

Summary and analysis of Claire Gonnin's thesis by Professor Robert Anton

Defended on 2 April 2012 at the University of Burgundy (Dijon Faculty of Pharmacy) to earn her national Doctor of Pharmacy qualification and entitled:

**"Clinical Use of Essential Oils:
Examples and Discussion of Hospital Practices
in Bade-Würtemberg (Germany)".**

This important dissertation presents an overview but also significant detail on the use of essential oils in 68 hospitals and clinics in more than thirty towns in Würtemberg (western Germany) following a large-scale survey in the field and analysis of the data collected. A complete assessment was drawn up. In addition, the clinical and scientific literature quoted is particularly insightful.

In some cases, essential oils are used in a centralised manner, i.e. in all the departments of the same hospital, with a structured approach planned in advance then applied after receiving advance medical approval and according to well defined standard protocols. In some cases, specialised nursing staff can create a personalised prescription depending on the particular profile of each patient. It is essential for carers to receive continuous training, so, of course, this is provided. Some training courses offered by Institutes, Academies, laboratories, etc., can even be long term.

The various methodologies for use are described. These essential oils are not used for strictly aromatherapeutic purposes (therapeutic care only). Without exception, they are exclusively for external use in the form of magistral preparations (never full strength but always diluted and used as a blend - with a maximum of 6 - in a vegetable oil). In most cases they are used for massages, stroking, bathing, compresses and bandages.

However, they can also be diffused into the air for deodorisation or disinfection (to prevent pulmonary disease, for example) or to offer relaxation. In total, almost fifty oils are among those used the most. Of those, lavender

ranks highly. The quality of these oils, and therefore their safe use, is thoroughly checked using the existing official monographs.

Certain hospitals use these aromatic treatments with the goal of improving patients' quality of life: psychosomatic problems (mood swings, fewer sleep problems, headaches, depression factors, dizzy spells, lower anxiety, agitation, improved appetite, stimulation in cases of fatigue, etc.). Symptomatology such as those relating to gastro-intestinal, urinary, dermatological (bedsores, chronic wounds, fungal infections), rheumatic (back aches, etc.), and pneumological (respiratory problems, colds, coughs, etc.) problems are also treated with aromatic blends. In other cases, essential oils play an important role in prevention (various conditions) but also for palliative care, especially at the end of life (support, pain, etc.), when these oils are often beneficial.

Other specialised hospital departments use them frequently: maternity wards (antenatal and postnatal, newborn care in very specific cases, with restrictions due to the vulnerability of young children), oncology (after radiotherapy, for example), gynaecology (urinary infections), pneumology, orthopaedic physiotherapy, traumatology, etc.

Therefore, this study contributes in a precise and constructive manner to the knowledge and understanding of the many hospital uses of essential oils in an area of Germany, a country which in general is open to natural products and even to anthroposophic medicine. All these clinical applications can be a source of useful and interesting experimentation for the future.