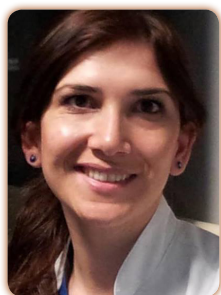


8th International Conference on

NATURAL & ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE

September 25-27, 2017 Dubai, UAE



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Using aromatherapy and reflexology for symptom management in Rheumatoid Arthritis

Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is a multi-systemic, autoimmune and chronic disease and reduces the quality of life by causing pain, fatigue, morning stiffness, difficulties in daily life, deterioration in social relations, and depression. Despite using pharmacological methods for symptom management, there is no complete cure of the disease so far. Patients frequently experience side effects such as liver and kidney toxicity, nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, anemia or systemic infection due to used pharmacological treatment. Patients with RA are applying to complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) because of side effects of the treatment, incomplete treatment, and chronic pain and fatigue. Aromatherapy and reflexology that often preferred and commonly used among patients with RA and health care professionals cause positive effect on the management of patients' symptoms and increasing the quality of life. Aromatherapy is one of the complementary therapy modalities widely used around the world to manage chronic disease symptoms. Aromatherapy is defined as the use of essential oils extracted from plants to produce physiologic or pharmacologic effects through the sense of smell or absorption through the skin. Essential oils have been used for their antiseptic, antibacterial, analgesic, anti-inflammatory, anti-spasmodic, antitoxic, immune stimulatory, and relaxing effects for management of the symptoms of arthritis, and muscle-related pain. Aromatherapy has been used in juvenile RA to relieve pain, fatigue, morning stiffness, and anxiety and increased physical and mental well-being have also been noted. Reflexology is another CAM modality with potential beneficial effects in RA. Reflexology uses specific hand and finger techniques to apply pressure to individual body parts and organs at specific reflex points on the hands and feet to stimulate endocrine glands. Reflexology has been found to decrease neck and arm, and low back and muscle-related pain and to improve muscle strength and tone. This abstract was written to inform relevant professionals about the use of aromatherapy and reflexology in RA.

Biography

Zehra Gok Metin has completed her PhD in 2015 from Hacettepe University and worked for one year at University of Alabama at Birmingham for Post-doctoral studies. She is an instructor at Hacettepe University Faculty of Nursing. She is working on symptom management especially for pain for five years. She has several publications in reputed journals and has been serving as a reviewer for reputed journals.

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