



SELECTION OF BACH FLOWERS FOR IMPROVING SLEEP QUALITY
SELEÇÃO DE FLORAIS DE BACH PARA MELHORA DA QUALIDADE DO SONO
SELECCIÓN DE FLORES DE BACH PARA MEJORÍA DE LA CALIDAD DEL SUEÑO

Sheila Katia Cozin Nosow¹, Maria Filomena Ceolim²

ABSTRACT

Objective: to promote a reflection on the proposal for selection of five Bach flower useful for the improvement of sleep quality. **Method:** a descriptive study, reflective theoretical type, from the PubMed search tool, articles published in MEDLINE database, and books with original data on Bach flowers. **Results:** some Bach Flowers refer to mental/emotional issues related to poor sleep quality, referring to thoughts and excessive worries, night terror, fatigue and uncontrollable spread of consciousness; there are also indications to use over a floral simultaneously in achieving greater efficacy. **Conclusion:** improved sleep quality should be obtained when its mechanism is achieved comprehensively, physically, psychologically and emotionally, the flowers are a good choice therapy to achieve it, especially when used in synergy; in this case using together Aspen, Clematis, Hornbeam, Chestnut Red and White Chestnut are a chance to sleep. **Descriptors:** Flower Essences; Sleep; Complementary Therapies.

RESUMO

Objetivo: promover a reflexão sobre uma proposta de seleção de cinco florais de Bach úteis para a melhora da qualidade do sono. **Método:** estudo descritivo, tipo teórico reflexivo, a partir da ferramenta de busca PubMed, de artigos publicados na base de dados MEDLINE, além de livros com dados originais sobre os florais de Bach. **Resultados:** alguns Florais de Bach referem-se às questões mentais/emocionais relacionadas à má qualidade do sono, remetendo-se a pensamentos e preocupações excessivos, terror noturno, estafa e dispersão incontrolável da consciência; existindo ainda indicações para o uso de mais de um floral simultaneamente na obtenção de maior eficácia. **Conclusão:** a melhora da qualidade do sono deve ser obtida quando seu mecanismo é atingido de forma abrangente, física, psíquica e emocionalmente, sendo os florais uma boa escolha terapêutica para atingir este mérito, principalmente quando utilizado em sinergia; no caso, Aspen, Clematis, Hornbeam, Red Chestnut e White Chestnut são juntos uma possibilidade ao sono. **Descritores:** Essências Florais; Sono; Terapias Complementares.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: promover la reflexión sobre una propuesta de selección de cinco flores de Bach útiles para la mejoría de la calidad del sueño. **Método:** estudio descriptivo, tipo teórico reflexivo, a partir de la herramienta de búsqueda PubMed, de artículos publicados en la base de datos MEDLINE, además de libros con datos originales sobre las flores de Bach. **Resultados:** algunas Flores de Bach se refieren a los problemas mentales/emocionales relacionadas a la mala calidad del sueño, remitiéndose a pensamientos y preocupaciones excesivos, terror nocturno, fatiga y dispersión incontrolable de la conciencia; existiendo todavía indicaciones para el uso de más de una flor simultáneamente en la obtención de mayor eficacia. **Conclusión:** la mejoría de la calidad del sueño debe ser obtenida cuando su mecanismo es alcanzado de forma general, física, psíquica y emocionalmente, siendo las flores una buena elección terapéutica para alcanzar ese objetivo, principalmente cuando utilizado en sinergia; en el caso de Aspen, Clematis, Hornbeam, Red Chestnut y White Chestnut son juntos una posibilidad al sueño. **Descriptor:** Esencias Florales; Sueño; Terapias Complementarias.

