

Persian medicine non-pharmacological therapies for headache: phlebotomy and wet cupping

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Abstract

OBJECTIVE: To describe the common causes of headache as well as the different methods of Phlebotomy (Fasd) and wet Cupping (Hijamat) based on Persian Medicine.

METHODS: In this study, we searched Google Scholar, Science Direct, PubMed and Scopus to get any in vitro or clinical evidence of the efficacy and possible mechanisms of phlebotomy or wet cupping on different types of headaches. Also different types of headaches, according to PM, under the title of "Sodaa"; extracted from famous Persian medical text books with key words including "Sodaa",

"Bayze" and "Shaqiqe".

RESULTS: According to PM, diseases (dys-temperament) are created by abnormal alteration in temperament. Temperament is a monolithic quality yielded by interaction between opposing qualities of four elements that are coldness, hotness, dryness and wetness. Headaches are caused by dys-temperament (sue-Mizaj) in brain or in total body that are divided into simple and corporal. Common forms of the latter type are Vaporal and Migrant headache (Bokhari and Rihi). Each of these headaches is treated either through phlebotomy or wet cupping.

CONCLUSION: In Persian Medicine, Fasd and Hijamat are easy and economical methods for treatment of headache with reasonable results. By describing the precise areas and indications of phlebotomy and wet cupping, this study provides the first step for future clinical trials in this field.

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Keywords: Headache; Phlebotomy; Cupping therapy; Sodaa; Persian Medicine

INTRODUCTION

Headache is one of the most common neurological disorders which have a negative impact on the individual's social life, education, and duties. It also decreases the patient's life expectancy. Its prevalence proportion has been reported as 31%-96% in different countries and 40%-70% and 20%-50% in women and men respectively.¹ International Headache Society (IHS) classified headache into primary and secondary types. Com-

mon primary headaches are migraine, tension-type, and trigeminal autonomic headache (or cluster type).² Several hypotheses are considered for pathophysiology of these headaches but the prevalent pathway is the ailment through trigeminal nerve fibers.¹

There are multiple treatments for headache. The most conventional treatments for the acute phase are acetaminophen, aspirin, chlorpromazine, somatritipan and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and for the chronic phase tricyclic antidepressants, beta-blockers and anti-epilepsy drugs are prescribed.³ Due to the recurrence and episodic features of disease and repeated consumption of analgesics, side effects including depression, insomnia, dizziness, constipation, obesity,³ ischemic colitis,⁴ stroke and heart attack appears in patients.⁵⁻⁷ Therefore more than 50% of patients stop their treatments.⁸

Multiple side effects of mentioned treatments and lack of an appropriate response to the medications, increases the propensity to Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) such as herbal therapy, massage therapy, reflexology, acupuncture, hydrotherapy, homeopathy.⁹ In recent studies, the number of patients with neurological problems that have relative improvement with CAM treatments has been increased worldwide.^{3,8-13}

PM as a kind of alternative medicine is a method of prevention, diagnosis and treatment based on humoral theory which has a history as old as 8000 years.¹⁴ Its booming period dates back to the golden era of Islam in the early medieval period.^{14,15} Medieval Books such as Liber Continent (al-Hawi) of Rhazes (Razi, 9-10th AD), Liber Regius (Royal Book or al-Maliki) of Haly Abbas (10th AD), (al-Qanun fi-Teb) of Avicenna

(10-11th AD) which are the most prominent medical books of Iranian physicians played an important role in western universities as they were taught there up to the seventeenth century AD.^{16,17}

Headache is defined as "Sodaa" in Traditional Persian medical books. More than 20 types of headaches (Sodaa) with different causes were listed and over 160 different drugs by oral, topical and nasal usage and non-pharmacological procedures such as Fasd and Hijamat have been used in the treatment of them.¹⁸⁻²² Fasd and Hijamat among various approaches and methods are as the main non pharmacological treatments in PM,²³ and their application have been investigated in various diseases.²⁴⁻³²

Due to importance of headache disorder and therapeutic successes of PM in several diseases, especially in migraine and other types of headaches with Hijamat and Fasd^{24,25,29-31} the aim of this study was to explain various techniques of phlebotomy (Fasd) and wet Cupping (Hijamat) therapy for headache in PM.

METHODS

This study was conducted in the form of a review article, with data being gathered via authentic texts of PM (Illustrated in Table 1). These manuscripts are regarded as the most prominent texts among medical and pharmaceutical books of PM from 10th to 18th century AD.^{19-23,33-40}

First, the history, complications, and prohibitions of phlebotomy and cupping therapy were described.^{16,17,25,28,41-44} Then, the causes, signs and symptoms of common types of headache in PM are listed and are shown in

Table 1 List of traditional persian manuscripts/books used in this article

No.	Traditional Persian name	Latin or English name	Writer	Living period
1	Ferdows al-Hekmahfi'l-Tibb	The Paradise of Wisdom in Medicine	Ali Ibn Rabban Tabari	8-9th AD ³⁹
2	Al-Hawifi'l-Tibb	Liber Continent or Comprehensive Book of Medicine	Zakariya Ra'azi	9-10th AD ³⁵
3	Kamel al-Sanaat al-Tibbyyah	Liber Regius or Complete Book of the Medical Art or Royal Book	Ali Ibn Abbas Majusi Ahwazi (Haly Abbas)	10th AD ³⁷
4	Hedayat al-Mota'alleminfi'l-Tibb	An Educational Guide for Medical Students	Abu Bakr Akhawayni Bukhari	10th AD ³⁴
5	Al-Qanunfi'l-Tibb	Canon of Medicine	Hossein Ibn Ali Avicenna (Avicenna)	10-11th AD ²²
6	Zakhirey-e- Kharazmshahi	Treasure of Kharazmshah	Sayyed Esma'il Jorjani.	11-12th AD ³⁰
7	Al-Aghraz al-Tebbieh va al-Mabahes al-Alayieh	Medical Pursuits	Sayyed Esma'il Jorjani	11-12th AD ³⁶
8	Al-Mujaz fi al-Tibb	A Commentary on Ibn Sina's Canon	Ibn Nafis Qarshi	13th AD ⁵⁴
9	Ikhtiyarat-e-Badiyee	Selections for Badī'i	Zein al-Din Attar Ansari Shirazi	14th AD ³⁸
10	Tohfat al-Momenin	Rarity of the Faithful	Mohammad Momen Tonekaboni	16th AD ⁴⁰
11	Teb-e-Akbari	Akbari's Medicine	Akbar Arzani	17-18th AD ²¹
12	Moalejat-e-aghili	Aghili's Treatments	Mohammad Hossein Aghili Khorasani	18th AD ³³
13	Kholasat al-Hekmah	The summary of wisdom	Mohammad Hossein Aghili Khorasani	18th AD ²³
14	Exir-e-Azam	Great Elixir	Mohammad Azam Khan Chasti	18th AD ¹⁹

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