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Prevention of *SARTAAN* (Cancer) and its Management in Unani System of Medicine: a Review

Mohd Saqlain^{1*}, Aliya Parveen¹, Ferasat Ali¹, Arshi Riaz¹, Abdal Ahmad²

1. Department of Kulliyat, Faculty of Unani Medicine, AMU, Aligarh.

2. Department of Amrazejildwatazeeniyat, Eramunani medical college, lucknow.

ABSTRACT

The Unani system of medicine provides not only proper diet but also single herbal drugs (*Unani Advia Mufridah*) which helps in boosting immunity. This paper is aimed to calculate and analyse the data of single herbal drugs which are effective in curing cancer whether it is caused by genetic factors or other environmental factors. This can make a huge difference in fighting cancer. Some foods increase the risk of cancer, while others support the body and strengthen the immune system. By choosing proper diet one can protect his health, feel better, and boost his ability to fight off cancer and other diseases. Ancient physicians provide us with the right choice of diet which has a powerful effect on health and reduces the risk of cancer. Unknowingly we are consuming such kind of food that is triggering the risk of cancer and neglecting the food which carry the nutrients and which helps in the protection from the deadly disease. For example, a daily serving of *Ghiza-e-kaseef qaleel-ul taghzia raddi-ul-kaimoos* (e.g. red or processed meat) increases the risk of colorectal cancer by 21 percent, while eating *Ghiza-e-lateef qaleel ultaghzia jayyad-ul-kaimoos* (Fruits and vegetables) can lower risk of a variety of common cancers. By making small changes in diet and lifestyle one can lower the risk of various diseases and can even stop cancer in its track because fruits and vegetables are the best source of antioxidants. Beside these, there are several kinds of *Advia mufridah* which contains many phytochemicals with medicinal properties.

Keywords: *Ghiza-e-kaseef qaleel-ul taghzia raddi-ul-kaimoos*, *Ghiza-e-lateef qaleel ultaghzia jayyad-ul-kaimoos*, *Advia mufridah*.

*Corresponding Author Email: drsaqlainaps@gmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

Sartan figure among the leading causes of morbidity and mortality worldwide, with approximately 14 million new cases and 8.2 million cancer related deaths in 2012¹. The Unani physician Avicenna (980-1037A.D.) has mentioned a detailed description of ‘Sartan’ (Cancer) along with varieties and treatment in his famous treatise “the Cannon of Medicine (Al-Qanoon fit Tibb).According to him cancer of different organs are not painful with the exception of cancer of eyes which is very painful. Advia haadda and hot things aggravate problems in patients suffering from cancer and the power of their tolerance and appetite is lost. Avicenna states that once this disease occurs the chances of getting back health is negligible. However, the symptomatic treatment can be given². Cancer is primarily an environmental disease with 90-95% of cases attributed to environmental factors and 5-10% due to genetics. Common environmental factors which contribute to cancer deaths include tobacco use (25-30%), diet and obesity (30-35%), infections (15-20%), radiation (both ionizing and non-ionizing, up to 10%), stress, lack of physical activity, and environmental pollutants. Carcinogens are the chemical compounds that are able to trigger cancer in humans by way of altering the chemical structure of the DNA molecule. This may be due to the ability to damage the genome or to the disruption of cellular metabolic processes. Carcinogens do not cause cancer in every case. Substance labeled as carcinogens may have different levels of cancer-causing potential for any particular person, the person’s genetic makeup and his exposure. Cooking food at high temperatures, for example grilling or barbecuing meats, can lead to the formation of minute quantities of many potent carcinogens that are comparable to those found in cigarette smoke (i.e., benzo [a] pyrene).Charring of food resembles coking (Formation of coke) and tobacco pyrolysis (Thermolysis in organic materials) and produces similar carcinogens. There are several carcinogenic pyrolysis products, such as polynuclear, aromatic hydrocarbons which are converted by human enzymes into epoxides, which attach permanently to DNA. Pre-cooking meats in a microwave oven for 2-3 minute before grilling shortens the time on the hot pan, and removes heterocyclic amine (HCA) precursors, which can help minimize the formation of these carcinogens. Reports from the food standards Agency have found that the known animal, overheated carbohydrate foods (such as French fries and potato chips). Recent researches evident that the foods in which anti oxidants are present have greater ability to absorb free radicals. They are found with the help of ORAC (oxygen radical absorbance capacity). In healthy people the free radicals are present in very less amount but in various conditions like

smoking, alcohol etc. The amount of free radicals is very much increased due to which conditions like sartaan (cancer) develops^{3,4,5}.

Types of cancer Described in Unani Medicine

According to Rhazes in his book *Kitab Al-Mansoori* he describes *Sartanas marz-e-muhlik* (fatal disease). While remaining faithful to Hippocrates's humoural theory, Galen extended Hippocrates' definitions of cancer and classified tumours into three major types, (i) *Onkoi* (lumps or masses) (ii) *Karkinomas* (non-ulcerating) cancers & (iii) *Karkinos* (malignant ulcers)⁶.