¹Nurse, Ph.D. student, Post-Graduation in Nursing, Nursing School, State University of Campinas/UNICAMP. Campinas (SP), Brazil. E-mail: sheilakatia@hotmail.com; ²Nurse, Associate Professor, Graduation/Post-Graduation in Nursing, Nursing School, State University of Campinas/UNICAMP. Campinas (SP), Brazil. E-mail: fceolim@unicamp.br

INTRODUCTION

Recognized and recommended since 1974 as Complementary Therapy by the World Health Organization and established its indication as specialty and/or qualification of nursing professionals from the regulation of COFEN Resolution 197 of 1997, Bach Flower accomplish the arduous search for its creator, Dr. Edward Bach (1886-1936), medical doctor and homeopath born in Wales.¹

Troubled with traditional medicine that he disbelieved, whose proposed treatments in its aggressive majority turned only to eradicate the symptoms of diseases; he dedicated to developing a simpler and more natural therapeutic method that aims at healing the causes and not the symptoms that treat the individual and not the disease.¹

By 1917, after suffering from bleeding and great pain triggered by cancer installed in his body, he realized that the experience of illness directs individuals understand the need for a definite purpose in life;² also he understood that individuals are in several groups of “types”, each of these groups reacted to the peculiar disease,³ that is, mental attitude, personality, and attitudes of the people, having a strong influence on the health and recovery of diseases.

Therefore, when seeking for new ways of treating diseases, he realized there is a real link between emotions, somatization, and infirmities way by which one could also establish a cure¹. In this context, Dr. Bach found that certain flowers have a vibration pattern corresponding to the same pattern in the human psyche or soul and, surprisingly, the botanical characteristics of the flower (color, shape, size, habitat, growth patterns) were comparable to features and gestures of the human personality.⁴ Through this understanding of the relationship between human emotions and energy of flowers, he built what he called a “new system of healing,” where those who are not doctors or nurses could care for their fellow exercising a simple practice, through the use of flower essences.¹

After testing several species of plants and observing how his behavior and emotions were established as disease-causing, he described the 38 flower essences, dividing them into seven basic branched emotions in the human psyche, which would be the seven performance groups of flowers.^{1,2,5} They were grouped as follows:⁴

- For those who are afraid: essences of flowers awaken encouragement to perform

the simplest actions of daily life and face those more challenging (Rock Rose, Mimulus, Cherry Plum, Aspen, Red Chestnut);

- For those who suffer from indecision, flower essences that lead to assertiveness, clarity of purpose, strength, hope, optimism and faith (Cerato, Scleranthus, Gentian, Wild Oat, Gorse, Hornbeam);
- For lack of interest in current circumstances: essences of flowers that evoke the presence awake and focused on the present moment, encouraged by the joy (Clematis, Honeysuckle, Wild Rose, Olive, White Chestnut, Chestnut Bud, Mustard);
- For solitude, inner reserve, isolation: essences of flowers to teach to share their gifts, shaping personal rhythms to foster relationships (Water Violet, Impatiens, Heather);
- For those who have excessive sensitivity to influences and opinions: flower essences that help in transitions, encouraging transparency and allowing free follow-limiting influences (Agrimony, Centaury, Walnut, Holly);
- To the dismay and despair, feelings of deficiency and limitation: flower essences that help us to establish links through deep courage of acceptance of others and ourselves (Larch, Pine, Elm, Sweet Chestnut, Star of Bethlehem, Willo, Oak, Crab Apple);
- For excessive concern for the welfare of others, flower essences that help us to love with compassion, tolerance flowing with the “middle way” (Chicory, Vervain, Vine, Beech, Rock Water).

Thus, flower essences encourage change rather than forcing them arranging them as instruments for maintaining the quality of life, since they maintain the connection between the body, mind, and soul, putting their conflicts evident to us; thus, solving them before they consolidate as an unpleasant situation or illness.

