



## Hypertension and its management from the perspective of unani traditional regime cupping therapy

### KEYWORDS

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**ABSTRACT** **Background:** Nowadays, hypertension is considered as a global public health issue and in recent decades, it has shown a growing trend due to changes in lifestyle. The prevalence of hypertension increases with age to the extent that one out of every two individuals older than 60-year-old is suffering from high blood pressure<sup>1</sup>. There has been a rapid increase in the prevalence rate of hypertension in India, China, Philippines, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal and Iran. Prevalence of hypertension (BP > 140/90 mmHg) varies between 15% to 35% in urban adult populations of Asia. In rural populations, the prevalence rate is two to three times lower than in urban areas<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, addressing this disease from the viewpoint might provide a better management from the perspective of unani traditional regime cupping therapy of this "silent killer".

**Objective:** To provide a better strategy for preventing, treating, and reducing the debilitating complications of hypertension in the future through traditional regime cupping therapy.

### Concept of hypertension in Unani

Unani scholars were all aware of *Zaghta-e-damwi* (Blood pressure) and described *Zaghta-e-Inqabazi* as Systole and *Zaghta-e-Inbesati* as Diastole<sup>3</sup>. According to Hippocratic doctrine, the basis of health is right proportion and specific equilibrium of *akhlat* (humours) according to their quality i.e. homeostasis in the internal environment. Hence, so long this homeostasis in the internal environment is maintained the body remains healthy. *Ratubat tajawif* and *ratubat uruq* which make the internal environment of the whole body have also fixed *Mizaj* (homeostasis) fluctuating within certain maximum and minimum limits. Any disturbance in *kamiyat* (quantity) and *kafiyat* (quality-composition) of *ratubat al-tajawif* or *ratubatul uruq* (internal environment of the body) or disturbance in the *homeostatic* condition of the internal environment of the body, causes *sual Mizaj* of the entire body<sup>4</sup>. After systematic swot of Unani literature, it may be concluded that hypertension seems to be a manifestation of dry temperament (*Mizaj-e-Yabis*) but according to Rashid Bhika, there are two main types of hypertension; (a) that due to a hot and moist, or *sanguinous*, imbalance; and (b) that due to a cold and dry, or *melancholic*, imbalance<sup>5,6</sup>. Viscosity of blood (*qiwamuddam*) creates the peripheral resistance thereby the blood pressure is maintained which ensures efficient circulation of blood. *Ibn-e-Abbas* mentioned that the *qiwamuddam* of the venous blood is higher than the arterial blood due to pressure tension of Bukhara-e-dukhania (CO<sub>2</sub>) in the blood<sup>4</sup>.

### Clinical manifestation

*Zaghta-e-damwi* is manifested as headache, congested eyes, pulsatile arteries, puffiness of face, heaviness in head, restlessness, yawning, epistaxis, dark coloured turbid urine, lethargy, flushing of face, warm body without any external cause like heaviness (in head, temple and eyes) and eruptions. On the other hand, many Unani scholars described *khafqan* (palpitation), *sakta* (apoplexy), *sadar wa duwar* (giddiness and vertigo), etc. in which of *Imtila* is one of the causes in all above condition<sup>7,8,9</sup>. Literally, '*Imtila*' means fullness of the body with fluids. Technically, *Imtila* means accumulation of normal or abnormal fluids in the body<sup>10</sup>. These materials could fill free spaces inside tissues and ducts; For example, they might cause obstruction in vessels and result in infarction. Obstruction of vessels especially arteries and in particular arteries of organs such as heart, brain, and liver is extremely dangerous<sup>11</sup>.

According to modern concept serious symptoms for hypertension which cannot be ignored specifically with Primary Pulmonary Hypertension, (PPH) are coughing up blood, rapid breathing, rapid pulse, shortness of breath during some normally light activity, and significant fatigue. Symptoms of pulmonary hypertension; fatigue or tiredness tends to be the first symptom. Symptoms of hypertension

may occur even though hypertension is known to exist in people who are not experiencing any symptoms at all. Additional symptoms of high blood pressure may consist of vision difficulties, chest agony, headaches, fatigue, trouble breathing, confusion, bloody urine and irregular heartbeat. These symptoms usually indicate a severe problem and should be evaluated by immediately. Symptoms of hypertension normally present themselves only when the blood pressure level is extremely high.

### Cupping therapy

Cupping Therapy refers to the therapeutic method of applying partial vacuum cups onto certain parts of the patient's body. In Unani practice, this method is also used in the treatment of hypertension. Cupping therapy treats hypertension by regulating the whole body, rather than by simply lowering the blood pressure. Medical studies suggest that high blood pressure is a result of the feedback regulation which takes place when the blood supplies to some important organs, such as the heart, brain and kidney, are not in balance. This regulation is a compensatory reaction of the body, but it is imperfect and leaves a pathological state of hypertension. So the proper treatment for hypertension is to make blood supply of the heart, brain and kidneys return to normality. Simply lowering the elevated blood pressure may lead to a new imbalance of blood supply<sup>12</sup>.

Cupping therapy treats hypertension based on syndrome differentiation; this is just to regulate the functions of the whole body, promote its self-balance function. It has been proved that the holistic concept of cupping therapy is accorded with the principle of treatment of hypertension. Cupping therapy can not only lower high blood pressure, control it in a normal range, prevent and treat various complication of hypertension, but also make various imbalance states of the body return to normal<sup>12</sup>.

