



Comprehensive Management of Lifestyle Disorders through Asbab-E-Sitta Zarooriyah: Insights from the Unani System of Medicine

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ABSTRACT:

This study explores the intricate landscape of lifestyle disorders, examining a comprehensive management approach rooted in the Unani System of Medicine. Focused on Asbab-e-Sitta Zarooriyah, the six essential factors influencing health, our investigation aims to provide profound insights into mitigating and preventing lifestyle disorders through Unani principles. Through a synthesis of traditional wisdom and contemporary perspectives, this research sheds light on the holistic strategies employed within the Unani System of Medicine. By understanding the intricate balance of these essential factors, we strive to contribute to a more nuanced and effective approach to lifestyle disorder management.

Keywords: *Asbab-e-Sitta Zarooriyah, Lifestyle disorders, Unani System of Medicine, GTCH*

Introduction:

In the contemporary landscape of healthcare, lifestyle disorders have emerged as a pervasive challenge, demanding innovative and holistic strategies for effective management. This study embarks on a journey into the realms of the Unani System of Medicine, specifically focusing on the Comprehensive Management of Lifestyle Disorders through the lens of Asbab-e-Sitta Zarooriyah.

Asbab-e-Sitta Zarooriyah, constituting the six essential factors in Unani philosophy, encapsulates a holistic understanding of the determinants influencing an individual's health. The six essential factors—Hawa-e-Muhit (Atmospheric Air), Makool-wa-Mashroob (Foods and Drinks), Harkat-wa-Sakoon-e-Badani (Physical Activity and Rest), Harkat-wa-Sakoon-e-Nafsani (Psychological Activity and Repose), Naum-wa-Yaqzah (Sleep and Wakefulness), Istifragh-wa-Ihtibas (Elimination and Retention)—a complex web that strongly influences the balance of the human body.

This research seeks to unravel the potential of Asbab-e-Sitta Zarooriyah as a comprehensive framework for managing lifestyle disorders, drawing insights from the traditional wisdom embedded in the Unani System. By synthesizing ancient principles with contemporary perspectives, our exploration aims to shed light on the integrative and holistic nature of Unani medicine.

Through a meticulous examination of these essential factors, we aspire to contribute meaningful insights to the discourse on lifestyle disorder management. This study envisions a bridge between traditional Unani principles and modern healthcare practices, offering a fresh perspective on the holistic care and prevention of lifestyle disorders.

As we start this journey, our aim is to discover practical ideas that could lead to a better and more effective way of managing lifestyle disorders. We want to embrace the holistic principles of the Unani System of Medicine.

Lifestyle diseases are defined as diseases linked to the way people live their lives, commonly caused by abuse of alcohol, drugs, and smoking, as well as a lack of physical activity and unhealthy eating habits.²⁴

Examples of lifestyle disorders

The prevalence of lifestyle disorders, including hypertension, diabetes mellitus, dyslipidemia, and obesity, associated with cardiovascular diseases is rapidly increasing. Cardiovascular disorders persist as the primary cause of mortality, accounting for approximately 30% of all global deaths.^{25,26}

Comprehensive Management of Lifestyle Disorders through Asbab-e-Sitta Zarooriyah

Management in Unani is centered around Asbab-e-Sitta Zarooriyah, the six essential prerequisites adherence to which is essential for a healthy life. ⁶

Asbab-e-Sitta Zarooriyah includes six essential pre requisites which are as follows- ^{7,8,9,10}

1. **Hawa-e-Muhit** (Atmospheric Air)
2. **Makool-wa-Mashroob** (Foods and Drinks)
3. **Harkat-wa-Sakoon-e-Badani** (Physical Activity and Rest)
4. **Harkat-wa-Sakoon-e-Nafsani** (Psychological Activity and Repose)
5. **Naum-wa-Yaqzah** (Sleep and Wakefulness)
6. **Istifragh-wa-Ihtibas** (Elimination and Retention)

The six factors mentioned above essentially influence every human body; hence, they are referred to as Asbab-e-Sitta Zarooriyah. No one can escape the impact of these factors as long as they are alive. ¹⁰

Hawa-e-Muhit (Atmospheric Air)

