
Aromatherapy Reduces Anxiousness, Improves Comfort and Empowers Surgical Nurses

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Aromatherapy for Surgical Patients

Clinical staff at Summa Health, an integrated healthcare delivery system with locations across Northeast Ohio, were looking to assess how Elequil Aromatabs® aromatherapy could help surgical patients reduce anxiousness and queasiness, improve comfort, and lessen the need for medications.

Kelly Glendon, Associate Chief Nursing Officer, and Hanna Shaw, Nurse Manager of Pre-Admission Testing, Same Day Surgery and PACU, presented the request to use Elequil Aromatabs to the Surgical Services Value Analysis Committee. While Elequil Aromatabs have been shown to be helpful for surgical patients at other facilities, the committee recommended conducting a Quality Improvement Project to determine how Elequil would benefit their particular patient population and how the nursing staff would respond.

Methods

The Quality Improvement Project to evaluate Elequil Aromatabs aromatherapy (Beekley Medical®, Bristol, CT) for surgical patients was conducted June – July 2023. Prior to the start of the project, nursing staff involved in the project received education on the use of Elequil Aromatabs from the Senior Clinical Product Specialist and Certified

Aromatherapist at Beekley Medical. Patients were initially introduced to Elequil Aromatabs by nursing staff during pre-admission testing (PAT) a week or two prior to their day of surgery. A Patient Information Sheet describing the product and the benefits of each aroma was provided during PAT. Some patients brought the information sheet in with them on the day of surgery and asked about using Elequil. Some patients said they had heard about aromatherapy elsewhere and asked if it is an option for them.

Front-line nurses led the evaluation and made the determination of when (pre- or post-op) to offer Elequil to a patient who was exhibiting queasiness, anxiousness, or discomfort. Four aromas: Lavender, Lavender-Sandalwood, Lavender-Peppermint, and Orange-Peppermint, were offered; patients and nurses together participated in the selection of which aroma to use.

“A patient used Elequil Aromatabs after their pain meds were maxed out. The patient had been anxious. Elequil helped calm them down.”

~ Surgical Nurse

Key Benefits Achieved

- **74%** of patients said their anxiousness was managed very well
- **72%** of patients said their comfort was managed very well
- **Up to 59%** of nursing staff reported a perceived reduction in medication administration
- Nursing staff felt **empowered** to make decisions about patient care

Following their use of Elequil Aromatabs, patients were given the option to fill out a feedback card (Figure 1).

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Aromatherapy Intervention Questionnaire

Patient Questions

1. How well was your comfort managed on a scale of 1-5?

1 Not at all 2 3 4 5 Very well

2. How well was your anxiousness managed on a scale of 1-5?

1 Not at all 2 3 4 5 Very well

Figure 1. Patient Feedback Card

Nursing staff participating in the project were also given an opportunity to fill out a feedback card (Figure 2).

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Staff Questions

1. Application in: Pre-Op Post-Op

2. Rationale for application: Queasiness Anxiousness Comfort

3. Do you feel like you administered fewer PRN medications?

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Figure 2. Staff Feedback Card

“The nurses could offer Elequil based on what they were seeing and use it as another tool on their tool belt.”

~ Kelly Glendon, Associate Chief Nursing Officer

Results of Patient Feedback

Patients were asked how well their anxiousness was managed with Elequil Aromatabs aromatherapy using a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (very well). A total of 104 responses to this question was received. The results are shown in Figure 3. Patients were also asked how well their comfort was managed with Elequil Aromatabs using a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (very well). A total of 109 responses to this question was received. The results are shown in Figure 4.

