



Abstract Title: Essential oils: Revolutionizing home and clinical practices

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Introduction

Research is well established that essential oils carry antimicrobial properties and immune enhancing effects. When appropriately extracted, essential oils are a very potent option of botanical medicine. In vitro and in vivo trials have demonstrated the antimicrobial effects of essential oils. In our current health care system, we utilize public health measures to overcome and minimize the influence of microorganisms such as microbial infections such as methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), vancomycin resistant Enterococcus (VRE), and other prominent micro-organisms in the home and clinical environments (i.e. klebsiella, staphylococcus, streptococcus). Often these microorganisms are responsible for illness, sometimes inconvenient, sometimes life threatening.

Objectives

There are two objectives of this project: 1) to explore the literature pertaining to the use of essential oils to decrease micro-organisms and increase the function of the immune systems and 2) to discuss home-based and clinical applications of essential oils to reduce the presence of micro-organisms with the goal of preventing illness and improving health.

Methods

Review of research literature using search engines including Pubmed, Google Scholar, and research acquired from individual organizations, clinics, and hospitals. A preliminary search on Pubmed revealed 3101 articles using the search words “essential oil” AND antimicrobial, 68 articles using “essential oil” and MRSA, and 30 articles using vancomycin and “essential oil”.

Results

Essential oils have been found to decrease the presence of microorganisms, including VRE and biofilms of MRSA alone or in conjunction with antibiotic agents. Practical application of these oils in the home and in clinical settings will be discussed as it pertains to safety of use, sanitization, sterilization, food preparation and self-care / patient-care practices.

Conclusion

Adopting essential oils in a cautious, appropriate and effective manner may reduce the burden of illness and iatrogenic infections through complimentary mechanisms that enhance the current approach in our health care system. Using essential oils may also contribute to safe home practices that may prevent illness through encouraging safe food preparation, sanitization, and self-care habits. Further discussion is welcome to engage stakeholders' and gain perspective on the political and pragmatic aspects of incorporating essential oils into individual homes, and both private and public health care.

Cite this document in APA:

Karthus, C. (2018, September). *Essential oils: Revolutionizing home and clinical practices*. Paper presented at the Healthy Living, Healthy Life: Collaborative Health Conference on Research, Practice and Community Innovations Conference, Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS. Retrieved from <https://ojs.library.dal.ca/HLHL/>

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