



Combating Covid-19 and Related Psychological Disorders through Unani System of Medicine: A Review

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ABSTRACT: COVID-19 or novel coronavirus is a deadly disease known to cause major respiratory-related issues and death in many sufferers. Physical distancing, sanitizing hands and use of triple-layer masks are effective preventive measures observed across the globe, but due to home confinement most individuals suffer from stress, anxiety, and fear; further stress of losing near and dear ones, fear of disease transmission, closure of business or losing jobs has led to devastating consequences. It means several psychological related conditions are prevailing in the general population. Recent reports had also raised the issue and measures to combat psychological diseases are a major concern nowadays. Unani medicine is a time-tested traditional system of medicine practiced in most parts of the world with principles of treating disease through natural drugs and regimens. In the current scenario of psychological related conditions, Unani medicine may prove handy through its nature-based care. In the Unani system of medicine, some compound drugs like Majoone Najah, Sufoof Musakkin, Habbe Asgand, Khameera Sandal, etc. and single drugs like Gule Surkh, Asgandh, Kishneez etc., are very effective to cure psychological conditions in general Covid-19 related psychological conditions in particular. This paper deals with the study of the concept of infection and preventive measures of Covid-19 through Unani medicine and in detail discussion of related psychological disease conditions and their Unani treatment.

Keywords: Covid-19; Unani medicine; psychological; prevention.

I. INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 outbreaks in Wuhan, the capital city of Hubei province, China at the beginning of winter of 2019. On 31st December 2019, Wuhan municipal health commission reported the outbreak to WHO, China country office as pneumonia of unknown etiology. On 5th January 2020, WHO states that reported symptoms are common in several respiratory diseases and pneumonia is common in winter. The initial onset of symptoms was traced between the period of 8th December 2019 to 5th January 2020 as fever, cough, and dyspnoea. The majority of patients were 40-69 years of age with male predominance [1].

Nowadays, due to this disease, many people are having psychological problems because of the fatality of this disease and, there is no proper cure has come in front of intellectuals. In the current global home confinement situation due to COVID-19 outbreaks, most individuals suffer from stress, anxiety, and fear. As of February 2, 2021, the total cases of coronavirus are 103,934,810, and 2,247,755 deaths have been reported [2]. Viral infections, in general, are supposed to be at greater risk of developing psychotic disorders and it is believed that psychotic diseases should be given a preference in considering any pandemic like Covid 19 [3, 4].

As humans are called social animals but nowadays being forced to stay home, work from home, homeschooling has eventually reduced outings which results in psychological disorders particularly stress and

anxiety. Moreover, the stress of losing near and dear ones, fear of disease transmission, closure of business have led to devastating consequences. The anxiety and fear raised due to the COVID-19 crisis are severely burdened on peoples' internal mental ability. Issues include problems in decision-making, commotion, and mental exhaustion. In this paper, an attempt has been made to review COVID-19 related psychological disorders and their management through the Unani System of Medicine. Unani physicians have recommended Arqe Gulab (rose water), Qust, Banafsha, Honey, Kundur, etc., for prophylactic purposes. Some pilot clinical research has been conducted to validate the efficacy of traditional medicines in Covid-19 has given hopeful results [5].

II. UNANI CONCEPT OF COVID-19

Since this disease is a new entity, classical texts may not have a direct reference to this deadly disease but the sign and symptoms are quite relevant to *Nazla Wabai* or *Humma Wabai*. It is mentioned in the classical texts that when there is alteration and deterioration in the air, the changes can be seen in the weather like there is no rain in the rainy season, continuous airflow with untimely clouds, lightning at night, the sun seen is cloudy and gloomy. Insects, bees, and mites produce in large amounts and the creatures living inside the earth come out of it [6].

Unani physicians have described that when the contaminated air in terms of *Kaifiyat* or *Johar* enters the human body then these types of pandemic diseases occur. *Nazla wabai* is most common in humid areas and the winter season. It spreads from one area to another area. It affects mostly old age and children. Sometimes the patients have *nazla* (cold) as well as fever; Unani physicians called it *Humma Wabai* [7,8].