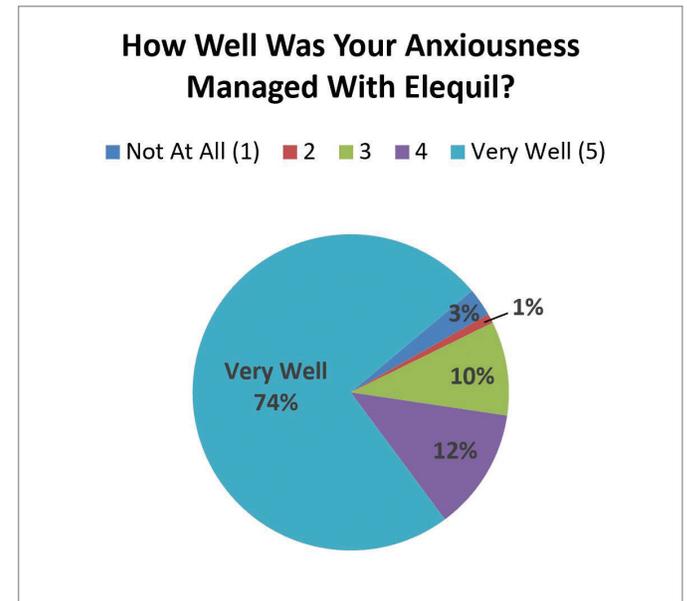


Figure 3. Improvement in Anxiousness with Elequil Aromatabs

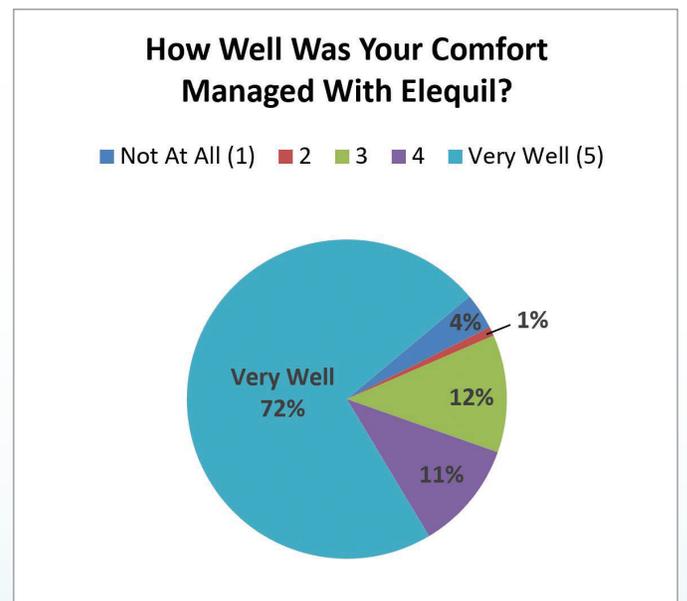


Figure 4. Improvement in Comfort with Elequil Aromatabs

Results of Staff Feedback

Nursing staff provided feedback on their experience with Elequil Aromatabs aromatherapy using the Staff Feedback Card shown in Figure 2. A total of 44 responses was received to the question asking if they felt like they administered fewer medications to the patients who received Elequil (76 pre-op applications and 52 post-op applications). The results are shown in Figure 5.

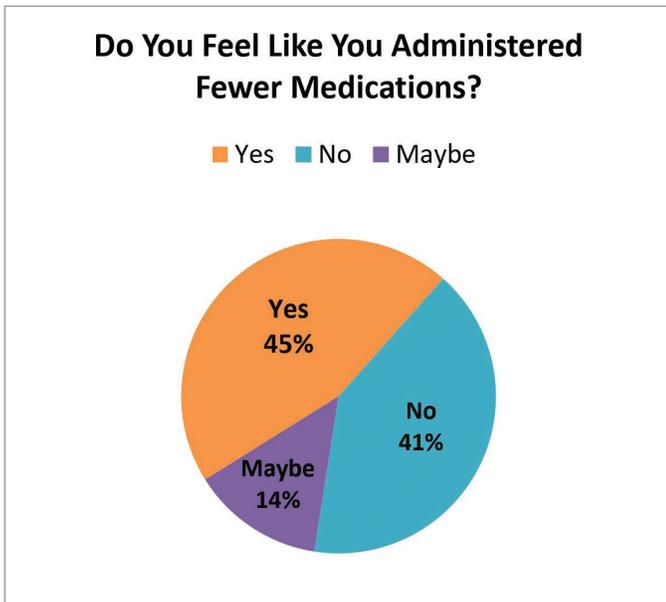


Figure 5. Perceived Reduction in Medications for Patients Using Elequil Aromatabs

“The patient felt better and did not require meds.”

~ Surgical Nurse

“The patient asked if they could buy Elequil at home because they liked it so much.”

~ Surgical Nurse

Conclusions

This Quality Improvement Project showed that patient experience improved significantly with the use of Elequil Aromatabs:

- Decreased anxiousness for patients, with 74% saying their anxiousness was managed very well.
- Increased comfort for patients, with 72% saying their comfort was managed very well.

Nursing staff benefitted as well, with less burden on nurses due to a perceived reduction in medication administration:

- 45% of staff felt like they were reducing administration of antiemetics and medications for anxiety and pain to the patients receiving Elequil.
- Another 14% said they may have been administering fewer meds.

Furthermore, Elequil Aromatabs empowered nurses to make their own decisions about patient care based on their experience and observations, as there is no need for a doctor’s order to administer Elequil.

The Surgical Services Value Analysis Committee approved long-term use of Elequil Aromatabs aromatherapy after seeing the results from the Quality Improvement Project. Staff is excited about continuing the use of Elequil to enhance patient care and empower nurses.

About Summa Health

Summa Health is one of the largest integrated healthcare delivery systems in the state of Ohio. Summa Health is nationally recognized



for exceptional patient care and is a model of excellence and an international resource for the study of geriatric medicine and hospice and palliative care. Providing superior, multi-specialty patient care, medical research and continuing medical education, Summa consistently is ranked one of the best healthcare providers in the country.

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
Lavandula angustifolia-Mentha piperita
Lasts up to 8 hours

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



Lavender
Lavandula angustifolia
Lasts up to 8 hours

Lavender-Sandalwood
Lavandula angustifolia-Santalum album
Lasts up to 24 hours

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



Orange-Peppermint
Citrus sinensis-Mentha piperita
Lasts up to 8 hours

Orange-Ginger
Citrus sinensis-Zingiber officinale
Lasts up to 8 hours

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