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Caregiver Thought Leader Interview: Ronald D. Hunt, M.D. • June 22, 2016

EDITOR'S PEN

Gary Barg, Editor-in-Chief

Caregiver Thought Leader Interview: Ronald D. Hunt, M.D.

Chief Executive Officer of **BALANCED HEALTH** plus

Gary Barg: Well, let's start at the beginning. What is Aromaid?

Aromaid is a patented hands-free nasal clip delivery system for essential oils, which is unique to anything else on the market. As an anesthesiologist, I regularly have patients who experience post-surgery nausea and for some, traditional anti-nausea medications are either unsuitable or ineffective. In an effort to find an alternative to those traditional medications, I found aromatherapy and after a scientific hospital study that my research team performed as well as extensive research I saw first-hand how essential oils can help with nausea.

However, essential oils alone were not the solution, they too presented a problem - how to administer them. A typically aromatherapy session requires the use of either a diffuser, which subjects the entire room to the scent and effects of the aromatherapy and isn't practical for a hospital setting, or some applicator such as a cotton ball, gauze pad, or personal inhaler, all of which have to be held to the nose and are easily dropped or misplaced. They don't stay with you, so that's where we developed the little clip to keep the oils self-contained.

Additionally, through the process of putting the essential oils in the clip we figured out how to slow down the movement of the oils molecules. This allows the effects of the oils in the clip to last longer. If you just use the clip periodically and you put it back in the bag and reseal it, you can get multiple uses out of a single clip and you can control when and how often you use it.

Gary Barg: And as an anesthesiologist, I am sure you have dealt with nauseous patients often. What steps did you take in thinking about essential oils as a solution?

Dr. Hunt: The first thing we did was to test the essential oils to see if they worked. I looked for the best people that are out there and my search led me to Jane Buckle, who's a world-renowned aromatherapist. I said to her and Kathy Duffy, her lead teacher and counterpart in the USA, "You put together the best blend of oils for nausea, let me test it and see if it really works." They put together the oils for me and we conducted a true clinical trial with a hospital.

Our successful results were published in a big, international peer review journal, *Anesthesia and Analgesia*.

Gary Barg: I think your idea for the clip is fascinating. How did that come about?

Dr. Hunt: Basically, we tried to figure out something that would attach to the patient, so they're not having to hold it. By trial and tribulation we found just the right type of plastics to use. The arm on the clip is flexible enough that you can squeeze it to make it fit in the nose tighter or looser, depending on your nose size. We infused the oils with the wax in the factory, loaded the mixture of oils and wax in the clips and put the little cap on it. Then, we put it inside the specially-designed bag that it comes in. That bag is developed in such a way that it gives it a two-year shelf life. You don't have to refrigerate it, it's just loaded and ready to go.

Gary Barg: As a caregiver, tell me how Soothe works to support our loved ones living with cancer.

Dr. Hunt: We've used it on friends and family members undergoing chemotherapy for different cancers. Mostly melanoma, testicular cancer, some lymphomas. They were using it to help offset the nausea that's associated with chemotherapy. It's worked on all those patients, just as well as it did with the post-operative study for nausea. It works in about five minutes. The only thing we've seen with chemotherapy patients is that the sense of smell, in particular, is heightened quite a bit. I don't know if you've come across that or not but if you talk to patients undergoing chemotherapy, they can tell you if there's a nurse down at the end of the hall that's wearing perfume. They can tell you that

she has on perfume, so their sense of smell is very heightened.

Gary Barg: One of the things that makes the most sense for any caregiver is to try to figure a way to mitigate stress and in fact, there was a Stanford University study that came out about 15 years ago that said that 40 percent of caregivers with loved ones with Alzheimer's will die before their loved ones do, basically due to the effects of stress. So, anything you do to help us with stress saves lives.

Dr. Hunt: Well, that makes sense. I'm a firm believer that we all carry a genetic carrier for cancer and I think that if you're under chronic stress for a prolonged period of time, that that turns on those cancer genes somehow. We're just not smart enough to figure out that one yet. We do have another product called Calm which was designed to help with better sleep as well as stress and anxiety. Calm could be used not only with the patient but also with the caregiver to help them cope with some of their stresses.

Gary Barg: I get that. With your medical background, you've probably seen this more times than you care to even think about.

Dr. Hunt: When you talk to someone with cancer, ask them what happened in their lives a year to two years previous. And almost everybody I've talked to can give you some major stress that happened. They either lost their job, they got a divorce, lost a very close parent or a child. There's some major stress that they never could get over and I'm convinced that has something to do with your immune system and it makes you vulnerable to turning on the cancer genes or prevents your body from fighting cancer cells. But that's another discussion!

Gary Barg: How do we get Aromaid?

Dr. Hunt: You can go to our website, balancedhealthplus.com and order it there. In fact, if you use the code "caregiver", we will ship it for free. A box of two clips is \$9.95, and one clip, if worn continuously, can last three days at least, sometimes even longer.

Gary Barg: What would the one most important piece of advice be that you would like to offer family caregivers?

Dr. Hunt: Just to be there. Holding their hand, let the person you care for, know you're there for them and you don't even have to say anything. I don't think that there's any great words of wisdom or any great advice anybody can give other than just, do your best to be there, and spend as much time as you can with them.

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