

Abstract

Hospice patients faced with a terminal illness often have difficulty with unrelieved symptoms related to a variety of causes. This DNP project adapted, implemented, and evaluated an aromatherapy pilot program in a 12-bed hospice facility using inhaled and topically applied essential oils. The administration of essential oil was rated effective by 90% of both patients and nurses. Lavender, the most frequently used essential oil was used 44% of the time. Cotton balls for direct inhalation were the preferred delivery method, used for 51% of essential oil administrations. Of the nurses who responded to the survey, 66% indicated that using aromatherapy increased their satisfaction in caring for hospice patients and 100% agreed that aromatherapy was effective and easily used. Evaluations indicated the program was effective, easily implemented with the guidance of a clinical aromatherapist, and readily accepted as an additional tool for nurses to use for hospice patient symptom management and overall comfort. It also provided a pleasing environment for patients, families, and staff in a hospice facility.