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Unani concept of diet and temperament (Mizaj)

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Abstract

Diet is a basic sustenance of human body and plays a key role in health diet has been taken as a central focus in many disciplines of research Unani medicine has always advocated diets for treatment because diseases are the result of disturbance in humors either quantitatively or qualitative. In the Unani concept of medicine alteration in the different four kinds of humor causes disease therefore, a particular diet is recommended for different diseases. So the prevention of diseases people should take diet opposite of their temperament. Keeping these things in view, and attempt has been made in this paper to classify the dietary substances on the basis of temperament.

Keywords: humors, diet, temperaments

Introduction

Mizaj (Temperament) is one of the basic concepts of Unani systems of medicine upon which diagnosis and line of treatment of a disease are based. Every human being has been furnished a specific Mizaj through which an individual performs his function properly. If it is disturbed, body becomes more susceptible to develop some diseases having same temperament as that of an individual.

The Hippocrates (460-3703C) gave the fundamental principles of with a belief that body of the individual is composed of four basic element which together are termed as Anasir-e-Arba possesses four different qualities i.e. Hot cold dry and wet. The admixture of these four basic element result in the formation of four biological fluids Akhlat (Humors). Blood (Dam), Phlegm (Balgham), yellow Bile (Safra) and Black bile (Sauda) a right Proportion, according to quality and quantity constitutes health and upright proportion, and irregular distribution. According to their quantity and quality constitute disease when these different Kaifiate Arba (quality) of Arkan (elements) acts and reacts by their powers, then previous qualities become diminished and a new moderate quality is developed which is known as Mizaj. Excess of any of the four basic humours (Akhlat) of body exerts its influence on the mizaj of the person and treatment is based upon the correction of that particular humor (Khilt). It is also mention in Tib E Nabvi Ibn Qayyim in "medicine of the prophet" said physical ailments attack and harm the body and alter its normal function because of an excess amount of substance. These types constitutes the majority of diseases and occur, because of over eating or consuming more than what the body needs, that which brings about little benefit or is not digested easily, or due to complex meals. When a human habitually feels is stomach with these types of food, he will end up with various type of illnesses.

Hippocratic theory of Temperament

Hippocratic physician recognized 4 fluids or humors blood whose nature is hot and moist, yellow bile is nature is hot and dry, phlegm whose nature is cold and moist, and black bile (or melancholic) whose nature is cold and dry. Modern medicine contests the existence of this last humor. Health is presented as the right balance of temperaments. Therefore, it is necessary to have a life style and a diet that helps one in maintaining this balance or that compensates the unbalances related to seasons or patients age

According to Hippocratic dietetics digestion implies cooking of food inside the body. Universe consists of 4 elements

Air	Fire	Earth	Water
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There are 4 qualities:

Hot	Cold	Dry	Moist
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Combination of elements and qualities results in 4 humors and 4 temperaments

Elements	Quality	Humor	temperament
Air	Hot and moist	Blood	Sanguine
Fire	Hot and dry	Yellow bile	Choleric or bilious
Earth	Cold and dry	Black bile	Melancholic
Water	Cold and moist	Phlegm	Phlegmatic

(Jalinoos) Claude Galen (or Claudius Galen in Latin) was a Greek physician of the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius (1st century A.D.) he wanted to complete the work started by Hippocrates by introducing graduation and combination. Galen classified foodstuff and medicines. Hippocratic medicine believes that digest is cooking of food in the stomach. (Unani) physician think that most of disease originated from problem the of digestion diet is proposed in order to maintain or restore the balance of humors. Human body made up of four fluids called humors. Blood, yellow bile, black bile, phlegm. Four fundamental forces (quality) heat, cold, dryness and moistness. Each of them become dominant during each of four seasons and each of four ages of life. Each type of temperament is attracted by foodstuffs that correspond to it. Sanguine person will love meet in gravy. Wines that is hot and moist like him. Choleric will favor grilled meat, spices, hot and dry food. Melancholic will prefer roots. Phlegmatic individuals eat soup, raw vegetable.

Ibn Seena Aldo Brandini of Siena recommends similar principals, those with hot temperament are to eat stuff whose nature is hot and those with cold temperament prefer cold foodstuffs. However many physician (Unani) recommend the opposite by suggesting that one attains a balance by correcting the temperament e.g. the choleric temperament with hot temperament must eat cold and moist food.

Diet in Different Temperament

Related with the concept of Unani medicine people should have to take diet opposite of their temperament in flowing way.

1. Sanguine temperament (Damvi Mizaj) (Hot and moist)

People with sanguine temperament should take cold and dry food item like cabbage, coliflower, tomato, potato, beans, all sour fruits apples, coconut, peanuts, maize, corn, peas, egg white, yogurt, tea, coffee, pickles, tamarind and vinegar

2. Phlegmatic temperament (Balghami Mizaj) (Cold and moist)

People with phlegmatic temperament should take hot and dry fruits like chicken egg, onion, garlic, bitter melon, fenugreek, grapes, walnuts, cloves, saffron, alcohol etc.

3. Choleric temperament (Safavi Mizaj) (Hot and dry)

Choleric temperament should take cold and moist foods like cucumber, ladyfinger, lettuce, beetroot, pear, fig, watermelon, litchi, rice, milk, coriander, cardamom, sugarcane juice, citrus fruits, ice-cream and milkshake.

4. Melancholic temperament (Saudavi Mizaj) (cold and dry)

Melancholic temperament people should take hot and moist food item like mutton liver ginger spinach, mangoes, almond, pistachios, peaches, banana, wheat, milk cheese,

honey, sugar and salt.

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