III. SIGN AND SYMPTOMS OF HUMMA WABAI PRESENT IN CLASSICAL TEXTS

Though covid 19 is a novel disease so the signs and symptoms narrated in classical Unani texts under the heading of *Nazla Wabai* and *Humma Wabai* are up to a greater extend found related to this disease. Following are the main symptoms mentioned in classic texts.

Acute weakness [9]

Alteration in taste sensation[9]

Fever, may or may not be with chills and rigor [9].

Giddiness[9]

Sometimes vomiting and purgation are also present [9].

The patient feels increased temperature inside the body [9].

Restlessness [9]

Irregular respiration [8]

Dry cough[9]

Dyspnea [8]

Bad smell in expiration[7]

Small and irregular pulse [8]

Sometimes splenomegaly [8]

Decrease appetite [8]

Increase thirst [8]

Sleeplessness [8]

In the late stage, there is the coldness of extremities. [3]

IV. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WABA (PANDEMICS)

Unani scholars had mentioned in detail the regimes which should be applied as preventive measures against any pandemic which are as follows:

Use of measures and regimes which are opposite to the temperament of air, e.g. use of hot drinks and foods in cold and in the summer season, live on high altitude. Fumigate the whole house with mastagi, heeng, zafran, kundru, quste shiri, etc[7]. During the time of pandemics, eating fruits should be avoided. Avoid meat or use the meat of those birds which live in mountains. Fish meat should be strictly avoided [9, 10]. Use *Sikanjabeen* which is made up of *gulab* is prescribed. The use of light *mulayyin* (laxative) drugs like *Imli*, *Gule banafsha*, *Amaltas*, etc., are useful[9]. Avoid food that contains more liquid content or take *khushk* (dry) diets. Eat less than habit and use vinegar more during pandemics [7]. Intake and the local application of cow ghee on the whole body are recommended. Drinking vinegar mixed water is considered to be good during pandemics. Use of onion in large quantity is also recommended [10]. It is also mentioned that one should not skip meals during a pandemic but instead take easily digestible foods in small quantities [8]. In addition to this use of tea and measures to avoid constipation are recommended.

One of the interesting things mentioned is to not step out of the house [10]. And if a person is found to have

symptoms of pandemic he or she should be kept in a separate room during disease. Apart from this Stay in the fresh air, using clean Clothes and warm clothes in winter are also prescribed [8].

V. SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Use four tablets of *Qurse mulayyan* with lukewarm water to clear the stomach and intestine[8].

2. Boil and strain the *Behidana* 3 gm, *Unnab* 5 piece, *Sapistan* 9 pieces and give it along with *sharbat banafsha* 20 ml once in the morning and once in the evening. Add *Khaksi* 5 gm if fever persists[8].

3. For headache and body ache, *Pashoya* (foot bath) of boiled *Gule banafsha* 1 gm, *Akleelul malik* 1 gm, *Gule baboona* 1 gm, *Marzanjosh* 1 gm, *Gule khatmi* 1 gm, leaves of *Beri* 5 gm in 10 *Ser* of water, is beneficial. Dip the patient's legs in this decoction up to the calf for 10 minutes and wrap a cloth around the legs after drying out[8].

4. For severe cough, give *Sharbate khaskhasi* or *Sharbate Ejaz* 20 ml is recommended.

5. To relieve the throat pain use *Shatbate Toot siyah* 20 ml is advised.

6. *Tiryaqe Kabeer* 4 ratti to 3.5 gm for prophylaxis is also recommended [8].

7. The spray of *Sandal*, *Gulab*, and *kafoor* inside the house or a sprinkle of *Arq Gulab* along with vinegar in the house to keep the space free of germs is highly beneficial[6,8]. *Qurse kafoor* every morning for prophylaxis is advised [8].

8. Inhalation of *Gulab* dipped vinegar.

9. *Abe Anar tursh* and *Abe Kafoor* and *Maul Shaeer* along with the sugar are also very beneficial [8].

VI. COVID19 AND BURDEN OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DISEASE

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) epidemic is known as a general health crisis that has caused irreversible psychological impacts on human societies. These psychological problems and home confinement may disturb mental health and anxiety or depression-like symptoms may arise [3, 4].

Covid-19 gives a breeding ground for hatred fear and social stigma [11]. Avoidance from social contact, gathering, lockdown faces, traveling restrictions, cultural celebration limitations, closure of places of entertainment, school, colleges, worshiping places, and fear of students and parents of loss of academic year all this leads to mental disorder [3,11].

