



Histoire d'Aroma

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AT SHONAN HOSPITAL IN FUJISAWA, JAPAN, AROMATHERAPY HELPS GERIATRIC PATIENTS TO RELAX

Dr Reiko Sato is a pharmacist and a true pioneer of clinical aromatherapy in Japan; she has been working for over twenty years to integrate it into hospital care. Through the implementation of rigorous and safe protocols, she has demonstrated that aromatherapy can improve patients' comfort and quality of life.

In recognition of her commitment and her exemplary approach to aromatherapy in a hospital setting, Dr Reiko Sato has been awarded the 2025 René Maurice Gattefossé International Prize.

Shonan Hospital is a long-term care facility with two internal medicine departments and a total of 104 beds. Its patient population is mainly elderly, characterised by a high prevalence of chronic and multiple conditions requiring comprehensive and adapted care.

Since 2002, Reiko Sato has developed clinical aromatherapy and implemented internal procedures that enable nurses, doctors, physiotherapists and other healthcare staff to practise aromatherapy safely and effectively as part of their patients' daily care.

These are now being used to respond to common health issues in elderly patients or those with serious medical conditions, in particular:

- Treatment of dry skin and itching, particularly in elderly patients or those with cancer
- Treatment of odour-related problems, helping to improve patients' comfort and dignity
- Reduction of anxiety, agitation and sleep disturbances
- Relief from nausea, breathing difficulties and dry mouth



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"All the essential oils we use are listed in the Japanese Pharmacopoeia. We use lavender essential oil very often. We prepare mixtures containing peppermint, sweet orange or eucalyptus globulus to relieve breathing difficulties in patients in the terminal phase. For oral care, we prepare a solution made from eucalyptus and bicarbonate of soda."

Essential oils are also incorporated into end-of-life care and post-mortem procedures; 'angel care' – a field that is still relatively underdeveloped internationally – exemplifies a holistic and respectful approach to the patient at every stage of their journey.

Through her commitment, Reiko Sato demonstrates that aromatherapy is a valuable complementary resource to conventional treatments, helping to improve patients' comfort whilst supporting healthcare teams in adopting a more holistic and humanistic approach to care, and generating cost savings for the hospital through the judicious use of treatments.

Would you like to find out more? Have a look at the article.

Staff at Shonan Hospital share their experience:

"Essential oils are managed in the same way as pharmaceutical products, in accordance with strict protocols governing their sourcing, use and reporting."

"Aromatherapy generates savings for the hospital through the judicious use of treatments."



Link to the video