



Research and Evidence-Based Practice Unit.

The demand for proof of effectiveness and evidence of therapeutic value in Complementary Therapies has increased over the last decade since the House of Lords Report in 1999. The report made a series of recommendations around evidence to support claims in Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) practice. Integral to developing good standards of education and training was the importance of providing sound evidence and a research base. They emphasised the need for pump priming of research funding, more robust structures for research from Universities, for CAM companies to invest in research and for therapies to work along side evidence-based medicine.

The IFPA seeks to provide the Aromatherapy student with the necessary investigative skills and the awareness of relevant research activities to support decision-making in clinical practice. In order to monitor and examine effectiveness, the student Aromatherapist requires a level of skill in the auditing of standards and outcomes of treatment plans.

Aims of the research unit

The research unit aims to provide the learning opportunities around differing approaches to research, evidence-based practice and audit processes. It will:

- Introduce the students to research methodology in order to understand and participate in research activities
- Provide an overview of various research designs with relevant examples
- Facilitate an understanding of reliability, validity and ethics at differing stages of the research process.
- Explore the use of audit as a tool for monitoring and assessing treatment outcomes and procedures, using standard setting as a guide
- To develop an appreciation of published research with a critical eye for its relevance to client care.

Outline content of the unit

The relevance of evidence-based practice in the field of CAM and Aromatherapy

Definitions of research and Audit

The political and ethics issues in research

The different approaches to research

Explore the research process

Explore reliability, validity and ethics in research

Choosing and blending different approaches for clinical practice.

Comparing methods and terminology to use in practice.

How to literature search for papers and evidence.

How published research can inform practice.

Practising reading, reflecting and reviewing relevant literature.

Assessment Strategy

The unit will be formatively and summatively assessed. Formative assessment will be as negotiated with the course tutor.

Summative assessment:

- Research evidence will be required within the written examination to support the decisions on client care.
- Evidence required in the practical examination to justify treatment plans based on client consultations.

Learning Methods

The unit may be delivered in the following ways:

- Classroom lectures
- Distance learning
- Directed/Self directed learning.