An online survey was done it showed that 72% of participants were worried for themselves and their close ones during the ongoing COVID -19 pandemic. More than 80% of participants felt the need for professional help from mental health experts to deal with emotional issues and other psychological issues during this pandemic[12]. Recently it is also reported that a new-onset psychosis associated with COVID-19 infection with potential immune-mediated neuropathogenesis is present within Covid-19 [13]. Interestingly Unani scholars had also mentioned that psychological conditions may prevail during pandemics and one of the important aspects of coping with pandemics is avoidance of psychic reactions like sadness, angeriness, etc [10].

VII. UNANI MANAGEMENT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH-RELATED CONDITIONS DURING PANDEMIC

In the Unani system of medicines, anxiety disorders are described as *Malankholia*, *Junoon*, *Bedaari* or *Sehar*, *Khafqaan*, etc. There are various regimes, dietary recommendations, and single and compound drugs are mentioned in classical treasures which are quite practicable in this era also. They are as follows:

(a) General regimes

The room should be well ventilated and aromatic flowers such as *Banafsha* or *Nilofar* or *Arq e gulab* may be sprinkled to refresh the air [14]. *Roghan e Banafsha* (*Viola odorata*) should be applied on the scalp and also inhaled through both nostrils. *Bakhur* (fomentation) of *Oud* (*Aquilaria agallocha*) *Kafoor* (*Cinnamomum Camphora*), *Sandal* (*Santalum Album*), etc., should be done at a frequent interval to make the atmosphere pleasant and aromatic [15].

Hamam with aromatic medicines like *Oud*, *Jawitry*, and *Jajphal*, *Kundur* (*Boswellia serrata*), etc. Dalak of the body by *Roghan e Zaitoon*, *Roghan e Kaddu*, *Roghan e Kahu*, *Roghan e Laboob e Saba*, etc., and *Saut* with *Roghan e Banafsha* (*Viola odorata*), *Roghan Nilofar* (*Nelumbonucifera*), *Roghan Kaddu*

(*Cucurbita maxima*) and the same oils may also use [16]. Regular exercise helps to promote or maintain positive self-esteem and improves mental health [17,18].

(b) Dietary recommendations

Zoodhazam (easily digestible) and good *akhlat* (humor) producing diets have been recommended. Cold and moist vegetables like *Palak* (*spinacia oboacea*), *Khurfa* (*Portula caoleracea*), *Kaddu* (*Cucurbita maxima*), *Taroi* (*Luffa acutangula*), *Tinda* (*praecitrullus fistulosus*), *Bathua* (*Chenopodium album*), *Kasni* (*cichorium intybus*), *Khas* (*chrysopongon zizanioides*) and fruits like *Anar* (*Punicagranatum*), *Grapes* (*Vitus vinifera*) and dry fruits like *Badam* (*Prunus amygdalus*), etc. are recommended. *Buqrat* has advocated that *Ma us Shaeer* (Barley water) is the best food in pandemic [16].

(c) Dietary restrictions

Saqeel (heavy), *Naffaq* (flatus producing), *Garam Ashiya* (hot eateries), and *Sauda* (Melancholic) producing diet should be avoided like *Masoordaal* (*Lens culinaria*), *Brinjal* (*Solanum eldigen*), etc., should be avoided.

(d) List of few herbs explored for their potential anxiolytic effects

Table 1.

Botanical name	Family	Plant part	Extract	Reference
<i>Achyranthes aspera</i> Linn	Amaranthaceae	Leaves	Methanol	[19]
<i>Actaea spicata</i> Linn	Ranunculaceae	Roots	Petroleum ether	[20]
<i>Carica papaya</i>	Caricaceae	Pulp	80% ethanol	[21]
<i>Clannamomum osmophloeum</i> ct. <i>linalool</i>	Lauraceae	Leaves	Essential oil	[22]
<i>Coriandrium sativum</i>	Umbelliferae	Fruits	70% Ethanol	[23]
<i>Occimum grattissimum</i>	Lamiaceae	Leaves	70% Ethanol	[24]
<i>Telfairia occidentalis</i>	Cucurbitaceae	Leaves	Hydroalcoholic	[25]

(e) Some Useful Single Unani Herbs for Palpitation

Table 2.

