



IMPORTANCE OF SIX ESSENTIAL FACTORS IN PREVENTING OBESITY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE UNANI SYSTEM OF MEDICINE-A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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INTRODUCTION

Increase in fat cell size or fat cell number or in both can cause the adipose tissue an unusual growth which forms obesity. This is known as the state of imbalance between the consumed and utilized calories. Therefore, being overweight and obese is explained through BMI (Body Mass Index). WHO stipulates that a BMI of 25 is classified as overweight and a BMI of 30 or above as obese. This has been positioned to be a crucial health problem faced by the world today as it has injurious effects on almost all the systems of the human body. Especially cardiovascular defects, narrowing of blood vessels due to fat deposition causing dyslipidemia, hyperinsulinemia (Type II diabetes), degenerative joint disease, respiratory dysfunctions, stress incontinence, menstrual irregularities etc. According to the Unani system of medicine, Siman-e-Mufrit (obesity) is described under Balghami (phlegmatic) disease. Hence, Khilt-e-Balgham (excessive balgham) tends to accumulate in the tissues which disturbs the equilibrium of Akhlat (humours) causing qualitative and quantitative derangement resulting in Zof-e-Jigar (weakness of liver) which becomes the main reason of multiple disease conditions. This is also well explained in the Canon of Medicine by Avicenna as increased diet consumption and sedentary lifestyle are known to be the major factors causing Siman-e-Mufrit (Obesity). Therefore, this study is conducted to understand the risk factors to eliminate the causes through proper lifestyle modification with the help of Asbab-e-Sitta Zarooriyah (The six essential factors).

METHODOLOGY

A systematic literature review was carried out to gather information on Siman-e-Mufrit and on Asbab e sitta e Zarooriya from many Unani classical texts, ethno-botanical literatures, scientific journals and from the web. Data are mainly included from Unani classical texts and ethno-botanical literatures. Research articles from inauthentic sites and unproven ones were excluded. The ethno-botanical literatures were analysed with Unani classical texts under different terminologies. Around 30 books and 10 journal articles were used for referral. Key words used in searching were obesity, siman-e-mufrit, excessive fat, asbab-sitta-e-zarooriya, basic principles in lifestyle modification etc.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An individual who is overweight or obese is at risk of developing crucial health problems which are injurious to almost all the systems of human body. insignificantly, there is a serious risk of cardiovascular defects, narrowing of blood vessels due to fat deposition causing dyslipidemia, hyperinsulinemia (Type II diabetes), degenerative joint disease, respiratory dysfunctions, stress incontinence, menstrual irregularities and many others.

According to the Unani system of medicine, Siman-e-Mufrit (obesity) is described under Balghami (phlegmatic) disease. Hence, Khilt-e-Balgham (excessive balgham) tends to accumulate in the tissues which disturbs the equilibrium of Akhlat (humours) causing qualitative and quantitative derangement resulting in Zof-e-Jigar (weakness of liver) which becomes the main reason of multiple disease conditions. Excessive coldness formed cause deposits of Shahm (fat) and excessive Balgham in the vessels and decreases the Hararat-e-Ghareezia (Innate heat) of the body which causes Imtila-e-Kaifiyat (congestion of blood vessels), narrowing and hardening of the blood vessels. This reduces the blood flow and



sometimes may rupture the vessels causing serious illnesses such as syncope, stroke or even sudden death. This is also well explained in the Canon of Medicine by Avicenna as increased diet consumption and sedentary lifestyle are known to be the major factors causing Siman-e-Mufrit (Obesity).

