

## Overview

Increased aromatic research is crucial to evidence-informed practice, however, quantity does not always translate into quality. In many countries there is limited formal education and verification of expertise in aromatic research. Suboptimal reporting can be traced to the reality that many aromatic practitioners are not trained as researchers. Conversely, healthcare researchers, steeped in scientific methods, are often not trained in aromatic inquiry, and they may not engage (or be able to identify) experts in the field of aromatics to inform their study protocols.

Many would agree that research into modalities such as aromatherapy requires consideration of factors not present in pharmaceutical drug trials. In drug trials, it is possible to a great extent to isolate the impact of a single chemical and compare effects to comparable treatments and placebo. Those wishing to research aromatherapy are challenged in many ways, not least of which is fully considering the sense of smell, which has only within the past 20 years become more fully understood (Bowles, 2020; Herz, 2009, 2016). For therapies involving complex multimodal and multicomponent interventions, such as aromatherapy, research criteria are not clearly defined (Ijaz et al., 2019).

**The onus for improving aromatherapy research reporting rests on the shoulders of aromatherapists with research training and the related community of scientists and researchers with an interest in aromatherapy and aromatic research.**

Our task force is a registered non-profit organization, focused on improving the quality of aromatic research and reporting. From the beginning the ARQAT kept the authors and readers of aromatic research in mind, desiring to help them evaluate the quality of studies. The TREATS quality appraisal checklist is our first creation. We have evaluated the robustness of TREATS and look forward to sharing with the public.

Our next step will be to conduct a Delphi process to elicit expert consensus on items needed for an aromatic research reporting guideline. Other complementary therapies have similar guidelines for the conduct of their research, and such criteria would be equally as relevant to the field of aromatherapy.

The field of integrative health science requires quality research and reporting to enable practitioners to utilize results in evidence-informed care. Watch for updates on our website [www.arqat.org](http://www.arqat.org) and LinkedIn [LinkedIn-ARQAT](#).

To learn more, please refer to the White Paper report “A Quest for Quality Reporting in Aromatic Research”, ARQAT 2022.

### References

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