Air takes precedence over all six essential factors; without it, the existence of life is unimaginable. Regularly breathing in fresh air is an effective way to strengthen the immune system and ward off pathogens. ¹⁴ The quality of the air a person breathes is believed to directly affect their temperament and, consequently, their health. Pure and clean air is crucial for better health, as many diseases can result from changes in the air. Seasonal variations in the air can support and favor one's Tabiyat (temperament), promoting overall health. However, these changes can sometimes be unfavorable to Tabiyat, leading to sue mizaj (mal-temperament) of the ruh (psyche/soul) and qalb (heart), and contributing to ill health — for example, Wabai hawa (epidemic air). ¹¹

Waba (epidemic) is believed to signify an alteration in the 'jauhar' (essence) of air. Consequently, the air becomes impure, ultimately leading to the sue mizaj of the ruh, which may result in the morbidity or mortality of a large number of people. ⁵ This situation persists until the air returns to its pure state. Once the air regains its normal characteristics, affected individuals recover their normal temperament, and their health is restored. Therefore, a direct relationship exists between air quality and temperament. Any contagion in the air can impact healthy life either gradually or suddenly, depending on the intensity of contamination. If atmospheric air contamination is abrupt and intense, it may result in sudden death due to suffocation. Chronic effects related to prolonged inhalation of contaminated air include conditions such as chronic bronchitis, bronchial asthma, respiratory allergies, emphysema, and lung cancer. ¹²

In his famous work, 'The Canon of Medicine,' Ibne Sina (980-1030 AD) states that a change in the environment can relieve patients of various diseases. He also underscores the importance of having open, well-ventilated houses, playgrounds, and gardens in cities. This ensures that everyone has access to fresh air, promoting a proper ecological balance. ¹³

Makool-wa-Mashroob (Foods and Drinks)

Diet constitutes an essential component of the six fundamental factors. In Unani medicine, food is defined as "substances altered by the body that do not produce any change and become a part of the body." Each type of food elicits both perceptible and non-perceptible symptoms when administered in various concentrations. This effect is described in terms of one's feelings with varying intensity. For example, if a food is consumed and there is no noticeable change in the body after assimilation, it is considered mutadil or moderate. Conversely, if it induces a slight effect of heat, cold, dryness, or wetness, it is categorized as having a constitution of hot, cold, dry, or wet, respectively. The intensity of the effects of foods depends on one's own Mizaj. Unani medicine provides comprehensive instructions on specific food and dietary schedules tailored for different times of the day, various seasons, and according to one's age. Most importantly, these guidelines are designed to suit an individual's temperament. Therefore, it is essential to consider and comprehend dietary issues, as this understanding plays a crucial role in promoting health and preventing diseases. ^{15,16}

Harkat-wa-Sakoon-e-Badani (Physical Activity and Rest)

Physical activity plays an essential role in ensuring health and well-being, and a considerable body of research explores the benefits of exercise. Engaging in physical activity positively impacts various aspects of the body, including the heart, skeletal muscles, bones, blood (such as cholesterol levels), the immune system, and the nervous system. Additionally, it can help reduce several risk factors associated with Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). ⁴

Unani physicians assert that physical activity is crucial for activating hararat ghariziya (innate energy) and facilitating the elimination of the body's waste products. However, prolonged activity of any kind results in the dispersion of hararat ghariziya. Rest becomes necessary to alleviate fatigue and reduce body temperature, which can be detrimental to body fluids. An excess of both, however, leads to a chilling effect on the body. Movement causes a decrease in innate fluids, while excessive rest increases body fluid, thereby diminishing innate energy. ⁷

Riyazat (exercise) stimulates innate heat, facilitating the maturation of thick morbid matters and their subsequent elimination through the proper outlet. It enhances arterial blood supply and nutrition to the affected muscles. Physical activity serves various purposes, helping individuals achieve multiple goals, such as increased cardiorespiratory fitness, heightened vigor, improved glycaemic control, decreased insulin resistance, an enhanced lipid profile, reduction in blood pressure, and the maintenance of weight loss.

Harkat-wa-Sakoon-e-Nafsani (Psychological Activity and Repose)

Ibn-e-Sina was the pioneering physician to establish the connection between psychology and medicine. The body and mind exert mutual influence, with nafsiyati awamil (psychological factors) being dependent on the dominant khilt and mizaj of an individual.⁷ Mental stress is often associated with lifestyle disorders such as hypertension and diabetes. Achieving mental relaxation through various means becomes crucial for protect human life.