Therefore, it is important to eliminate the causes through lifestyle modification with the help of Asbab-e-Sitta Zarooriyah (The six essential factors) to maintain a healthy life. The six essential factors are inhalation of pure air, consumption of healthy food and drinks, maintenance of healthy physical activity and repose, maintenance of healthy mental activity and repose, sleep and wakefulness in a proper pattern and finally excretion and retention of waste materials in a healthy routine. These essential factors maintained in an equilibrium balances the humours which in turn causes proper metabolic functions which helps to maintain the general health state of an individual. Therefore, eliminating the cause is achieved through maintaining the principles and through treatment procedures. In prevention it is advised to engage in regular physical activity to prevent obesity and a sedentary lifestyle. Promoting healthy eating patterns, emphasizing on a variety of nutrient dense foods in appropriate portion sizes (balanced diet to be maintained) helps to improve health and it is advised to avoid fast food which leads to the nutrition problems. Maintain adequate sleep, psychic movement and rest is important for human health and elimination of unnecessary waste materials out of the body is also an important factor. Asbab-e-Sitta zarooriya (six obligatory factors) in the Unani system of medicine are the main factors which are directly or indirectly responsible for the preservation or transition of existing health. (Nasiruddin M, Zulkifl M, Khan Y, 2015), (Moritani T, Akamatsu Y, 2015), (Nafisi, 1954), (Ibn-e-Sina, 1993). Various treatment procedures are also mentioned under the Unani system of medicine. The modes of such treatment procedures are Ilaj-bil-Ghiza (Dieto-therapy), Ilaj-bil-Dawa (Pharmacotherapy), Ilaj-bil-Tadbeer (Regimental therapy) and Ilaj-bil-Yad (Surgery).(Table 2) (Alam A, Ahmed Z, Quamri MA, 2015), (Mand D, Ahmed T, Khalid M, Jafar M, Fatima S, 2015)

Regimental therapy includes various successful treatment procedures in obesity such as exercise, steam bath, massage therapy with anti-inflammatory oil on fat deposited areas, cupping therapy etc. (Kamaluddin, 2004)

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Siman-e-Mufrit (Obesity) is known as a very risky condition and leads to many complications if not prevented or treated in a proper manner. Not only by appearance but an obese individual has many effects which are harmful to human health which causes multiple disorders in almost all the systems. This is a reversible condition whereas, it can be brought back to healthy BMI as recommended by WHO (18.5-24.9). Therefore, maintaining the six essential factors as explained in the Unani system of medicine is mandatory. Inhalation of pure air, consumption of healthy food and drinks, maintenance of healthy physical activity and repose, maintenance of healthy mental activity and repose, sleep and wakefulness in a proper pattern and finally excretion and retention of waste materials in a healthy routine maintains the humours in an equilibrium state in order to obtain a healthy lifestyle. The effective drugs should be studied and experimented further for more effective results in treatment.

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Table 1: BMI and Weight status

BMI	Weight status
Below 18.5	Underweight
18.5-24.9	Healthy weight
25.0-29.9	Overweight
30.0 and above	Obesity

Table 2: Single drugs prescribed in Unani system of medicine in treating obesity

Unani term	Botanical name
Sadkofi	<i>Cyperus rotundus</i>
Balchhar	<i>Nordostachys jatamansi</i>



Muqil	<i>Commiphora mukul</i>
Chal Arjun	<i>Terminalia arjuna</i>
Badranjboya	<i>Mellisa officinalis</i>
Abresham	<i>Bombyx mori</i>
TukhmMethi	<i>Trigonella foenum-graecum</i>
Garlic	<i>Allium sativum</i>
Halela Zard	<i>Terminalia chebula</i>
Balela	<i>Terminalia bellerica</i>
Aamla	<i>Phyllanthous officinalis</i>
chaubezard	<i>Curcuma longa</i>
Tukhm e kalonji	<i>Nigella sativa</i>
Gurmar booti	<i>Gymnemma sylvestere</i>
Post e Anar	<i>Punica granatum</i>
Kundur	<i>Boswellia serrata</i>
Kanduri	<i>Coccinia indica</i>
Zeera	<i>Carum carvi</i>
Badiyan	<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i>
Ajwain	<i>Trachyspermum ammi</i>
Darcheeni	<i>Cinnamomum zeylanicum</i>
Zanjabeel	<i>Zingiber officinale</i>
Sumbul ut Teeb	<i>Nardostachys jatamansi</i>
Luk Maghsool	<i>Coccus Lacca</i>