Name of herb	Common name	Botanical name	Actions on the heart as per Unani text	Pharmacological studies confirming the cardioprotective activity
<i>Baadranjboya</i>	Catnip	<i>Nepetahindostana Haines</i>	<i>Mufarrih (exhilarant)</i>	[26]
<i>Aabresham</i>	Silk cocoon	<i>Bombyx mori</i>	<i>Muqawwi-e-Qalb (cardiotonic)</i>	[27]
<i>Sumbul-al-Teeb</i>	Spikenard, Indian nard	<i>Nardostachys jatamansi</i>		[28]
<i>Sandal safed</i>	Sandal wood	<i>Santalum album</i>	<i>Mufarreh(exhilarant) muqawwi e qalb (cardiotonic)</i>	[29]
<i>Gul e Surkh/Gulab</i>	Pink rose, Rose	<i>Rosa damascena</i>		[30]

(f) Some useful single Unani Herbs for Depression

Table 3.

<i>Sumbulteeb</i>	<i>Nardostachysjatamansi</i>	antidepressant	[31]
<i>Gul e Surkh</i>	<i>Rosa damascena</i>	antidepressant	[32]
<i>Asgand</i>	<i>Withaniasomnifera</i>	Mood stabilizer and anti depressant	[33]
<i>Amla</i>	<i>Embellicaofficinalis</i>	Antidepressant and antioxidant	[34]
<i>Gaozaban</i>	<i>Boragoofficinalis</i>	antidepressant	[35]
<i>Saad kufi</i>	<i>Cyperusrotundus</i>	antidepressant	[36]

(g) Some useful Unani drugs used to treat Insomnia

Table 4.

Common Name	Scientific name	Action	Pharmacological studies done
Kadoo	<i>Cucurbita maxima</i>	Sleep inducing	[37]
Barg e khurfaSiyah	<i>Portulacaoleracea</i>	Sleep inducing	[37]
Kahu	<i>Lactuca sativa</i>	Sleep inducing	[11]
Palak	<i>Spinacia oleracea</i>	Sleep inducing	[37]
Barg e Khas	<i>Chrysopogon zizanioides</i>	Sleep inducing	[38]
Sheeratukhme e khashkhash	<i>Papaversomniferum</i>	Sleep inducing	[11]

(h) Some useful Unani Compound Formulations to treat psychological disorders

Table 5.

Compound Formulation	Action	Reference
<i>Arq e gulab</i>	Soothing effect	[7, 8, 39]
<i>Arq e Bahar</i>	Used to treat palpitation	[7, 8, 10, 39]
<i>Khameera Banafsha</i>	Sleep inducing and anti-anxiety	[7, 8, 39]
<i>Khameera Sandal sada</i>	Used to treat anxiety	[8, 10,39]
<i>Majoon sandal</i>	Used to treat Anxiety	[7, 8, 10, 39]
<i>MufarrehAzam</i>	Used to treat Anxiety	[7, 8, 39]
<i>Roghan e Kaddu</i>	Sleep inducing	[7, 8, 39]
<i>Roghane e laboob e Saba</i>	Sleep inducing	[7, 8,10,11, 39]
<i>Sharbat e gaozaban</i>	Used to treat palpitation	[7, 8, 11, 9, 39]
<i>Sharbat e Sandal</i>	Soothing effect	[7, 8, 10, 39]

VIII. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Covid 19 is a highly contagious disease and measures to avoid the spread and transmission of disease should be applied to every aspect. Unani medicine like other traditional medicine may provide help in avoidance of disease spread and in the same manner, may be found useful in the prevention of this deadly disease. One of the important aspects of this pandemic which usually does not speak about is related to mental and psychological health.

Previous studies have found a strong positive relationship between social interaction and mental health. Loneliness and social isolation have both been found to be associated with increased mortality risk, whilst controlling for baseline mental and physical health [40].

As described in classical Unani texts, psychological health is very important in combatting the pandemic. The natural and easy-to-use regimes, dietary modifications, and herbal drugs of Unani medicine may be found helpful in combating the psychological aspects without any apparent adverse effects.

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Conflict of Interest. None

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