

## Effect of Bach Flower Therapy on Stress among Adults

Ayesha H S<sup>1\*</sup>, Dr. Kavita Rai Sinha<sup>2</sup>

### ABSTRACT

Bach Flower Therapy is one of the many means to help treat mental health issues. It is absolutely natural as the therapy involves flowers carefully selected from the wild, each made suitable for a specific mental health issue such as depression, anxiety, stress, lack of confidence, guilt and many more. The purpose of this study is to know the effect of Bach Flower Therapy on stress. Referring to few interviews irrespective of one's background the cause of the issues were found in order to treat them by providing Bach Flower Remedies. World Health Organisation (WHO) labels India as the 'most depressing country', despite of having therapies to reduce these issues we are yet, not taking mental health seriously. However, it is often believed that curing negative thoughts and emotions on everything is the first step to heal ourselves. This is one of the main objectives of Flower Therapy. This study serves purpose to heal people suffering from mental health issues, which might help India stay mentally fit.

**Keywords:** *Bach Flower Therapy, Mental Health Issues, Lack of Confidence, Stress, Anxiety*

This study aims to research on the effect of Bach Flower Therapy on Mental Health Issues. Bach flower remedies are an alternative or complementary treatment that is used for emotional problems and pain. They're made out of watered-down extracts from the flowers of wild plants.

Edward Bach, a medical doctor and homeopath, created these remedies in the early 1900s. Homeopathy is the belief that the body can cure itself. It uses small amounts of natural substances like plants and minerals to treat the body or mind. The idea behind Bach flower remedies is similar to homeopathy. But they use fewer materials and don't work directly on physical symptoms, but instead on the emotions. (Melinda Ratini DO, MS, on January 15, 2019). Describes these as bringing courage to the fearful, peace to the anguished and strength to the weak. But the therapeutic effects of the remedies were never limited to emotional states. They are really effective in the treatment of physical disorders. (Julian Barnard, Steiner Books, 2004). The mind and body cannot be separated—what affects one will affect the other. The Bach Flower Remedies contain the subtle vibrational essences of flowers and trees. These remedies correct imbalances in the mental, emotional and spiritual bodies, promoting healing in the physical body. Every day we are subjected to

<sup>1</sup>Student, BA 2<sup>nd</sup> Year, Presidency College, Bangalore, India

<sup>2</sup>Assistant professor, BA department, Presidency college, Bangalore, India

\*Corresponding Author

Received: June 26, 2021; Revision Received: August 06, 2021; Accepted: August 23, 2021

## Effect of Bach Flower Therapy on Stress among Adults

thousands of distractions, stressors, and pollutants. These myriad influences can wear down our natural defenses and cause frustration, tension, and even physical illness (David F Vennells, Llewellyn Worldwide, 2001). Flower remedies do not fit in with the homeopathic or herbal systems of classification, having a unique method of preparation and use. It should not be confused with flower therapy where flowers are used as a source of colour and aroma to foster wellbeing (Steven B Kayne, complementary and alternative, 383,2009).

A major advancement in the scientific use of flower essences. Lists 200 clinically proven combinations of Bach Flower essences for treating specific conditions. Targets the source of problems, not their outer manifestations. Each of us has a unique psychic structure that affects our emotions, thoughts, and actions. We can develop harmoniously or have unbalanced reactions that can cause illness and psychosomatic conditions. The strength of Bach Flower Therapy lies in its ability to treat these pathologies, restore balance, and free us from the physical manifestations of problems that are often psychic and emotional in origin. (Gotz Blome, Inner traditions/Bear&Co,1999).

Statistical analyses indicated that only the high-state anxiety treatment subgroup demonstrated a statistically significant difference between pretest and post test scores. The results suggest that BFE Rescue Remedy may be effective in reducing high levels of situational anxiety. (Robert Halberstein, Lydia DeSantis, Alicia Sirkin, Vivian Padron-Fajardo, Maria Ojeda-vaz, January 1,2007).

The flower tinctures are taken by mouth either on their own or with other medications. They are safe, nontoxic, and could be used by everyone from little children to older adults (Barnard, 1990).

