

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF UNANI AND INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE



E-ISSN: 2616-4558
P-ISSN: 2616-454X
IJUIM 2020; 4(2): 01-04
Impact Factor (RJIF): 6.3
Peer Reviewed Journal
Received: 02-05-2020
Accepted: 06-06-2020

Nushrat Jahan
Research Associate, Central
Council for Research in Unani
Medicine, New Delhi, India

Jamal Akhtar
Research Officer (Unani), S-
III, Central Council for
Research in Unani Medicine,
New Delhi, India

Asim Ali Khan
Director General, Central
Council for Research in Unani
Medicine, New Delhi, India

Prevention and management of lifestyle diseases through unani system of medicine

Nushrat Jahan, Jamal Akhtar and Asim Ali Khan

Abstract

According to a report published by ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research) in 2017, three of the five leading individual causes of disease burden in India were lifestyle diseases. As the name suggests, lifestyle disease is a condition that is attributable to lifestyle choices *viz.* diet, smoking, alcohol and drugs, exercise, etc. Most common lifestyle diseases are cardiovascular diseases, chronic respiratory diseases and other chronic liver diseases, digestive diseases, diabetes, urogenital, blood, and endocrine diseases, neurological disorders, and some types of cancer. The majority of these diseases are preventable illnesses. Since such a disease is not transmissible directly from one person to another, it is also called Non- Communicable Diseases (NCDs).

Prevention of a disease is of utmost priority in Unani system of medicine as compared to curing diseases. Implementation of Unani preventive measures lowers the burden of these diseases. There is a need to aware people about the role of *Asbab-e-Sitta-Zarooriah* (six essential prerequisites) in maintenance of human health. An attempt has been made through this paper to highlights the lifestyle changing factors that help in keeping oneself away from NCDs and attaining good health.

Keywords: Life-style diseases; Metabolic disorders; Mental disorders; Asbab-e-Sitta-Zarooriyah; Mizaj

Introduction

The diseases that primarily occur due to imprudent personal behaviour of a person are termed Lifestyle diseases. These imprudent habits detract a person from regular physical activities and lead them towards a sedentary and pernicious lifestyle resulting in a number of health-related issues and becoming a cause of chronic, virulent non-communicable diseases. As per ICMR's 2017 report ^[1], the contribution of most of the major non-communicable disease groups to the total disease burden has increased all over India since 1990. Bad dieting habits i.e. diets low in fruit, vegetables, and whole grains, but high in salt and fat are the primary factors for rise in NCDs.

According to World Health Organization, every year, around 41 million people i.e. 71% of all deaths globally, die of non-communicable diseases ^[2]. Lifestyle diseases are prevalent in the middle or old age peoples who had prolonged exposure to unhealthy lifestyle like use of tobacco, consumption of alcohol, fast food and unhealthy diet, insufficient physical activity. A healthy life-style leads to physical, mental, social and spiritual health. Healthy lifestyle includes controlled bad habits, healthy diet, absence or minimum presence of alcohol and tobacco consumptions, and regular physical activity. All these habits are present in military personnel therefore they are healthier in comparison to native population ^[3]. Unani system of medicine (Unani Tibb) is a holistic traditional system of medicine. It was introduced in India by the Arabs and Persians around the eleventh century. The system suffered a severe setback during the British rule in India. It saw the beginning of its revival during the freedom struggle and after independence it received a fresh boost under the patronage of the National Government. Today, India is one of the leading countries in so far as the practice of Unani medicine is concerned. It has the largest number of Unani educational, research and health care institutions ^[4].

In Unani system of medicine lifestyle diseases are considered to be result of improper management of *Asbab-e- Sitta Zarooriyah* (the six governing factors) over a prolonged period of time ^[5, 6]. If any imbalance occurs between these governing factors, toxins inside the body get accumulated, initially at the humoral level, resulting in illnesses. It further leads to the functional imbalances and thereafter impairing digestive, urinary, circulatory functions of body. The comprehensive approach of Unani system of medicine is to cover the two main pillars of lifestyle diseases, namely, prevention and treatment by avoiding the accumulation

Corresponding Author:
Nushrat Jahan
Research Associate, Central
Council for Research in Unani
Medicine, New Delhi, India

of such toxins inside the body humours abnormally.

Etiology

The etiology of lifestyle diseases is attributed to [7]: Su-e-Hazam (dyspepsia), Ifrat naum (excessive sleep), Ifrat sakun (excessive rest), Qillate harkat-e-badani (sedentary life style), Martoob-wa-ghaliz Ghiz'a (meat, fatty / oily food and sweets), Balgham (dominance of phlegm), Mizaj Barid (cold temperament), Ghalba-e-Ifrat-e-Sharab bad-e-Ghiz'a (excessive alcohol after meal), Virasat and Khilqui (hereditary and congenital), Hawa-e-Ghaliz (polluted air), Aa'b-e-Ghaliz (contaminated water), Farhat (excessive gratification), Narm-wa-mulaim- bister (soft couch).

Concept of lifestyle diseases in unani medicine

Hippocrates is considered to be father of lifestyle medicines in Unani System of Medicine, as he had advised measures for the prevention of life-style diseases and modification of life-style habits through diet and exercise, in his famous treatises [8].

In Unani Tibb, mizaj (temperament) is an important theory which indicates the properties of an Unsur (atom), a molecule, a cell, a tissue, and an organ of an individual as whole [9]. Mizaj of a person represents its physical constitution and tendencies. The imbalance in Mizaj leads human body to various diseases by producing a biotic imbalance within body. Asbab-e-sitta zarooriyah (the six governing or essential factors) are responsible for balancing the mizaj.

Asbab-e-sitta zarooriyah

Sabab (cause) (plural – Asbab) is defined as a specific factor which either maintains the state of the body or changes it from health to sickness or from sickness to health [10,11]. The six governing factors are essential in establishing a synchronized biological rhythm and thus living a balanced life. These factors are briefed below:

- 1. Hawa-e-Muhit (Atmospheric Air):** Human beings need a continuous supply of air to exist because air is a vital rukn (pillar, support) of ruh (pneuma) and body. The air moderates hot temperament of ruh by means of inspiration or inhalation and purifies lungs by means of expiration or exhalation. Both of these functions occur when the air is in pure form. But when it is contaminated, it leads the sue mizaj (mal temperament) of ruh. The quality of breathing air directly influences the mizaj of ruh and thus, either health is maintained or lost [12].
- 2. Makool-wa-Mashroob (Foods and Drinks):** The foods and drinks act upon the body in three ways: by their kaifiyat (quality), by their madda (matter) and by their surat-e-naueia (morph) or vise versa [13]. Therefore, Unain Tibb advises to take a balanced diet for maintaining health.
- 3. Harkat-wa-Sakoon-e-Jismani (Rest and Physical activity):** The effect of harkat (movement) on human body depends on what types of movement is i.e. vigorous or mild, prolonged or moderate, or accompanied by rest or not. Whenever the body of an individual does harkat notwithstanding the type of movement, the body extricates hararat (heat) which

stimulate the hararat-e-ghareeziyah (innate heat) and dissolve the waste product generated in the body [14]. As per Unani Tibb, hararat is the tool of all quwa (faculties) especially, quwa tabaiyah (vegetative faculties). These faculties process the food, metabolise and expel the waste materials out of the body [13]. When the waste materials get accumulated in but are not expelled out of the body, it causes the hararat-e-ghareeziyah to cease [13]. Sakoon (rest) after harkat is crucial for health preservation. Incessant harkat without sakoon result in dissolution of ratubat (fluid) which further affects the hararat-e-ghareeziyah [14]. Once the hararat-e-ghareeziyah becomes subnormal, the normal metabolic process cannot occur. Sakoon reinforces digestion process which results in formation of good quality of humour and health depends on humoral balance. Excess of either harkat or sakoon or both produces baroodat (cold) which affects the action of faculties and ultimately, the function of the body becomes abnormal. Therefore, the balanced harkat and sakoon are essential for good health [14].

- 4. Harkat-wa-Sakoon-e-Nafsani (Psychological activity and Repose):** As harkat-wa- sakoon-e-jismani is viatal for good health, so is harkat-wa-sakoon-e-nafsani. Unani scholars have explained that Quwwat-e-Mudarikah (Sensory Faculties) and Quwwat-e-Muhrikah (Motor Faculties) are associated with harkat-wa-sakoon-e-nafsani and these faculties regulate the internal and external functions of the body [12]. All psychic states are governed by internal and external movement of ruh, khun (blood) and hararat-e-ghareeziyaha [13]. The excessive harkat-e-nafsani leads to dissolution of ruh [12] and subsequently, faculties become feeble and infirm which makes functions of the body abnormal. After harkat-e-nafsani, sakoon-e-nafsani is essential for the body to replenish the lost substances [13]. This manifests that harkat-e-nafsani cannot be performed continuously without taking sakoon. Psychic states such as anger, sorrow, fear, worry, happiness etc affect Body [14]. While positive physic states boost body's immune system, negative ones leads a person physically sick. The emotional state of a person plays an important role in health maintenance [15]. Therefore, balance with emotions, harkat-wa- sakoon-e-nafsani are indispensable for good health.
- 5. Naum-wa-Yaqzah (Sleep and Wakefulness):** Amount of sleep determines the normal physical and psychosocial functions [15]. The eminent Unani scholar Zakariya Razi specified that eight hours of sleep is imperative for health [16]. He also says that sleep strengthens the vital faculty, pneuma and promotes digestion by retaining hararat-e- ghareeziyah. Sleep is related with central nervous system [17]. Excessive sleep causes dullness of the psychic faculties, cold diseases and heaviness of head. On the other hand, excessive wakefulness produces dryness, impairs digestion etc [14]. Moderate amount of, and properly timed sleep is essential for the body for functions normally.
- 6. Istifragh-wa-Ihtibas (Elimination and Retention):** Retention of the substances which must be eliminated

from the body such as urine, stools, sweat, menstrual blood etc or elimination of the substances which must be retained in body viz., fluid, salts, and nutrients in the stools, etc causes certain diseases or abnormal condition¹⁸. Coldness and dryness of mizaj is also caused by excessive elimination of any matter¹⁴. Therefore, balanced retention and timely elimination are needed for maintaining a good health.

Prevention and management of life style diseases-unani approach

Controlling the risk factors associated with a disease is an important way of controlling non-communicable diseases. According to Unani system of Medicine, prevention of any disease is not by a single entity but it is prevented with the help of various aspects¹⁹. Unani Tibb focuses at limiting the accumulation of toxins by appropriate adjustment of the person's asbab-e-sitta zarooriyah for preventing the onset of lifestyle diseases. And for treatment, elimination of accumulated toxins and excess or abnormal humours is done.

a) Preventing / delaying the onset of lifestyle diseases:

The concept of mizaj is a useful indicator for identifying the risk factors associated with individuals, as it indicates the predisposition that the individual has to chronic disorders which are invariably the result of poor lifestyle management^{20, 21}. After identifying a person's risk factors, appropriate lifestyle changes especially diet and exercise can be made. Modifying the asbab-e-sitta zarooriyah in a way that it minimises the accumulation of toxins, especially when they arise from a poor, inadequate diet of an individual can delay the onset of the disorder.

b) **Treatment of lifestyle diseases:** In Unani Tibb, much importance is given to identify a person's risk factors and to interpret the illness on the basis of the temperamental / humoral theory. The eminent Unani Professor Rashid Bhikha²² highlights that the Unani treatment approach to chronic lifestyle illness consists of three main components: (i) activities leading to a reduction in the increase of the abnormal/excess humour associated with the illness; (2) encouragement of the concoction and elimination of the abnormal humour; and (3) strengthening the organ system affected by the disorder by application of an appropriate lifestyle management programme. Appropriate Unani medication in support of one or more of these components is frequently resorted to.

Various factors responsible for maintenance or equilibrium the health status are described as under:

- **Ghiza (Diet):** Ghiza is one of the greatest factors in lifestyle and has a direct relation with health²³. To improve overall health, specifically to attain individualized glycemic, blood pressure, and lipid goals of an individual, healthy eating patterns consisting variety of nutrient dense foods in appropriate quantity is recommended²⁴.
- **Riyazat (Exercise):** Qillate harkat-e-badani and unhealthy diet cause accelerated ageing, diseases of the body and brain, and an overall decline in the quality of

life²⁵. On the contrary, proper exercise and healthy diet improve sehat (health). Relations have been found between active life style and happiness²⁶. According to Majusi, exercise strengthens the organs and increases the power²⁷. Exercise increases perspiration through which Fuzlat-e-Badan gets excreted. Accumulation of Fuzlat is harmful for nervous system. Therefore, neglecting the exercise may be a risk factor for nervous system disorders²⁸. Exercise boosts Hararat-e Gharizia, which is responsible for better digestion and for general well-being²⁹.

- **Naum (Sleep):** Sleep and wakefulness are an essential factor of life. One of the bases of healthy life is adequate and sound sleep as the normal physical and psychosocial functions depend on sleep. Sleep helps in digestion of food. Improper sleep causes mal-digestion which leads to production of Fuzlat²⁹. Zakariya Razi opined that normal sleep for optimum duration recompense the Taskheen and Taqwiyyat of the body³⁰. Majusi stated that if duration of sleep is less than normal, it creates zoaf-e-nafs, zoaf- e-tabiyat and khushki-e-badan. He further stated that intentional wakefulness loosens the quwa and body²⁷. Sleep is similar to rest and thus increases Buroodat and Rutoobat in the body³¹. Therefore, moderate amount of sleep is good for health.
- **Harkat-wa-Sakoon-e-Nafsani (Psychological activity and Repose):** Harkat-wa- Sakoon-e-Nafsani impact the human health in many ways. Unani scholars have explained that Quwwat-e-Mudarikah (Sensory Faculties) and Quwwat-e-Muhrikah (Motor Faculties) are associated with harkat-wa-sakoon-e-nafsani and these faculties regulate the internal and external functions of the body¹².
- **Istifragh-wa-Ihtibas (Elimination and Retention):** In Unani Tibb, balance between istifragh and ihtibas of substance is believed to be very important for maintenance of health¹². Result of any problem in maintaining the normal excretory and retaining balance is hazardous to human health. If the retention of the matters become abnormal it will lead to several diseases³² such as (i) Amraz-e-sue mizaj (e.g. infection, decrement in hararat-e-ghariziyah); (2) Amraz-e-sue tarkeeb (e.g. embolism, paralysis); (3) Amraz-e-tafarruk ittesal (e.g. rupture of vessels); and (4) Amraz-e-murakkabah (e.g. inflammation, abscesses). Therefore, it is necessary to eliminate excessive humours and waste products from body at regular interval.

Conclusion

Asbab-e-sitta zarooriyah are the efficient causes which are either directly or indirectly responsible for the preservation or transition of existing health. Any imbalance in these six governing factors may predispose majority of lifestyle diseases. The physicians while treating any patient should always look for any imbalance in essential factors and moderate the six essential factors so as it maintains and promotes positive health as well as prevent the development of diseases. They physician should also advice the appropriate regimen, as per requirement of body e.g. avoid heavy spicy food; avoid water drinking during meal or just

after meal, etc. The preventive aspects should be included in middle school syllabus so that people, from early age, get aware about lifestyle disease and know how to prevent onset of the same.

References

1. Indian Council of Medical Research, Public Health Foundation of India, and Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, India: Health of the Nation's States - The India State-Level Disease Burden Initiative. New Delhi, India: ICMR, PHFI, and IHME, 2017. <https://www.who.int/news-room/factsheets/detail/noncommunicable-diseases>
2. Pappachan J. Increasing prevalence of lifestyle diseases: High time for action. The Indian journal of medical research. 2011; 134:143-5. <https://main.ayush.gov.in/about-the-systems/unani/introduction>
3. Ahmad HIS, Kulliyat-e- Asri. New Public Press, New Delhi, 1983.
4. Park K. Park's Textbook of Preventive and Social Medicine, 19th edition, M/s Banarsidas Bhanot, Jabalpur, 2007, 301.
5. Alam A, Ahmed Z, Quamri MA. Time Tested Safe and Effect Oriented Drugs in Unani Medicine for Dyslipidemia-A Review. J Homeop Ayurv Med. 2015; 4:176. DOI:10.4172/2167-1206.1000176.
6. Anjum R, Sultana K, Wani P. Prevention of lifestyle diseases in unani system of medicine-A Review. European Journal of Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Sciences. 2018; 5:256-260.
7. Ali SM, Islam R, Alam M. A Scientific Co-relation between Blood Groups and Temperaments in Unani Medicine. Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge. 2007; 6:319-323. <http://nopr.niscair.res.in/handle/123456789/931>
8. Ameen HMW. Qadeem Iilmul Amraz, 4th edition, Qaumi Council Bara e FaroghUrdu Zaban, New Delhi, 2010, 64. <https://www.unanimedworld.com/iilmul-amraz>
9. Ibn Sina AAHIA, Al-Qanoon Fil Tibb (Urdu Translation by Kantoori GHG). Aijaz Publication House, New Delhi 2010; 1-113(83-87):97-98.
10. Nafis IB, Kulliyat-e-Nafisi (Urdu Translation by Kabiruddin HM). Idara Kitabul Shifa, New Delhi, 1954.
11. Ibn Sina AAHIA. Al-Qanun Fil Tibb (English Translation of the Critical Arabic Text). Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi, 1993.
12. Donatelle RJ. Access to Health. Edn 7th, Benjamin Cummings, New York, 2002, 46-47.
13. Zakariya Razi, Kitabul Mansoori, Urdu Translation by CCRUM, Department of AYUSH, Ministry of H & FW, Govt. of India, New Delhi, 1991, 151-152.
14. Ilahi A, Ansari AH, Zulkifile M, Muti MA. Association of Exercise, Sleep Habits, Bathing and House Status in the Genesis of Central Nervous System Disorder. Hamdard Medicus. 2012; 55(3):37.
15. Qarshi HMM, Jam-ul-Hikmat. Idara Kitabul Shifa, New Delhi. 2011; 1:229.
16. Sochaliya KM, Parmar DV, Yadav SB. A Study on Prevalence of Life Style Diseases and its Risk Factors in Urban Area of Jamnagar City. Natl. J Community Med. 2012; 3(4):595-600.
17. Zaidi IH, Zulkifile M. Temperamentology: A Scientific Appraisal of Human Temperament, 1st Edition, Aligarh, 1999.
18. Shah MH. Temperament, Explanation and Interpretation Philosophy of Medicine and Science Problems and Perspective, Compiled By Dept of Philosophy of Medicine and Science, New Delhi, IHMMR, 1972.
19. Professor Rashid Bhika. International Conference on "Holistic Approach of Unani Medicine in Lifestyle Diseases" - Aligarh Muslim University, India, 2007.
20. Whatnall MC, Collins CE, Callister R, Hutchesson MJ. Associations between Unhealthy Diet and Lifestyle Behaviours and Increased Cardiovascular Disease Risk in Young Overweight and Obese Women. Healthcare (Basel). 2016; 4(3):2-57.
21. Feingold KR, Anawalt B, Boyce A *et al.* Nutritional Recommendations for Individuals with Diabetes. South Dartmouth (MA): MDText.com, Inc, 2000.
22. Moritani T, Akamatsu Y. Effect of Exercise and Nutrition upon Lifestyle-Related Disease and Cognitive Function. J Nutr Sci. Vitaminol (Tokyo). 2015; 61:S122-4.
23. Dalle Grave R, Calugi S, Centis E, Marzocchi R, El Ghoch M, Marchesini G. Lifestyle modification in the management of the metabolic syndrome: achievements and challenges. Diabetes Metab Syndr Obes. 2010; 3:373-85.
24. Majusi, A. Kamilus Sana'ah, Vol. 1, Urdu Translated by Kantoori, G.H., Published by Munshi Nawal Kishor, Lucknow. 1889, 229, 233, 235, 286-287.
25. Ilahi A, Zulkifile M, Ansari AH. Association of Exercise, Sleep Habits, Dietary Habits, Bathing and House Status in the Genesis of Central Nervous System Disorders: An Observational Study. Hamdard Medicus. 2012; 55(3):36.
26. Ilahi A, Zulkifile M, Ansari AH. Relevance of exercise and timing of meal in causation of joint disorders: An observational study, Indian Journal of Unani Medicine, ISSN No.0974:6056, International Journal of National Environmental Science Academy, New Delhi. 2009; 2(2):59-61.
27. Zakariya ARAMA, Alhawi Kabeer, Daira Al Ma'aruf Al Usmania, Hyderabad. 1858; 23:153.
28. Ibn Rushd, Kitab Al-Kulliyat, Urdu Translation by CCRUM, Department of AYUSH, Ministry of H & FW, Govt. of India, New Delhi. 1987; 344:348.
29. Saleem S, Saleem S, Mujeeb K, Khan MI, Sherani FS. (2015). Implication of Asbab-e-Sitta Zarooriyah in Prevention of Lifestyle Diseases: A Review. International Journal of Advanced Research. 2015; 3(10):407-412