The search for Dr. Bach remedies inspired other physicians and researchers to test their effects. In a study with mice, the researchers used specific pharmacological models associated with certain flowers of Dr. Bach’s floral repertoire to assess their action in the central nervous system. This study aimed to investigate the influence of floral Gorse for depression, Clematis for schizophrenia and joint management of White Chestnut, Vervain and Agrimony for insomnia. Tests with Clematis were not statistically significant; since the assessment of the reduction of

immobility time caused by Gorse was positive, as well as the efficiency of the whole White Chestnut, Vervain and agrimony to reduce latency and increase total sleep time.⁶

Another study on mice, conducted at the University of Medical Sciences of Villa Clara, in Cuba, separated five groups of six subjects each to verify that the flower essences have an impact (positive or negative) in acute inflammatory responses. Each group received a different agent: the first group received floral Beech, another Rescue Remedy, the third received placebo, the fourth got floral Vervain and the fifth got Control (Diphenhydramine). Despite the limitations of the study, it can be seen that the flower and Vervain Beech had a significant effect greater than placebo in controlling inflammation.⁷

In a descriptive linear and prospective study, 50 patients who had the menopausal symptoms participated in the floral therapy consultation to evaluate their effect in the treatment of symptoms. The patients had a questionnaire applied and were prescribed floral treatments that were evaluated again at the end, to conclude whether there was progress or improvement of symptoms. Psychological symptoms were found as depression, anxiety, and nervousness. Furthermore, neuro-vegetative symptoms, which are the most upset patients had a higher percentage improvement in other symptoms. Except for dry skin, which only achieved a 50% improvement, all other symptoms showed a positive response to floral therapy.⁸

Another randomized experimental study with 18 rats to evaluate the effect of the compound of floral Bach Rescue Remedy in the control of risk factors for cardiovascular disease, using the test of three study groups (a control that only used water, a trial that used water and floral in equal proportions and a third group that was used floral, all three with the same amount of liquid), it was observed that the group that received floral only has gained significantly less weight than the control group which used only water and glucose levels lower than the two other groups. The groups using floral, pure or with water, had significantly higher HDL-cholesterol and triglycerides lower than the control group. There is evidence, for this study, that the compound floral Rescue Remedy can have some biological effects and may serve as a strategy to reduce risk factors for cardiovascular disease in rats.⁹

There are many mental and psychological issues amenable to treatment or amelioration with floral, involving even physical illness. In

this health degradation universe, there are the changes of sleep. It is already known the role of sleep in the regulation of emotional processes and physiological reactivity. Keep a sleep quality is necessary for tissue repair, in addition to fundamental relationship with memory consolidation, binocular vision, thermoregulation, energy conservation and restoration, as well as Restoration of brain energy metabolism and therefore essential maintenance quality for the individual to have a good healthy life.¹⁰⁻¹ One night only sleeps deprivation was associated with increased reaction of the tonsils to negative visual stimuli, increased pupillary reaction to negative emotional information and more negative judgment of neutral images.¹²

There are also studies that cited sleep deprivation as a decelerator of the healing process, and chronically responsible for decreased immune function, decreased healing and increased energy expenditure and cause neurological and behavioral changes, such as memory loss and communication skills, decreased verbal fluency and irritability, delusions, hallucinations, incoordination and blurred vision.¹³

Knowing the importance of maintaining a good quality sleep, investigations for efficient and affordable interventions improved sleep are necessary, as is the case of Complementary Therapies, seeking to consolidate, always tried to establish less aggressive treatments with fewer effects side and lower-cost and more accessible to patients. It is important to do investigations and discussions of the applicability of these therapies, including Bach flower remedies, which can be useful in improving the quality of sleep, knowing that some of them provide for the intervention in emotional aspects of this change.

OBJECTIVE

- To promote reflection on the proposal for selection of five Bach flower remedies useful for the improvement of sleep quality.

METHOD

Descriptive study, reflective theory that proposes to analyze reflectively a proposal of five Bach flowers remedies that may be useful in improving the quality of sleep, regardless of amendment during sleep, taking as a basis articles published in MEDLINE base, from PubMed search tool, as well as books with original data on Bach flower remedies.