The Bach Flower Remedies are natural, non-invasive and can be used as complementary to other medicines. "Every house should have this kit as it is like a first aid kit," says sharmee. She sites cases she has taken on where people were on the brink of a nervous breakdown due to a loss in business or the loss of job. It helps people who have anxiety, those apprehensive of flying, or those who feel overwhelmed by crowd, for instance. A case a day is her schedule. It requires lot of time, patience, interaction and counselling. She calls flower friends with positive energy that gently soothe. (Soma Basu , The Hindu ,2019)

According to Bach, the remedies work through the life force energy or vibration that is transmitted from the flowers to the tincture. This vibration interacts on a subtle energy level with the individual to rebalance the conscious and unconscious and dissolve old patterns of behaviour.[5] By alleviating negative feelings and relieving the underlying emotional and psychological problems of the patient, a physical healing is enabled. Patients sometimes experience a worsening of their symptoms before an improvement, which can manifest as aggravation. (Kylie Thaler, Angela Kaminski, and Gerald Gartlehner)

This study is not focused on a particular mental health issue as there are 38 remedies which focuses on different emotional states of an individual. It is important to give attention to these therapies which helps an individual cleanse their unwanted thought patterns and keeps us mentally fit. However, mental health requires equal care as physical health.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Ana Paula Pancieril, Suzimar Benato Fuscol, Bianca Ires Abrantes ramosl , Eliana Mara Bragal (Brazil , 2018) conducted a study on the meanings of flower therapy for anxiety in

## Effect of Bach Flower Therapy on Stress among Adults

people with overweight or obesity. Qualitative research study was conducted on 42 participants after analysis, five thematic categories emerged: seeking natural alternatives to aid in control of anxiety and obesity; perceiving the benefits of flower therapy in itself and in family and professional relationships; recognizing flower therapy as source of tranquility and self-knowledge; perceiving changes in sleep quality; acquiring self-control and guidance on food and relational needs. Consequently, participants reported self-control in feeding and in family and professional relationships.

Sheila Hicks Balgobin (2015) conducted a study on the impact of the Bach Flower Remedies on stress among emergency and health service workers. In partnership with the Bach Centre and the Twelve Healers Trust, a pilot study, led by The British Flower & Vibrational Essences Association (BFVEA), examined what impact, if any, essence therapy (ET) had on emergency (police, fire brigade, ambulance, paramedics) and health service workers suffering from stress. The study was free for emergency and health workers to participate in and took place over a six-month period. Participants were randomly allocated to one of two groups) individualised Bach Remedy therapy and (ii) Bach Rescue Remedy® only. This latter group acted as a control. Severe challenges in recruiting participants were encountered and the resulting sample size was far smaller than intended. Notwithstanding this, the results indicate that Bach Flower Essences could play a useful role in supporting emergency and health workers manage work-related stress. 73% of participants who completed the study showed good reduction in their stress levels as shown by lower post treatment scores on the 34-question CORE-OM instrument. The study shows that there is an evidence-based proof that there is a decrease in the stress levels after the usage of Bach Flower Therapy.

Robert Halberstein, Lydia DeSantis, Alicia Sirkin, Vivian Padron-Fajardo, Maria Ojeda-Vaz (2007) conducted a study on healing with Bach Flower Therapy. A double-blind clinical trial comparing a standard dosage of BFE Rescue Remedy against a placebo of identical appearance was conducted in a sample of 111 individuals aged 18 to 49, randomized into treatment (n = 53) and control (n = 58) groups. The Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) was administered before and after the use of Rescue Remedy or placebo. Downward trends in anxiety level measurements were discovered in both the treatment (Rescue Remedy) and control (placebo) groups. The results suggests that Bach Flower Essence Rescue Remedy may be effective in reducing high level of situational anxiety.

Judy Horward (2007) conducted a critical analysis investigating therapeutic value beyond the placebo effect and the potential of Bach Flower Therapy. This paper explores the potentiality of Bach flower remedies as a means of pain relief through a retrospective case-study analysis to establish how clients suffering with painful conditions responded to the therapy. Of 384 subjects, 41 suffered pain. Of these, 46% felt treatment had relieved their pain; in 49% the physical outcome was unknown. About 88% of all subjects reported an improvement in their emotional.