### Materials and methods

In this article, traditional resources of different ages, such as The Canon of Medicine by Avicenna (980–1037 AD), The Complete Art of Medicine (*Kitab Kamil as-Sinaat-Tibbiyya*) by Haly Abbas (949–982 AD), and Facilitating Treatment, *Tahsil Al-Elaj* by Mohammad Taghi Shirazi (1814-1896) was selected to rule out the disease. Likewise, Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine (the main textbook of internal medicine) and databases like Pubmed, Scopus, and some unani databases like were searched based on keywords in order to extract evidences and to find probable hypertension symptoms, preventive measures and management.

The intervention under study was the performance of wet cupping therapy (WCT) or *al-hijama*. *Al-hijama* procedure is described as follows: Clean the areas with alcohol swab then put the cup on the

area and start suction. Gently take of the cup and make 5-10 very superficial incisions parallel to each other. Replace the cup on the same area and repeat suctioning. Remove and replace the cups for about two times, then clean the area and do dressing. The *hijama* was carried out on four to six sites of the body. The first site is between the two scapulas, opposite the T1-T3 scapular spine (Al-Kahil), as done in Zarei's study<sup>13</sup>. The second site is located on the seventh cervical vertebra (GV14), as done in Guo's study<sup>14</sup>. The other 4 sites are on both sides of the neck and below. They are located 2 fingers posterior to the angle of the mandible on both sides, just below the skull bone, on the hair line (*Al-Akhdaain*).



**Wet cupping therapy**

### Results and discussion

**Case 1:** This patient Sanjay, Age 48, Sex M, H/o Smoking, Alcoholic, past history of Treatment of mental depression for 3 years, Physical examination: Height 180 cm and Weight 79 Kg, Heart rate 76, chest clear to P & A, Heart Regular rhythm, No organomegaly, was suffering from Grade 2 hypertension (>160/100 mm Hg) since 5 years, because his BP measurements was in the abnormal hypertension range. Diagnosis was made confirmed from multiple BP measurements. The patient was advised for cupping therapy twice weekly for 2 months. On Every visit BP was measured through electronic automatic digital blood pressure monitor before and after the therapy to compare the result and advice the patient of as follows:

- Weight reduction
- Restriction of sodium intake
- Reduction in dietary fat and cholesterol
- Avoidance of tobacco
- Restriction of alcohol consumption
- Regular physical exercise 30 minutes 5 day's weekly

**Case 2:** This patient Shri Bhagwan age 52, gender M, Reg No. 4666, registered on dated 24.08.2016 at ayush wellness clinic in unani opd with past h/o high bp since 6 yrs and no medication history. Physical examination: Height 180 cm, weight 89 kg, hear rate 77, chest clear to p & a, heart regular rhythm, no organomegaly, was suffering from grade 2 hypertension >200/120 mm of Hg since 6 yrs, because his B.P measurement was in the abnormal hypertension range. Diagnosis was made confirmed from multiple BP measurements. The patient was advised for wet cupping therapy twice weekly for 2 months. On every visit BP is measured through electronic automatic digital blood pressure monitor before and after therapy to compare the results and same advice as in above case.

### BP measurements:

Date	Before Therapy	After therapy
24.08.2016	206/120 mm of hg	150/110 mm of hg
26.08.2016	184/120 mm of hg	162/110 mm of hg
30.08.2016	174/110 mm of hg	160/110 mm of hg
01.09.2016	170/100 mm of hg	160/100 mm of hg
02.09.2016	BP measurements only 162/100 mm of hg	
04.09.2016	164/110 mm of hg	150/100 mm of hg
07.09.2016	150/100 mm of hg	140/90 mm of hg
10.09.2016	142/90 mm of hg	136/86 mm of hg
13.09.2016	BP measurements only 140/90 mm of hg	
16.09.2016	BP measurements only 140/90 mm of hg	
20.09.2016	140/90 mm of hg	136/86 mm of hg

27.09.2016	BP measurements only 136/86 mm of hg	
30.09.2016	BP measurements only 136/86 mm of hg	
01.10.2016	140/86 mm of hg	130/82 mm of hg
07.10.2016	BP measurements only 130/84 mm of hg	
14.10.2016	BP measurements only 130/86 mm of hg	
21.10.2016	BP measurements only 130/86 mm of hg	
28.10.2016	BP measurements only 130/86 mm of hg	

Both above cases are on screening and routinely to check-up blood pressure weekly for further 6 months.

The disturbance of the cardiac system may be caused by ischemia or oxyachrestia. Also myocardial infarction is due to ischemia resulting from arterial stenosis (arteriosclerosis) and the thrombi themselves when they are in these coronary arteries. The angina pectoris is generated when there is a decrease in supplying the heart tissue with the necessary Oxygen. Because the fat precipitations have partly blocked up the coronary artery. Then the high level of arterial hypertension may lead to complications such as: cardiac insufficiency, angina pectoris and encephala vascular incident. The long arterial hypertension may cause heart enlargement, and atherosclerosis.

### Conclusion and recommendations

WCT (*Al-hijamah*) is a minor surgical excretory procedure that has medical and scientific bases in clearing blood and interstitial spaces from harmful substances, noxious substances and CPS. Both modern medicine and Unani medicine proved the beneficial value of WCT in treatment of diseases that are different in etiology and pathogenesis. WHO is invited to shed more light upon health benefits of *Al-hijamah* and to encourage its practice in hospitals.

Applying cupping is the best solution to prevent and treat such cases, as cupping decreases the level of fat (triglyceride, cholesterol) in blood to normal one, gets rid of hypertension and increases the blood flow through heart tissue after cleaning the arteries and preventing them from atherosclerosis. Researchers worldwide are invited to pay more attention to develop more research in investigating remedies practiced in Unani medicine to cure and relieve human suffering in many incurable diseases with dismal prognosis.

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