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Temperament/Mijaz of people suffering with sciatica: A descriptive research

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Abstract

Background: Historically Hippocrates was the first physician who used the term ‘Sciatica’, derived from the Greek ‘Ischios’ meaning ‘hip’. He also noticed the symptoms were more frequent in summer and autumn. Low back pain & sciatica is a most common health problem around the world & major cause of disability which affect work performance & general well-being. Sciatica rarely occurs before the age of 20. Incidence peaks in the fifth decade decline thereafter. There are so many environmental and inherent factors that influence sciatica. Sciatica ranges from 1.6% in the general population to 43% in the specific waged population. Identifying temperament in sciatica patients will help in appropriate selection of different Unani remedies and therapies for its treatment and productive research. It might prove a breakthrough in managing Sciatica and decreasing the burden on conventional medicines and their side-effects.

Methods: The Current Study was based on a questionnaire and examination of sixty (60) diagnosed cases of Sciatica according to the temperament chart recommended in Unani literature.

Results: The Study revealed that 48.3% of Sciatica Patients were having Phlegmatic Temperament (*Balghamī al- Mizāj*) 35.0% having sanguine (*Damwī al-Mizāj*) 10.0% were bilious (*Safrāwī al-Mizāj*) and 6.7% were Melancholic (*Sawdawi al- mizaj*).

Conclusion: Sciatica is more prevalent among patients with Phlegmatic temperament followed by sanguine temperament. Thus supports the description given by *Razi* more than thousand years ago.

Keywords: Sciatica, temperament, unani, phlegmatic

Introduction

Sciatica is a musculoskeletal disease, commonly defined as pain radiating from the lower back to the lower limbs beneath the knee associated with both sensory and neurological deficiencies due to the nerve root compression. Sciatica was initially thought to be caused by a ruptured herniated lumbar disc compressing the lumbar nerve roots, but tumors and epidural abscesses compressing the extra-spinal course of the sciatic nerve can also cause sciatica [1]. There is an estimation of 05-10% patients with low back pain having sciatica. While it is stated that lifetime prevalence of low back pain ranges 49% to 70%. Disc-related sciatica prevalence annually estimated in the general population is 2.2% [2]. The Unani Medicinal system is based on the principle of the four-humor proposed by Hippocrates, father of medicine, which states that any disturbance in the ratio of four humors, Akhlat, viz; blood, bile, phlegm, and black bile, is responsible for disease [3]. Sciatica in this system of Medicine is stated as Irq al nasa, an Arabic term [4]. Symptoms are described as dull, deep pain radiating into the posterior buttock and thigh. This is typically referred pain and occurs in structures with the common mesodermal origin. Neuro compressive pain can be felt as sharp, lancinating pain radiating below the knee up to the foot [5]. Severity of Symptoms and causative factors Quantified by some signs and tests like Straight leg raising test, Braggard’s test, femoral nerve stretch test etc. [6]. Sciatica is treated by the conventional therapies like pharmacological or surgical means, or sometimes both. Medicines include oral or parenteral administration of “non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs” epidural injections of anesthetics, corticosteroids, and surgical intervention include hemilaminectomy or microdiscectomy [2]. According to Unani System of Medicine Sciatica is linked with Humoral disbalance, and disturbance in temperament [4, 7, 8]. The basic principle of treatment of sciatica in Unani medicine is to normalize the disturbed humoral balance and altered temperament [3]. Sciatica has been treated for centuries with herbal medicine and different types of therapies which strongly need a comprehensive scientific validation. Knowing the temperament of

patients suffering from sciatica will help in appropriate selection of different Unani remedies and therapies for its treatment and productive research. Such a study might prove much beneficial in managing sciatica and decreasing the burden on conventional medicines and their side-effects. The current study was thus performed to assess the temperament (mizaj) of patients having Sciatica.

In a cross-sectional study sixty (60) diagnosed cases of Sciatica were evaluated for temperament according to the temperament chart recommended in Unani literature (Table 1). This brief study was conducted at Regional Research Institute of Unani Medicine (RRIUM), Srinagar, Kashmir for a period of one year (December 2019 to December 2020). The data obtained was analyzed by using SPSS, version 20.0.