Classification of Diet in Unani system of Medicine

Unani system of medicine pays more emphasis on the importance of diet. According to *Aristotle* "every living thing is made up of three things i.e quwwate ghazia, hararat-e-gharizia and diet (ghiza). As Avicenna wrote "Most illnesses arise solely from long continued errors of diet and Regimen", therefore our diet should be adequate and appropriate in all nutrients. Also Rhazes states that before selection of diet a person should have the knowledge of two things 1) Tabyat and its characteristics 2) Its composition and timings. In Unani system of medicine diet has been divided on the basis of quality of chyme, nutritious value and the consistency of blood they produce.⁷ Combining all these parameters, there are following eight types of diet.

- 1) Ghiza-e-Latif Kasir-ul-Taghziyayyid-al-kaimoos They produce good chyme which is more nutritious and produce attenuated blood e.g. egg yolk, Ma-ul-Lahm.
- 2) Ghiza-e-Latif kasir-ul-Taghziya Raddi-al-kaimoos They produce bad chyme which is more nutritious and produce attenuated blood e.g. liver, lungs
- 3) Ghiza-e-Latif Qalil-ul-Taghziyayyid-al-kaimoos: They produce good chyme which is less nutritious and produce attenuated blood e.g. apple, pomegranate
- 4) Ghiza-e-Latif Qalil-u-Taghziya Raddi-al-Kaimoos: They produce bad chyme which is less nutritious and produce attenuated blood e.g. spinach, radish
- 5) Ghiza-e-Ghalizkasir-ul-Taghziyayyid-al-Kaimoos : They produce good chyme which is more nutritious and produce thick blood e.g. boiled egg, lamb meat
- 6) Ghiza-e-Ghalizkasir-ul-Taghziya Raddi-al-Kaimoos: They produce bad chyme which is more nutritious and produce thick blood e.g. duck meat, horse meat
- 7) Ghiza-e-Ghaliz Qalil-ul-Taghziyayyid-al-Kaimoos: They produce good chyme which is less nutritious and produce thick blood e.g. ox meat
- 8) Ghiza-e-Ghaliz Qalil-ul-Taghziya Raddi-al-Kaimoos: They produce bad chyme which is less nutritious and produce thick blood e.g. dried meat⁸

Unani concept of cancer⁹

According to Unani, cancer is essentially a disease of the black bile humour. That is, it means that all four of the humours are out of balance. Ripening, purging, and rebalancing of each of the four humours in turn are required for a cure to take place. Pulse evaluation likely will reveal a total disorder of his metabolic system, particularly the phlegm and black bile humours. In the Unani view, cancer is not actually one disease, but several hundred different symptoms affecting virtually any organ. As noted above, cancer is a disease of the black bile humour. It can occur with only the black bile humour out of balance, or one or more humours out of balance along with it. In severe cases, all four may be disordered.

Avicenna's View on Cancer and its management^{9,10}

According to Avicenna, cancer is a tumour arising from "burning" of the black bile humour. By 'burning' it is meant that the increase of innate heat has become pathological. The cancerous tumour is usually differentiated from benign tumours by the signs of pain, acuteness, and some degree of throbbing and rapid increase in size. Swelling is a manifestation of this black bile substance "boiling" at its junction with the organ. Cancerous tumours also send out crab-like "tracks," and there is a trend toward blackness, green, and heat. Avicenna notes that cancer occurs mostly in hollow organs and that is why it is more frequent in women. It also is common in the nerves, muscles, tendons, and lymph. In the Unani view, the first objective in the treatment of cancer is to keep it as stationary as possible so that it will not increase, and to keep it non ulcerated. A cure is most likely if treatment is begun at the earliest stage. Avicenna notes: "When the cancer is advanced and well-established, it will not cure. In the case of occult (hidden) cancers becoming manifest after having existed for some time, both Avicenna and Hippocrates believed the best course is to leave the tumour alone. Avicenna writes: *"And if it is left and not treated (removed) the patient may remain alive longer with some safety, especially if the diet is corrected and made to cool and to refresh and produce a bland, safe material like barley water, mashed fish, egg yolk half-boiled, and the like"*. If there is elevated temperature and fever, Avicenna advises a diet of churned cow's milk, strained vegetables, and squash. Surgery is recommended by Avicenna for small cancers. His influence on contemporary surgical procedure is evident in his description of the technique to employ: *"If the small cancer can be arrested with anything, it can be so by vigorous excision, the radical one extending beyond the tumor to a circle to be excised from the surrounding of the tumor including all the vessels supplying the tumor so that nothing of these will be left and that much blood will flow from the vessels."*