RESULTS

Flower essences have a harmonic electromagnetic formation of its particles, characteristic of plants, which on contact with the disharmonious electromagnetic field they can harmonize it, acting through subtle waves of energy, balancing the energy flows from these areas that they are designated.^{14,15}

This balance is obtained by vibrational resonance phenomenon, probably acting on the limbic system or directly on the hypothalamus, causing the increase of power frequency, when slow may cause changes in the physical system⁴ - as with the blood vessel when the blood runs through them slowly, allowing the formation of clots.

The change prompted by floral in the electromagnetic frequency present in a specific part of the brain related to emotions and memory of daily experiences, raises them to the point that they become more fluid (moreover, there may be a parallel with the speed of synapses) making thinking and consciousness lighter, easier to individual perception, acceptance, and modifying psycho-emotional conditions, which may also produce correct or physiological changes, such as anxiety, when treated improves heart rate.

Some Bach Flowers refer to mental and emotional problems that are related to poor sleep quality by organic /physiological and/or energy pursuant. In the first case, there are the floral patterns of excess thoughts, worries, fear, and exhaustion, and in the second condition, there are floral patterns related to energy inharmonious, as the lack of anchoring the mind. The following is the description of the five Bach flowers selected for this discussion because they are the closest to the circumstances relating to standard changes of sleep.¹

◆ Aspen (*Populus tremula*)

One of the nineteen floral ranked by Bach as “complementary”, group of flowers directed to degrading conditions established for the individual long enough to establish the feeling of resignation and hopelessness to modify it, disjointed personality and innate temperament. It is indicated for vague and unexplained fears, for individuals who are affected by an irrational fear, including nighttime fears (fear of something that may happen in the dark, fear of the occurrence of some dreams).^{1,4}

Bach described the leaves of this plants as green on one side and silver on its back, trembling even in light winds and referred this

feature to fear behind the “I,” which pursues the individual all the time.^{2,5}

This floral would be recommended to calm and harmonize the sharp sensory capabilities, to provide that the mind receives and consciously process more external ethereal information and own thoughts, allowing the discrimination between both information and understanding, leaving the fear of what was previously unknown to the courage to what is now understood,^{1,3} indicated to suffering from somnambulism, nocturnal panic and frequent nightmares.¹⁶

◆ Clematis (*Clematis vitalba*)

The floral group designated by Bach as one of “the twelve healers”, which are used to improve innate aspects to the individual as his personality and more frequent temper, establishing a healthier way of reacting to situations. It is indicated for individuals who keeps thinking of something that is not in the present or the immediate situation, indicating the absence of consciousness.^{1,2,4}

They are also used to the difficulty of concentration and memory and daytime drowsiness and may cause when taken the experience of realistic and vivid dreams, by altering the memory.^{1,3,16}

As botanical characteristic, Bach cites especially the quality of dispersing light and flowing seeds that float easily through the air.³

◆ Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*)

Another floral of “complementary” group, indicated for mental tiredness, lack of mental courage and irritation to perform daily activities, fatigue, everyday boredom,⁴ may also be used for difficulty initiating sleep and thyroid changes.¹⁶

Its branches were formerly known for being used to make magic wands, being able to make wishes.² Bach indicates the quality of awakening the interest and recover energy, like magic, reorienting the individual’s will for their work and habits, allowing the necessary provision to change or resume routine.³

◆ Red Chestnut (*Aesculus carnea*)

Another “complementary” floral group indicated for individuals who are concerned overly with the welfare of others by linking their mind, even at night, consciously and unconsciously with others, keeping the mind in a state of alert.^{1,4}

It is also indicated for obsessive and repetitive thoughts and negative forebodings, causing agonizing pain, which interferes from

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performing simple daily tasks even in sleep maintenance.^{2,3,16}

Its buds appear navels and flowers are arranged and red, highlighting the green of the leaves, relating to the security provided by its organization and the need to look at yourself before you expose lush and ready to the world.³

◆ White Chestnut (Aesculus hippocastanum)