Methods

Table 1: Assessment of Mizaj (Temperament)

Parameters	Damwī (sanguine)		Balghamī (phlegmatic)		Safrāwī (bilious)		Sawdāwī (melancholic)	
Complexion	Ruddy (reddish/wheaty/ Brown)	1	Chalky (whitish)	0.75	Pale (yellowish)	0.5	Purple (blackish)	0.25
Built	Muscular & broad	1	Fatty & broad	0.75	Muscular & thin	0.5	Skeletal	0.25
Touch	Hot & soft	1	Cold & soft	0.75	Hot & dry	0.5	Cold & dry	0.25
Hair	Black & lusty thick. Rapid growth.	1	Black & thin. Slow growth.	0.75	Brown & thin. Rapid growth	0.5	Brown & thin. Slow growth.	0.25
Movement	Active	1	Dull	0.75	Hyperactive	0.5	Less active	0.25
Diet (most liked)	Cold & dry	1	Hot & dry	0.75	Cold & moist	0.5	Hot & moist	0.25
Weather (most suitable)	Spring	1	Summer	0.75	Winter	0.5	Autumn	0.25
Sleep	Normal (6-8 hrs.)	1	In excess	0.75	Inadequate	0.5	Insomnia	0.25
Pulse	Normal (6-8 hrs.)	1	Slow (60-70)	0.75	Rapid (80-100)	0.5	Slow (60-70)	0.25
Emotions	Normal	1	Calm & quiet	0.75	Angry	0.5	Nervous	0.25

Range of temperament in numbers are; sanguine: 7.5-10; phlegmatic: 5.10-7.50; bilious: 2.51-5.00: melancholic: 0.00-2.50.

- Damwi
- Balghamī
- Safravi
- Sawdawi

Inclusion criteria

Patients between 20 to 65 years of age, complaining of Radiating shooting pain from back to anterior thigh muscles,

posterior thigh muscles, Buttock, calf muscle, posterolateral or anterolateral foot.

Exclusion criteria

Patients who fail to give consent, or with traumatic, infective, neoplastic conditions of spine, pregnancy, chronic systemic and mental illnesses.

Results

The results obtained after completion of trial have been shown in the form of table 2 and figure 1 below;

Table 2: Number and percentage of patients in four different temperament/Mizaj groups

Temperament	Number of patients out of sixty	Percentage
Phlegmatic (<i>Balghamī</i>)	29	48.3
Sanguine (<i>Damwī</i>)	21	35
Bilious (<i>Safrawī</i>)	4	6.7
Melancholic (<i>Sawdawī</i>)	6	10

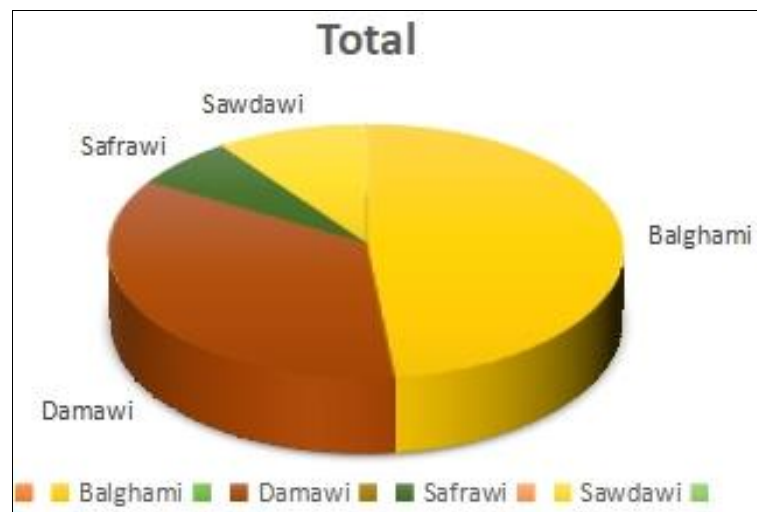


Fig 1: Distribution of patients as per their temperament

Discussion

After assessing the temperament (mizaj) of 60 diagnosed sciatica patients majority, 29 (48.3%), were seen to have

phlegmatic temperament (*Balghamī al- Mizāj*). This was followed by 21 (35.0%) sanguine temperament (*Damwī al- Mizāj*), while as 6 (10.0%) were having bilious (*Safrāwī al-*

Mizāj) and only 4 (6.7%) with melancholic temperament (*Sawdawī al- mizāj*). This finding proves the concept given by Abu-Bakr Mohammad bin Zakariya *Razi* that the sciatica (*Irq al Nasa*) is more frequent among the Phlegmatic and Sanguine Temperament people ^[7].

Conclusion

From the study it is inferred and proved that phlegmatic people are more prone to sciatica. It will not only help for devising preventive measures but also appropriate selection of unani herbs for the treatment of sciatica.

Conflict of Interest

Not available

Financial Support

Not available

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