But Avicenna's view is much more comprehensive, as he immediately qualifies his recommendation that surgery "be preceded by purifying (clearing) the body of the bad material (black bile) by purgation, cupping, and maintaining that purity by good food quantitatively and qualitatively and strengthening the defense (resistance) of the organ involved". Even with careful surgery and strict dietary therapy, Avicenna adds this strong caution: "Nevertheless, most of the time, excision increases the cancer." Further surgery is often needed, and in this "there may be a great danger if the cancer was in the vicinity of the principal organs and the precious vital organs". This is quite often the case when surgery is performed on one breast, for example, and soon arises in the other. The formula Avicenna recommends for palliation consists of 4 teaspoons of dodder (*Cuscuta Europea*) in honey, given at three-day intervals. It acts as a brisk purgative. Colocynth (*Citrullus colocynthis*) has a similar effect. Local medications for cancer are many. There are four purposes to such treatments: (1) total arrest of the cancer (this is difficult); (2) preventing its progress; (3) preventing ulceration; and (4) treatment of ulceration. These medications given for total arrest of the tumour or reversing the effects of the corrupted black bile should not be overly powerful, since strong medication increases the risk of spreading the cancer. Also, one should avoid irritant medicines. For these purposes Avicenna recommends zinc oxide mixed with essential oils of rose and other flowers. Preventing the progress and growth of cancer can be accomplished by controlling the black bile by improving diet and reinforcing the organ involved, and by using salves of substances such as dust from millstone and whetstone, mixed with rose oil and coriander water. Medications that are needed to prevent ulceration should not be irritants. Many salves can be used for this purpose, but Avicenna specially recommends Armenian bole (a kind of earth), houseleek water, and lettuce juice, or mucilage of fleawort. Also of benefit are zinc oxide preparation with the soft part of fluvial crab. An ointment recommended for treatment of ulceration is made of kernels of wheat mixed with frankincense and Armenian bole and made into an ointment by adding rose oil. Zinc oxide mixed with rose oil is a simple remedy that is said to be effective. Cancer will be eliminated only when people return to a more balanced, natural lifestyle, and keep the body, mind, and spirit free from impurities.

Cancer preventing diet and Advia Mufridah

Ghiza-e-lateefqaleelultaghziajayyad-ul-kaimoos (i.e fruits and vegetables) are cancer-fighting powerhouses. While there's no single food one can eat to prevent or fight cancer on its own, a balanced plant-based diet filled with a variety of vegetables, fruits, soy, nuts, whole grains, and beans can help lower risk for many types of cancer. Eating a colorful variety gives the best protection. Plant-based foods are rich in nutrients that boost the immune system and help protect

against cancerous cells. Fruits and vegetables are the best source of antioxidants such as beta-carotene, vitamin C, vitamin E, and selenium. These powerful vitamins can protect against cancer and help the cells in body function optimally. There is also evidence that plant-based foods may be effective at preventing specific cancers. For example:

- Diets high in fruit may lower the risk of stomach and lung cancer.
- Eating vegetables containing carotenoids, such as carrots, Brussels sprouts, and squash, may reduce the risk of lung, mouth, pharynx, and larynx cancers.
- Diets high in non-starchy vegetables, such as broccoli, spinach, and beans, may help protect against stomach and esophageal cancer. Vitamin C may also protect against esophageal cancer.
- Foods high in lycopene, such as tomatoes, guava, and watermelon, may lower the risk of Prostate cancer.¹¹

There are many ways to add plant-based foods in diet. A nice visual reminder is to aim for a plate of food that is filled at least two-thirds with whole grains, vegetables, beans, or fruit. Dairy products, fish, and meat should take up no more than a third of the plate.

Beside these, there are several kinds of *Adviamufridah* which acts as maudilate-e-sauda.e.gAnesoon(*pimpinellaanisum*),khutmi(*Althaeofficinalis*),Daarcheeni(*cinamomumzeylanicum*),Ambbahaldi(*curcuma longa*), Qaranfal(*Eugenia chryophyllata*), Zinjabil (*Zingibar officinalis*) containing many phytochemicals with medicinal properties. An impressive body of data exists in support of the concept that Unani *adviamufridah* can be used in preventive strategies aimed at reducing the incidence and mortality of different types of cancers because of their antioxidative, antimutagenic and anticarcinogenic properties. They also can be used as adjuvants¹². besides. *mufridah* (unani sin)

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study is that dietotherapy is an adjunct therapy to Unani Medicine and plays an important role in prevention and treatment of diseases. Therefore, improper diet may result in certain diseases, while some can be prevented by modifying the diet. So it is the prime duty of the physicians to advice their patients a proper diet. Several experimental studies have proved plants for their traditional claims and also explored novel therapeutic actions. However there is a need to explore other hidden beneficial potential of above mentioned plants which describe in Unani System of Medicine (Traditional medicine).

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