The effects of aromatherapy on heart rate recovery following exercise.

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Introduction:
Aromatherapy has been shown to have an effect on psychological aspects such as mood, perception and anxiety. Peppermint is reported to decrease levels of perceived effort and fatigue during exercise (Raudenbush 2000). As of yet there is no evidence that aromatherapy affects physiological conditions such as heart rate and blood pressure. Lavender oil has been tried in regards to recovery, yielding no significance results (Romine et al. 1999). The purpose of this study was to determine if peppermint oil used in aromatherapy had an impact on heart rate and blood pressure post exercise during recovery.

Methods:
The experiment was a repeated measures cross over protocol with data analyzed by inter-subject comparison using repeated measures Anova. Participants ran a 15 min modified bruce protocol with increasing incremental speed and incline to elevate heart rate with and without the presence of peppermint. Following the protocol the scent was removed and heart rate and blood pressure were recorded immediately after, five min after, and ten minutes after the exercise.

Results:
Difference in Map (mean arterial pressure) or heart rate were not significantly different demonstrating that peppermint had no effect on heart rate or blood pressure.

Discussion:
Under current conditions peppermint has no effect on heart rate recovery. The experiment did not test effects of maximum heart rate on exercise and scent. If maximum heart rate were achieved there would be more time to achieve an affect and with a harder workload there could be more reliance on the scent as a means to relax psychological and thereby physiological conditions. Experiment should be repeated with a more strenuous protocol to achieve maximum heart rate.

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Resources: