Dalk (Massage therapy): A Review

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Abstract
Dalk (Massage) is a scientific way of treating some forms of disease by external manipulations, employed in a variety of ways to the soft tissues of the body. It is also a type of manual kneading or manipulating the soft tissues to relieve pain, discomfort, stress to preserve or promote health and wellness.

Keywords: Dalk, Unani medicine, Ilaj-bil-Dawa

Introduction
Unani medicine is also called as Greco-Arabic medicine, it is based on the wisdom and tradition of great Greek physician and father of medicine Buqrat (460-377BC), Roman physician Jalinoos (129-200AD) and it is further elaborated by Arab and Persian physician such as Ibn-Sina, Al-Razi, Ibn-Nafis, Al-Zahrawi. Unani medicine is popular form of traditional medicine, widely practiced and established in many countries. In Unani system of medicine treatment strategy is based on 4 Approaches. Ilaj-bil-Ghiza (Dietotherapy), Ilaj-bil-Dawa (Pharmacotherapy), Ilaj-bit-Tadbeer (Regimenal Therapy) and Ilaj-bil-Yad (Surgery) [1].

Dalk (massage)
Massage is one of those terms, which are easily understood and expressed. Throughout the history massage has been used not only by sick but also by the healthy people for therapeutic, restorative as well as preventive purposes; but people still find it difficult to define massage although they are confident of its meaning. Dalk (Massage) is a scientific way of treating some forms of disease by external manipulations, employed in a variety of ways to the soft tissues of the body. It is also a type of manual kneading or manipulating the soft tissues to relieve pain, discomfort, stress to preserve or promote health and wellness. In Unani medicine, Dalk known as massage, is a form of Riyādat (exercise) as a manipulative technique by means of hands on muscles. It produces Hararat (heat), causes Tahallul (dissolution) and Riqqat (liquidity) in accumulated Fuzlat (morbid matter) of the body. It strengthens the Autar (ligaments) and Azlat (muscles) and evacuates the Fuzlah of Hadm Akheer (waste metabolites) accumulated in the body [2].

Classification of Dalk
There are four major types of Dalk i.e. Dalk Sulb, Dalk Layyin, Dalk Kaseer and Dalk Mutadil.

Dalk Sulb (Firm Massage).
This is a type of massage in which firm pressure is applied while stroking with hands. This renders the body firm and strong by the virtue of eliminating those Rutubat (moistness), which are responsible for the flaccidity of the muscles [3].

Dalk Layyin (Gentle Massage)
This type of massage is performed with soft and slow strokes of the hand without exerting much pressure. It mainly produces muscle relaxation.

Dalk Kaseer (Prolonged Massage)
This type of massage is done for longer duration to reduce body fat mass and renders the body lean and thin, helps in elimination of Rutubat (moisture) from the body leading to weight loss [4].
Dalk Mutadil (Moderate Massage)

This type of massage is moderate in every aspect, such as stroke and duration. Thus induces better perfusion in muscles, helps in the growth and development of the body and causes moderate rise in muscle mass. Dalk Mutadil is Mun’ish-e-Hararat-e-Ghareeezi (innate heat enhancer), causes Talteef (refining) in Akhlat (humours) and enhances freshness of the body.

Classification of therapeutic massage therapy

On the basis of character

Stroking Manipulation: Superficial, Deep (effleurage)
Pressure Manipulation Kneading: it includes palmar kneading, digital kneading and ironing reinforced kneading. Petrissage: it includes, lifting away skin, wringing, Skin rolling. Friction: it includes circular friction and transverse friction [5].

Percussion/Tapotent Manipulation: It includes clapping, hacking, tapping, beating, pounding, tenting, and contact heel percussion. Vibratory Manipulation: It is done by vibrations and shaking.

On the basis of depth of tissue approached: Light, Deep

On the basis of part of body massaged: General, Local

On the basis of application of pressure: Manual, Mechanical massage.

Therapeutic Indications and uses of Dalk

Also indicated in removal of Riyah. In Waja-uz-Zahr. It is useful to soften the muscle if it is hard and if muscle is hard then it makes it soft as well Some times dalk is used for diversion of morbid matter (Khilt) It is used to increased circulation locally Dalk is also indicated in Aayae-Qurooshi Dalk is also indicated in Aayae-Tamaddudi Dalk is also indicated in Aayae-Warmi [6].

Contraindication of Dalk (Massage therapy)

In accumulation of pus.
In acute inflammatory and swelling condition.
In case of Hummiyat.
In case of open wound, unhealed scars.
Recent fracture sites.
In diseases which loses the vessels.

Physiological effect of Massage

Effects on blood circulation

A moderate, consistent and definite increase in the arterial flow is observed. Massage have direct as well as indirect effect on circulatory system. It influences blood circulation [7].

Effects on the organs of digestion

Some authors claim that massage on abdomen has very little impact in digestive system and other viscera. Others stated that it has significant effects, mechanically as well as reflex action also. A common consensus is that massage improve the circulation of viscera and via a reflex pathway causes contraction of smooth muscles.

Effects on lymph circulation

The human body contains 1200-1500 ml of lymph moving at the speed of 4 mm/sec and massage increases these to eight folds. Lymph flows from the interstitial spaces to the collecting vessels. Massage has an indirect effect in lymph circulation. Congestion in capillary network raises the Blood hydrostatic pressure [8].

Removal of metabolites

By increasing the circulation through muscles, massage has the effect of draining the metabolites, including lactic acid and water. Similarly, carbon dioxide is eliminated by the improved venous return.

Effects on the muscles

Petrissage and Tapotentment increase significant venous blood flow in muscles when there is venous stasis of skeletal muscles, by Petrissage the vascular bed is mechanically emptied and it refills with fresh blood supply and the stasis is reduced. Deportment was found to cause 5% increase in muscular blood flow, an increase in the blood flow caused additional temperature changes in the muscle [9].

Timing of Dalk (massage)

Unani physicians emphasized more on the timings of massage. It is very important to know when massage has to be done for the more benefits and good results and to avoid adverse events. Timing of massage exclusively depends on the type and nature of massage. Timing of massage differs according to changes in weather; in Mausam-e-Rabi (spring season) and Mausam-e-Kharif (autumn) massage should be done at Noon; in Mausam-e-Saif (summer season) massage should be done in the morning; in Mausam-e-Shita (winter season), it should be done in afternoon. In Unani literature, duration of massage is not exactly mentioned in terms of minute or hours, but it has been extensively discussed depending upon the various conditions which are as follows: [10].

a) Strength of organ
b) Mizaj of body part to be massaged
c) Type of oil used
d) Mizaj of disease and person
e) Condition of disease (acute, sub-acute, chronic)
f) Condition of patients (obese, lean and thin, healthy)
g) Seasons
h) Desired outcome.


Conclusion

Massage has been a method of treatment for centuries and gaining popularity. It holds an important place as a therapeutic modality in Unani Medicine. Preventive and therapeutic massage is the mainstream treatment of Unani medicine since centuries and it is being indicated for range of musculoskeletal diseases since then.
References