The use of Bach flower remedies has brought about positive emotional changes in the majority of clients in this study. Whilst it is difficult to draw a definitive conclusion as to significance of the therapeutic value of these remedies in relation to pain above that of a placebo, the results are encouraging. In particular, relief of negative emotions and promotion of positive thought including how clients opened up about, and dealt with, emotional issues. The indication is that potential for Bach flower remedies as a therapeutic agent in the relief

## Effect of Bach Flower Therapy on Stress among Adults

of pain does exist and is worthy of further qualitative and quantitative investigation through robust, purpose-designed studies to replicate and progress the results shown here.

PT Marcele Siegler, PT Cristina Frange, MD Sergio Tufik, MD Helena Hachu(2017) conducted a study on the effects of Bach Flower Remedies on menopause symptoms and sleep patterns. During the postmenopausal stage, women go through many remarkable changes, including physical, emotional, and hormonal. They also experience some unwanted effects, such as vasomotor symptoms, anxiety, and insomnia. The use of Bach flower remedies has been described as a supporting therapy for those symptoms. The research team created a case report. The study was conducted at the Menopause Transition and Postmenopause Sleep Disorder Clinic at the Department of Gynecology of the Federal University of São Paulo in São Paulo, Brazil. The participant was a 53-y-old, single woman, at the postmenopausal stage, who had been diagnosed with insomnia according to the criteria of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine and complained of climacteric symptoms. The patient underwent treatment with a blend of the supplement for 4 mo. Sleep questionnaires were given and polysomnography was performed before and after treatment. Both sleep perception and objective sleep were improved. The patient's anxiety and menopausal symptoms were reduced after the treatment with the supplement. The study found that the use of Bach flower remedies as a therapeutic strategy to relieve menopausal symptoms, such as anxiety, mood changes, and insomnia, seems worthy of further investigation.

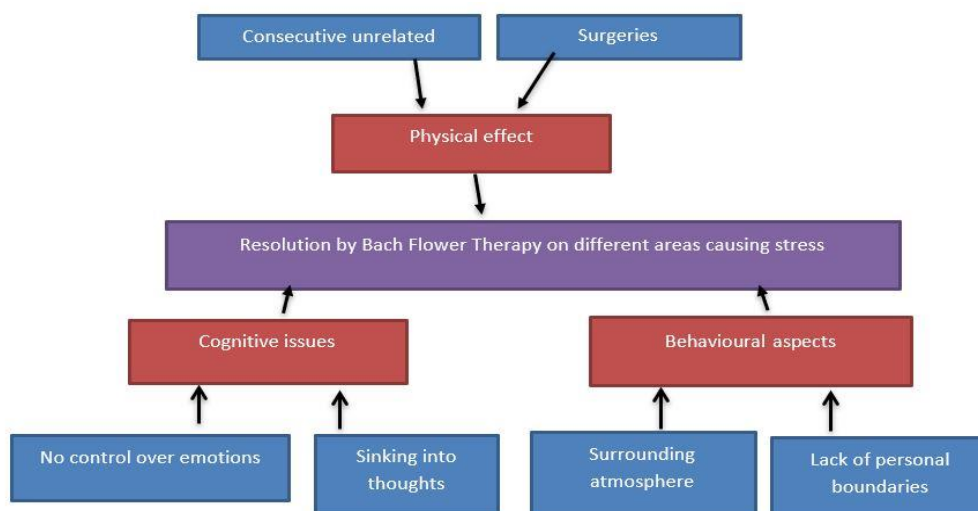
### METHODOLOGY

This study follows a qualitative research methodology. In order to understand the effectiveness of Bach flower therapy three interviews were transcribed and analysed. The data was collected through clients approach followed by informed consent. The information related to each interview was transcribed, analysed and compiled.

Research objective: Research can be conducted on the people who are clinically diagnosed by mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, stress. The Bach Flower Therapy can be used on these people, using the mental health assessments. The level of these issues will be shown clinically. Bach Flower Remedy is more than a placebo. In clinical set up these therapies should be proven in order to bring in the confidence in people to use it.

### ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

#### Representation of thematic network



## Effect of Bach Flower Therapy on Stress among Adults

The thematic analysis of the data obtained from the in-depth interview of the participants which was conducted using an interview.

**Table 1 Resolution by Bach Flower Therapy on different areas causing stress.**

Global Theme	Organising Theme	Basic Theme
1. Resolution by Bach Flower Therapy on different areas causing stress	1.1 Physical Effect	1.11 Consecutive unrelated diseases 1.12 Surgeries
	1.2 Cognitive Issues	1.21 No control over emotions 1.22 Sinking into thoughts
	1.3 Behavioural Aspect	1.31 Surrounding atmosphere 1.32 Lack of personal boundaries

### **Resolution by Bach Flower Therapy on different areas causing stress**

Analysing the effect of Bach Flower Therapy among adults suffering from stress, established three domains which were causing stress to the participants. The themes that emerged are physical effect, cognitive issues, behavioural aspect.

The qualitative analysis indicates that there are three different areas causing stress among the adults. The stress caused in participants have led to other problems, Bach Flower Therapy has helped them resolve their sickness by treating them through its slight vibrations. This helps in healing the mental health by removing negative thought patterns.

There are different issues, as each participant had their own problems, yet being mentally affected where they are all dealing with stress. However, their issues have been resolved after using Bach Flower Therapy.

**1.1 Physical Effect:** Problems related to physical health also impacts mental health. Negative thoughts in one's mind can cause damage. Being physically affected can be one of the reason for not taking care of mental health as important as the physical health. Keeping mind checked is also important in order to stay fit physically.

**1.11 Consecutive unrelated diseases:** Occurring of different diseases one after the other can also be the reason for being mentally unfit. Diseases that are unrelated damaging one's body can be due to the negative thoughts causing stress in the mind. As shared by one on the participant:

“My emotions not being healed was causing stress which was getting physically manifested, experiencing certain negative emotions which finally manifests into our body in the physical form and that's what turns into a disease, I knew that on my mind and was trying to work on myself but its only after these remedies I have started actually feeling better”.

(Personal Communication, April 29<sup>th</sup> 2021)

This tells us that mental health can destroy one's health physically and it is necessary to take care of mental health by using remedies like Bach Flower Therapy which has no side effects and cures one's body and mind.

**1.12 Surgeries:** Dealing with physical pain like surgeries can lead to stress. seeking help in such cases to heal ones thoughts maybe heal the body from surgeries as well. Bach Flower

## Effect of Bach Flower Therapy on Stress among Adults

Therapy can be used in any such cases in order to get relieved from negative thoughts causing more damage to the mind and body. As one participant shared the experience of using Bach Flower Therapy after the surgeries said that:

“I feel a lot stronger, I feel a lot less miserable and I can feel there a drastic improvement”

(Personal Communication, April 29<sup>th</sup> 2021)

**1.2 Cognitive Issues:** Over thinking can cause damage to one’s mental health. Negative thoughts gathered by thinking over and over again on same issue leads to stress. Bach Flower remedies help resolve such thinking over and over again on the same issues can affect mental health. The extracts of wild flowers consist of slight vibrations that help one to think positive by healing the negative one. Treating one’s mind with utmost care is important in order to keep emotions stable.

**1.21 No Control over Emotions:** Having unstable emotional state can affect one’s lifestyle. Changing thinking patterns in whole can gain control over emotions. Having a balanced emotional state is equally important as having a balanced diet. The trigger of the emotions can be healed by learning to deal with the trigger, this therapy helps one to deal with the root cause of the sufferings. Treating from the bottom helps heal completely. As one participant told:

“I needed help to cope up on handling my emotions. Bach Flower Therapy is really helping me, it is visible. I can feel that I’m getting better. It’s easing me out a lot. It’s helping to deal with emotions” (Personal Communication, April 30<sup>th</sup> 2021)

**1.22 Sinking into thoughts:** Rethinking on issue that requires no much thought makes one feel mentally sick. This therapy is used to treat the thoughts in one’s mind. Sinking into thoughts causes stress and might lead to intense health problems. Overcoming these issues includes the talk therapy including remedies. These remedies have different effect with respect to the issues, finding out the start of the problem and treating the same helps one deal with stress. One of the participants says:

“Earlier for a petty thing also I used to keep sinking into the thoughts and was not able to get over it. So, for days I would be sinking into the same thing and I had a lot of fears inside me. Now I can feel a lot of improvement. I learnt to say yes and no to my emotions so it’s worked like magic on me” (Personal Communication, April 29<sup>th</sup> 2021)

**1.3 Behavioural Aspect:** The behaviours of the people around or the situation can cause an impact on one’s mental health. Stress is the main factor here as getting adjusted to one place and people becomes really difficult. There are two behavioural aspects i.e., surrounding atmosphere and lack of boundaries. These two things also can hurt one’s mental health by causing stress. Learning to deal with this by gaining patience through this therapy helps to stay mentally fit.

**1.31 Surrounding Atmosphere:** The vibration in the surroundings can affect one’s thoughts. The happenings can impact on your mental. One of the participants talked about the situation due to corona is impacting her mental health. Worrying about the loved ones also causes stress. This shows how others can also be a reason for causing stress. If there is a funeral, that atmosphere can cause impact, which means managing to deal with the surrounding’s atmosphere is important to avoid stress. One of the participants says:

## Effect of Bach Flower Therapy on Stress among Adults

“Due to the covid situation last year, I was a little bit anxious. The situation around me caused stress. So, I started with this therapy which is helping me overcome the fear for loved one’s health which causing stress in me”

(Personal Communication, April 29<sup>th</sup> 2021)

**1.32 Lack of Personal Boundaries:** Drawing personal boundaries is important. Not letting one get into your thoughts is required in order to stay stress free. For some people it is difficult to say no, which might not only affect their relationship but also affect their mind. As one of participant says:

“Areas I needed to work on, for instincts like not being able to say no, drawing personal boundaries and patience. Working on these areas helped me deal with the stress also this therapy made me think in different positive ways”.

(Personal Communication, April 29<sup>th</sup> 2021)

## DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this study is to know the effect of bach flower therapy among adults dealing with stress. This therapy contains of subtle vibrations in them which has the power to alter the negative thought patterns. As mentioned by Gotz Blome, Inner traditions/Bear&co 1999, there is a major advancement in the scientific use of flower essence which has been clinically proven. Therapies which provide remedies causing a positive impact should gain popularity in order to save lives. This research is a qualitative research in which the participants are interviewed about the impact of this therapy on them. After analysing, the findings are that there is a great improvement on each one’s mental health. The major resolution of Bach Flower therapy was in three areas that is physical, cognitive and behavioural. In these areas we can see that stress has impacted the physical, cognitive and the behaviour of a person. Firstly, physical health of a participant was badly affected because of unhealthy mental state as the person was suffering from stress. Secondly, stress has also affected the cognitive ability of a person where on the participant was not able to control emotions which was leading to stress; however, Bach flower therapy has cured stress. Thirdly, behaviours around a person can also cause stress, negative energies can impact on the surroundings which lead to disturbance of one’s mental health causing stress. Treating in these areas has shown major results. The participants were dealing with stress due to various reasons like, surrounding atmosphere, lack of control on emotions and many more. The behaviour or a situation around a person can cause stress which might later have a greater impact on one’s life. The findings also say that stress itself can cause a lot of physical damage to the body. One of the participants mentions that because of mental health illness there has been a great impact on the physical health. Negative thoughts can manifest into a disease in one’s body. These remedies have helped a lot of people to deal with stress. This is a therapy which cleanses the body and mind. It has made lives better. Indirectly curing physical health by treating one’s mental health proves it’s effect. The energies bring a change in one’s life and surroundings, which helps gain positive energy. The vibrations in the remedies altering thought patterns into a positive one helps people live their desired life. The effect of this therapy is visible and can be seen and felt, though it treats the mind. This therapy having no side effects gives us the confidence to use it. The participants had different issues but the common factor in them was the stress which few of them were not aware of. This shows that people overlook their mental health and focus on their physical health which has led to severe mental health disorder in the human beings. Mind is something that helps get success as well as it is equally bad which can completely destroy a person. Hence, taking good care is essential. The main motive of this study is to prove the drastic changes in one’s life in order to help others seek help and benefit from this therapy.

## Effect of Bach Flower Therapy on Stress among Adults

One of the most important finding was that the cause of the problem has been treated rather than treating with respect to symptoms. This is something rare, usually in allopathy they treat based on the symptoms of the patient but here the root cause has been treated where there is low chance for the problem to reappear. Therefore, this shows the reason behind the success rate of this therapy. The remedies play a major role in this therapy. However, the counselling with the therapist is also important. Basically, the therapy as a whole is essential to have a good mental health. In India people hardly take care of their mental health as equal to their physical health, showing them a way to cure themselves from these issues helps create awareness about mental health. In order to save lives, it better to show proofs of lives saved by Bach Flower Therapy.

### CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Bach Flower Therapy cures mental health illness such as fear, consciousness, anxiety, stress, depression, guilt, frustration, lack of confidence and many more. Dr. Edward Bach has prepared remedies from wild flowers, which contains slight vibrations in them which would help to cleanse the unwanted thought patterns. There are about 30 certified practitioners in India which is quiet less. In the review of literature, the study says about 88% of people show improvement in their emotions after consuming Bach remedies. There was also a research done on the placebo effect, says that the outcome is more than a placebo effect as there was decrease in the anxiety level. A pilot study done on the health service workers brought in a decrease in their stress level as well. These researches done prove that there is a positive impact on a large percentage of people. However, the awareness of this therapy is not that great. According, to the World Health Organisation (WHO) India has the highest suicidal rate (September, 9, 2019) as our country's condition is getting worse, these therapies should be popularised, it might help people safe their lives. In result and discussion chapter, those interviews showed how important the whole therapy is, not only the remedies. The participants sharing the changes in their life after consuming the remedies have had mind blowing results. Altering The thought patterns in a subtle way without any harm is the best thing about this therapy. The therapist has to evaluate the cause and then give them remedies based on the issues the clients go through. Having almost no side effects these therapies should be considered in our country. These remedies are to be taken for weeks to months as consulted by the therapists. The thought patterns differ from one another, so finding the cause and treating the issue from the root would get a positive result. Feeling in a certain way causes distress in humans and gradually getting used to such feeling and thought becomes normal, which reaches the advanced level of feeling sick. Treating issues that are causing trouble to one's self might not lead to that advanced level. Seeking for help becomes easier if treatment has a proper evidence of the cure.

Mental health itself has challenged people to accept they are mentally sick, just like how they get physically sick. However, showing them the cure might bring in a confidence for them to feel safe and talk about their mental health issues.

### REFERENCES

- Balgobin, S. H. (2015). The Impact of The Bach Flower Remedies on Stress Among Emergency and Health Service Workers.
- Barnard, J. (2004). Bach Flower Remedies: Form and Function. Steiner Books.
- Blome, G. (1999). Advanced Bach Flower Therapy: a scientific approach to diagnosis and treatment. Inner Traditions/Bear & Co.



## Effect of Bach Flower Therapy on Stress among Adults

- Halberstein, R., DeSantis, L., Sirkin, A., Padron-Fajardo, V., & Ojeda-Vaz, M. (2007). Healing with Bach® flower essences: testing a complementary therapy. *Complementary health practice review*, 12(1), 3-14.
- Hommel, M., Peres, B., Pollak, P., Memin, B., Besson, G., Gaio, J. M., & Perret, J. (1990). Effects of passive tactile and auditory stimuli on left visual neglect. *Archives of Neurology*, 47(5), 573-576.
- Howard, J. (2007). Do Bach flower remedies have a role to play in pain control? A critical analysis investigating therapeutic value beyond the placebo effect, and the potential of Bach flower remedies as a psychological method of pain relief. *Complementary therapies in clinical practice*, 13(3), 174-183.
- Marcele Siegler, P. T., Cristina Frange, P. T., Sergio Tufik, M. D., & Helena Hachul, M. D. (2017). Effects of Bach flower remedies on menopausal symptoms and sleep pattern: a case report. *Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine*, 23(2), 44.
- Pancieri, A. P., Fusco, S. B., Ramos, B. I. A., & Braga, E. M. (2018). Meanings of flower therapy for anxiety in people with overweight or obesity. *Revista brasileira de enfermagem*, 71, 2310-2315.
- Kayne, S. B. (2009). Flower remedy therapy. *Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, 383.
- Thaler, K., Kaminski, A., Chapman, A., Langley, T., & Gartlehner, G. (2009). Bach Flower Remedies for psychological problems and pain: a systematic review. *BMC Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, 9(1), 16.
- Vennells, D. F. (2001). *Bach Flower Remedies for Beginners: 38 Essences that Heal from Deep Within*. Llewellyn Worldwide.

### **Acknowledgement**

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

**How to cite this article:** Ayesha H. S. & Sinha K. R. (2021). Effect of Bach Flower Therapy on Stress among Adults. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 9(3), 1132-1140. DIP:18.01.105.20210903, DOI:10.25215/0903.105