



Aromatherapy and Chinese Herbal Medicine

The word "aromatherapy" is unknown in China - yet Chinese Traditional Medicine or TCM, has used its principles for centuries.

Aromatherapy, the practice of using volatile plant oils to promote psychological and physical well-being is common around the world, and while TCM may not actually use the word, these volatile oils are an important part of many balms, liniments, plasters, and other TCM treatments.

Chinese herbal medicine is used to successfully treat different diseases and disharmonies based on the diagnosis and theory of how a disease relates to one's "Qi" which can be roughly translated as "life force" or "energy."

This theory looks at Yin and Yang, manifested as concepts of cold and hot (redness or swelling, for example, would be considered "hot"); deficiency and excess; or damp and dry. The herbs' actions are considered to have an "ascending" or "descending" effect on an organ, in other words, some invigorate while others sedate. Each has an effect on a different part of the body.

Lavender has many medicinal properties, but one of the most well known is its calming and relaxing effect.

In aromatherapy lavender is used as a natural remedy for various ailments including insomnia and stress. It is also used to calm the spirit, provide relaxation and help balance the emotional system.

According to the TCM theories, Qi moves the blood, and therefore stagnant Qi results from nervous tension, therefore regulating the Qi, will result in relaxation.

That's where lavender essential oil comes in - it can

smooth and regulate the flow of Qi, circulate the heart Qi, calm the spirit, and relieve irritability and anxiety, help with restlessness, overcome insomnia and help with sleep loss.

Aromatherapy's holistic approach towards the body is well known, and the wisdom of Chinese Herbal Medicine and using its theories when considering the use of essential oils can increase our understanding and enhance the benefits the oils provide.

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