

# Effect of Inhaled Essential Oils on Mental Exhaustion and Moderate Burnout: A Small Pilot Study.

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**Abstract Objectives:** The objective of this pilot study was to determine the effectiveness of a mixture of essential oils (peppermint, basil, and helichrysum) on mental exhaustion, or moderate burnout (ME/MB) using a personal inhaler. **Design:** This was a randomized, controlled, double-blind pilot study. Data were collected 3 times a day for 3 weeks (Monday-Friday). The first week was baseline for both groups, the second week was intervention (aromatherapy or placebo), and the third week was washout. **Settings/location:** Participants used a personal inhaler at home or at work. **Subjects:** The subjects comprised a convenience sample of 13 women and 1 man who each had self-assessed ME/MB. **Interventions:** Participants were randomized to receive a personal inhaler containing either a mixture of essential oils or rose water (as used in Indian cooking). **Outcome measures:** The outcome measures were a 0-10 scale with 10=worst feeling of burnout, 0=no feeling of burnout. There was a qualitative questionnaire rating aroma and a questionnaire listing perceived stressors. **Results:** While both groups had a reduction in perception of ME/MB, the aromatherapy group had a much greater reduction. **Conclusions:** The results suggest that inhaling essential oils may reduce the perceived level of mental fatigue/burnout. Further research is warranted.

J Altern Complement Med. 2012 Nov 9. Varney E, Buckle J. 1 Private Practice , Andover, MA.

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