavender aromatherapy before the anesthetic procedure and continuing until the extractions were completed, with patients rating anxiety on a visual analog scale, the results showed a significant reduction in anxiety levels among participants in the experimental group

compared to those in the control group. The researchers concluded that aromatherapy can be used as an adjunct treatment to control anxiety during dental procedures.<sup>17</sup>

- In a randomized, placebo-controlled study conducted in women undergoing image-guided breast biopsy, with patients receiving two different types of aromatherapy tabs (lavender-sandalwood and orange-peppermint) compared with a matched placebo-control delivery system, and anxiety self-reported before and after the biopsy using the Spielberger State Anxiety Inventory Scale, there was a statistically significant reduction in self-reported anxiety with the use of the lavender-sandalwood aromatherapy tab (median state anxiety scores decreased from 48 to 37) compared with the placebo group. The researchers added that reducing anxiety during the image-guided breast biopsy experience promotes patient comfort and may enhance an individual's experience.<sup>18</sup>

### Reduced Anxiousness in Dialysis and Infusion Center Patients

- A clinical study of pediatric patients in dialysis and infusion centers showed that 100% of participants who used Elequil Aromatabs<sup>®</sup> experienced a reduction in their anxiousness, and 90% did not require anxiolytic medications.<sup>20</sup>

### Improved Patient Experience and Perception of Care for Hospital Stays, Emergency Room Visits, Surgical Procedures, and MRI Exams

- In a survey of patients who had an MRI exam, surgical procedure, emergency room visit, or hospital stay, 83% of those who received Elequil Aromatabs said it made their experience more positive. Additionally, 59% of patients who received Elequil Aromatabs said it helped with their anxiousness or feelings of being scared, nervous, or overwhelmed.<sup>22</sup>
- In a clinical evaluation conducted in a hospital PACU, 92% of patients using Lavender-Sandalwood Elequil Aromatabs for pain and anxiousness said the use of aromatherapy made them feel like their medical facility cared for them.<sup>23</sup>

### Reduced Burdens on Staff and Improved Operational Efficiency for MRI Patients

- Patients undergoing MRI exams experienced reduced anxiety and claustrophobia with the use of Elequil Aromatabs, with a decrease in the number of patients requiring 15 minutes or more of coaching in order to complete their MRI. Patients using the aromatherapy also reported a significant improvement in their experience. These benefits may contribute to increased patient satisfaction while also improving operational efficiency and providing potential financial benefits for the facility by reducing the number of aborted scans.<sup>24</sup>

*"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."*<sup>19</sup>



*"A 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."*<sup>21</sup>

Reduced Anxiousness in Behavioral Health Patients

- In a pilot study involving behavioral health patients, 70% of participants reported a positive change in their level of anxiousness with the use of lavender-sandalwood Elequil Aromatabs.<sup>26</sup>

Reduced Pain and Stress

- In a study of patients in an acute clinical setting experiencing intractable pain, there was a 27% reduction in stress five minutes after application of aromatherapy and a 36% reduction in stress 60 minutes after application of aromatherapy. Additionally, there were clear and consistent reductions in pain, muscle tension, and stress. The researchers concluded that aromatherapy is a useful adjunct in the management of pain as part of an initiative to reduce the use of opioids in a clinical setting, with lavender helping to promote calmness and wellness while reducing stress and anxiety, thus interrupting the pain cycle.<sup>28</sup>

Facility Preference and Patient Satisfaction Scores

- In a survey of patients who had an MRI exam, surgical procedure, emergency room visit, or hospital stay, 72% of those who received Elequil Aromatabs® said they would be more likely to choose a medical facility because they offer Elequil Aromatabs.<sup>30</sup>
- In a clinical evaluation conducted with patients in a hospital PACU, patient satisfaction scores rose from 90-91% to 94-95% for patients who used Elequil Aromatabs, and 82% of patients using Orange-Peppermint Elequil Aromatabs for queasiness said the aromatherapy improved their experience.<sup>31</sup>

*“If the patient feels the hospital cares for their well-being, that’s huge. Integrating aromatherapy into patient care makes the patient feel we are going one step beyond what other hospitals do. It’s important that facilities understand the value of the patient’s voice.”<sup>25</sup>*

*“I observed that most patients were receptive to the Aromatabs® intervention and often appeared calmer following its use. It served as a simple, non-pharmacological approach to reduce anxiousness, promote emotional well-being, and foster meaningful nurse-patient interactions throughout their admission.”<sup>27</sup>*

*“Aromatherapy offers comfort and calming to patients experiencing pain, assisting to achieve a relaxation response.”<sup>29</sup>*

HCAHPS

The Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) initiative aims to provide a standardized survey instrument and data collection methodology for measuring patients’ perspectives on hospital care.<sup>32</sup> The survey includes several questions directly related to patient experience and interaction with doctors and nurses, including the following:<sup>33</sup>

- During this hospital stay, how often did nurses treat you with courtesy and respect?
- During this hospital stay, how often did nurses listen carefully to you?
- During this hospital stay, how often were you able to get the rest you needed?
- During this hospital stay, did doctors, nurses and other hospital staff help you to rest and recover?

Responses to these questions may be influenced by a patient’s perception of the care received and any extra steps taken by staff to help improve their experience.

Conclusions

Patient experience has numerous implications for healthcare facilities and for patients. Interventions that improve the patient experience, including non-pharmacological strategies to reduce anxiety, may contribute indirectly to improved clinical outcomes and reduce healthcare utilization and associated costs.

The available evidence suggests that Elequil Aromatabs® aromatherapy provides multiple patient benefits, including improved comfort, procedural tolerance, and feelings of being cared for, as well as reduced anxiousness, aggression, agitation, queasiness, and the need for antiemetics and pain medications. Because pain and stress are major contributors to patient discomfort and dissatisfaction, these findings are relevant to the patient experience. Additionally, the use of Elequil® aromatherapy may reduce procedure time in some clinical settings.

Overall, these benefits may support improved patient satisfaction, an enhanced patient experience, and greater operational efficiency for the facility. Furthermore, the use of Elequil aromatherapy may influence facility preference and reduce burdens on healthcare staff associated with managing patient anxiousness, agitation, and discomfort.

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<br>Lasts up to 8 hours                                                                    | Lavender-Sandalwood<br>Lasts up to 24 hours |
| Lavender and Lavender-Sandalwood promote relaxation during pain, help comfort and calm anxiousness |                                             |



|                                                                      |                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Orange-Peppermint<br>Lasts up to 8 hours                             | Orange-Ginger<br>Lasts up to 8 hours |
| Orange-Peppermint and Orange-Ginger uplift and can soothe queasiness |                                      |

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