

Is Lavender an Anxiolytic Drug? A Systematic Review of Randomised Clinical Trials

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Abstract

Background: Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*) is often recommended for stress/anxiety relief and believed to possess anxiolytic effects.

Aim: To critically evaluate the efficacy/effectiveness of lavender for the reduction of stress/anxiety.

Methods: Seven electronic databases were searched to identify all relevant studies. All methods of lavender administration were included. Data extraction and the assessment of the methodological quality of all included trials were conducted by two independent reviewers.

Results: Fifteen RCTs met the inclusion criteria. Two trials scored 4 points on the 5-point Jadad scale, the remaining 13 scored two or less. Results from seven trials appeared to favour lavender over controls for at least one relevant outcome.

Conclusion: Methodological issues limit the extent to which any conclusions can be drawn regarding the efficacy/effectiveness of lavender. The best evidence suggests that oral lavender supplements may have some therapeutic effects. However, further independent replications are needed before firm conclusions can be drawn.

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