Indicated for situations of excessive thoughts or cyclic thoughts, of which the individual cannot stop and relax and insomnia related to difficulty initiating and maintaining sleep by excess of thoughts, it is another of the nineteen "Complementary" floral.^{1,4}

Bach described his smooth stem when suffering cracks getting blackened and matted as if the plant does not bear the excess sap elaborated (phloem) produced in the leaves after all metabolic processes of the plant. Its white flowers indicate the desired peace for troubled mind.³

This floral is still useful to treat bruxism, frontal headache, depression, obsessional neurosis, lack of memory.¹⁶

It was one of the few tested alone with floral scientific nature for the mental issue for which Bach designated it. Cuban researchers, from the School of Psychology, in 2012, tested the floral White Chestnut in a group of 70 adults divided between men and women, aged 20 to 60, divided into two double-blind groups, aiming to understand if this floral is effective in the control and reduction of unwanted thoughts, thoughts they understood as images that penetrate the mind involuntarily, producing malaise, and difficult to control. Again, although some variables related to individual characteristics of the human being, as a coping ability and maturity, may have had some influence in the study, the White Chestnut was effective, compared to placebo, in reducing these thoughts unwanted.¹⁷

In addition to simply select the Bach flower remedies that would be more suited to sleep issues, there is still of being discussed for their use, isolated, indicating one of them only for the most frequent question among all the five described floral would apply, or the best option would be to use them simultaneously in synergy, given together, at least initially, for those who do not enjoy a sleep quality.

The results of an experiment that observed with combined use of Kava-Kava and Passiflora incarnata, the extension phase of sleep, previously induced in mice, indicates

that the combination of alternative drugs may be more effective than their separate uses.¹⁸

Another systematic review study on medicinal plants for insomnia showed the operation of each plant tested, demonstrating that the concomitant use of more than one plant can increase the efficiency of treatment, since each would have specific function of sleep, however limited, but could be complementary to each other, as is the case of Kava and Valerian. First, it is a well-established hypnotic drug with a rapid onset of effect, duration of adequate action and minimum after-effects in the morning, but severe hepatotoxicity reports, on the other hand, the effects of valerian have profound beneficial effects on the architecture of sleep (deep sleep increases). However, its effect was slowly (2-3 weeks after the beginning of use) being unsuitable for short-term use.¹⁹

For energy interventions, such as floral, there is also a concern to obtain the highest possible efficiency on a situation or condition which, in the case of human beings, are quite a complex form of established, involving most of the time more than a feeling.

Studies with floral also show significant responses to some conditions when used synergies, as was achieved with the joint management experience White Chestnut, Vervain and Agrimony for insomnia, reduced latency and increased total sleep time,⁶ or the test Rescue Remedy in the control of risk factors for cardiovascular disease, unique floral composed by Bach in particular description of treatment with floral.⁹

Sleep also to other physiological mechanisms is given as an asset, multiple and complex processes, involving behavior of various systems, and playing a key role in maintaining emotional well-being, and, chronically disturbed, the opposite is also true, and may amplify the emotional conditions of the disruptive effect of sleep.¹²

CONCLUSION

The improvement of sleep quality tends to be obtained when its mechanism is achieved comprehensively, with a good start, duration and latency and a peaceful awakening beyond the resolution of emotional problems linked to it. To achieve this goal, a comprehensive treatment also is necessary, which can change over a part of this complex mechanism, without causing further collateral damage and effects.

Bach flower remedies can be a good choice of complementary treatment to improve the quality of sleep, especially when used

synergistically with simultaneous essences with different aspects, but complementary, related to sleep, such as Aspen, Clematis, Hornbeam, Red Chestnut and White Chestnut, indicated, respectively, for night terrors, daytime sleepiness, difficulty falling asleep by mental fatigue, excessive worry and excessive thoughts, and other indications.

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Nosow SKC, Ceolim MF.

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Corresponding Address

Sheila Katia Cozin Nosow

Caixa Postal 582

ACF Aquarela

CEP 13330-972 – Indaiatuba (SP), Brasil