Naum-wa-Yaqzah (Sleep and Wakefulness)

Normal sleep and wakefulness are essential for health. The benefits of sleep include providing rest to the nafs (psyche) and organs, making a person more active, and aiding in digestion for overall health. Sleep also plays a crucial role in repairing and regenerating the body's functions. Healthy individuals should pay special attention to their sleep, ensuring it is regular, moderate, and not excessively long. Ideally, every individual requires a proper 7 to 8 hours of sleep to facilitate the repair of body functions. Any alterations in sleep patterns can impact the body's immune function, hormone secretion, and mental and physical stamina.

Sleep and wakefulness are vital aspects of life, where sleep is related to rest, and wakefulness is comparable to movement. Normal physical and psychosocial functions hinge on adequate sleep.¹³ According to the eminent Unani scholar Zakariya Razi, eight hours of sleep are crucial for health. Razi also asserts that sleep strengthens the vital faculty, pneuma, and promotes digestion by retaining hararat-e-ghareeziyah.^{17,18} Movements generate hararat (innate heat), aiding in the elimination of waste products by disintegration and preparing food for combustion. Therefore, sleep is necessary before any movement to ensure the body receives proper nourishment. Majoosi adds that sleep benefits tabiyat in two ways: mental and physical rest, and digestion and concoction of akhlat (body fluids), causing innate heat to enter the body.^{3,19}

Istifragh-wa-Ihtibas (Elimination and Retention)

Elimination is the body's natural function to expel waste through various means, including the exchange of gases through the lungs (respiration), passing of stool, urine, sweating, and menstruation. While common means of elimination are well-known, it's essential to recognize that coughing, vomiting, sneezing, hiccups, passing of wind, burping, mucous from the nose (running nose), nosebleeds, pus in the corner of the eyes upon waking, earwax, vaginal discharge, and ejaculation are also considered natural eliminative processes.

If the waste products (fuzlaat) of the body are not entirely and properly excreted, they may accumulate within vessels, cavities, interstitial spaces, potential cavities, and become pent-up, potentially leading to diseases with a morbid temperament. The advocated principle for prevention and treatment in such conditions involves eliminating disease-causing morbid matter from the body through the easiest and nearest channel, which the body's natural tendencies are already attempting. Methods of assistance for elimination include Riyazat (Exercise), Dalk (Massage), Hammam (Bathing), Faşd (Venesection), Qai (Emesis), Taliq al-Alaq (Leeching), Hijamat (Cupping), and more.^{1,2,5}

Management of lifestyle Disorders by Unani System of Medicine:

Unani medicine employs a comprehensive treatment strategy that encompasses various approaches, including dietary modifications, specific regimental procedures, and diverse pharmacotherapies.²⁰ Pharmaceutical interventions in Unani medicine aim to form normal blood and evacuate the deranged Balghami akhlat (phlegmatic humor).²¹ The "Asbab-e-Sitta zarooriya" (six obligatory factors) are influential causes, directly or indirectly responsible for preserving or transitioning existing health. Throughout life, individuals cannot escape the impact of these factors, making their harmonization essential for maintaining equilibrium in health status.²²

CONCLUSION:

the comprehensive management of lifestyle disorders through the Asbab-e-Sitta Zarooriyah, as presented in the Unani system of medicine, offers valuable insights into a holistic and multifaceted approach to health. The exploration of classical Unani texts in Arabic and Urdu, coupled with insights from articles by esteemed Unani scholars, forms the foundation for understanding and addressing lifestyle disorders.

The incorporation of dietary modifications, specific regimental procedures, and diverse pharmacotherapies within the Unani framework underscores the system's commitment to treating not only the symptoms but also the underlying causes of health issues. The emphasis on Asbab-e-Sitta Zarooriyah, the six obligatory factors, highlights their pivotal role in health preservation and transition, making their harmonization crucial for maintaining equilibrium.

This comprehensive approach, rooted in traditional wisdom and supported by contemporary insights, provides a nuanced understanding of lifestyle disorders and offers a holistic strategy for their management. The integration of classical Unani principles with modern research underscores the potential

for synergistic and effective interventions in addressing the complex challenges posed by lifestyle disorders. Ultimately, this exploration contributes to the growing body of knowledge at the intersection of traditional healing systems and contemporary healthcare practices.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

The literature survey was conducted in classical Unani textbooks written in Arabic and Urdu. Information was also obtained from articles authored by Unani scholars, which were published in reputable journals.

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