



UNANI MEDICINES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF COMMON PEDIATRIC AILMENTS: A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

Paediatrics

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ABSTRACT

Unani medicine, rooted in Greco-Arabic tradition, has been a holistic health system for centuries, offering preventive, promotive, and therapeutic care across all ages. The Importance of child health has been recognized by many ancient Unani physicians. They have mentioned about childhood diseases management and regimens for maintenance of good health in the children. The comprehensive explanation of child care is mentioned under the heading of Tadabeer-e-Naumaulood and Amraze atfal. Principles of Unani, emphasize not only disease management but also the cultivation of physical strength, mental well-being, and balanced temperament (Mizaj). This review article summarizes different single and compound Unani drugs in various common problems of pediatric age group.

KEYWORDS

Unani, Medicines, Amraze Atfal, Common Ailments

INTRODUCTION

Traditional System of Medicine is commonly used in order to support medical treatment, reinforce immunity system, reduce disease symptoms, prevent relapses of diseases, and to maintain health. In last 2-3 decades special focus was drawn on child and maternal health. Child is not a miniature adult, the principles of adult medicine cannot be directly adapted to children. Pediatric biology is unique and risk factors, clinical manifestations of disease are distinct and so the management. Childhood is the most significant age group not because they make up 40% of the total population but because of the fact that a child's health is the foundation for the determinants of chronic diseases in later life (Paul 2013). Several renowned philosophers of the Unani system, such as Ibn Sina, Ibn Hubal Baghdadi, and Rabbani Tabari, have elaborated extensively on their perspectives regarding the principles of health, disease, and treatment, contributing significantly to the development of traditional Greco-Arabic medicine promote child health (Jurjani 2010). They define childhood under the heading of Sinn-i-Numu which means the stage of growth- a time period from birth to 30 years. Sinn-i-Namu is further divided into five sub stages, each with its own unique characteristics. The child's body is considered naturally moist and warm (Mizaj-i-Haar Ratab)(Gruner 1973) requiring gentle interventions that avoid excessive heat or dryness. Pediatric care in Unani system is an integrated approach derived from the works of eminent physicians that emphasis on Tadabir (Regimenal therapies) for strengthening immunity, Ilaj bil-Ghiza (Dietotherapy) for balanced growth, Ilaj bil-Dawa (Pharmacotherapy) with safe herbal, animal and mineral origin medicines. This review article focuses on Ilaj bil- Dawa with different single and compound drugs mentioned and used in pediatric disease condition with their actions.

Methodology

Classical and significant texts of the Unani System of Medicine formed the basis for the study of medicines in children and adolescents. The authentic text books provided the key data for this article which were accessed from the libraries of the college. To supplement this, scientific research article from journals accessible through platforms such as Google Scholar, Scopus, PubMed, and Science Direct were consulted to gather additional information.

Principles of Unani Pediatric Care

Preventive Aspects:

Children are particularly vulnerable to diseases and illnesses due to their developing immune systems, and therefore, it is essential that they receive proper care and attention. Prevention is always better than

cure, and this holds particularly true for children's health. Several preventive measures can help reduce the risk of illnesses and ensure a child's overall well-being. It includes immunization, hand hygiene, proper nutrition, and physical activity (Chawla 2023).

Good habits should be encouraged in children, along with close supervision of their behavior—particularly in relation to emotional outbursts such as anger, fear, anxiety, and sleep disturbances. It is important to fulfill the child's natural desires in a healthy manner and identify and remove causes of irritability, in order to protect them from the development of mental illnesses. A stable and balanced emotional environment is essential for both the physical and mental well-being of the child. Children should be encouraged to wake up early in the morning and bathe twice daily. A proper and balanced diet is essential, and regular physical exercise is highly recommended. Exercise helps to increase innate heat, strengthen organs, harden the joints and ligaments, reduce waste material in the body, and stimulate the body's natural ability to absorb nutrients. Access to pure and clean water, as well as the consumption of cold and sweet foods, is also advised. Harmful habits such as smoking and alcohol consumption must be strictly avoided, as alcohol in particular can increase bile and have harmful effects on a child's developing body.

These health and behavioral regimens are generally recommended up to the age of 14 years. However, it is important to consider day-to-day changes and adjust practices as needed to support the child's growth and individual needs (Bashir 2022).

Curative Aspects

Unani medicine utilizes a wide range of herbal formulations for treating various childhood illnesses. These include syrups, powders, and other preparations designed to address specific ailments. Most of the well-known physicians used single drugs as well as preparations which was disease-specific that match the child's Mizaj and Quwat-i-Mudabbira Badan (self-healing power). They employ various therapeutic techniques, including massage, detoxification therapies, and lifestyle modifications, to restore health and balance (Gruner 1973).

Common Pediatric Conditions and their Management Through Unani Medicines

There is a brief description of remedies for the management of common ailments which have been used since ancient times in form of single drug or formulations or in combination for oral and external use.

S. No	Pediatric's common ailments	Drugs (single and compound form)	Actions
1.	Ishal (Diarrhea)	Plaster made up of rose seeds or cumin and vinegar should be applied to the abdomen (Razi 1991)	Muhallil-i-Warm , Qabiz
		Soft bread, Sattu (Gram flour) apple should be given (Baghdadi 2010)	Mujaffif, Mufarrih, Muqawwi
		Frequent oral administration of decoction prepared with Ushna (Usnea longissima), Resha Khatmi (Althaea officinalis), Gul Surkh (Rosa damascena), Belgiri (Aegle marmelos), Badiyan (Foeniculum vulgare), Habbul Aas (Myrtus communis), Tukhm Kanocha (Phyllanthus maderaspatensis) each 1 gm in case of diarrhea due to dentition (Bashir 2022, Jamal 2013)	Habis, Qabiz, Mulattif, Hazim (Ghani 2010)

		Habb-i-Rumman, Habb-i- Mumsik Rummani, Habb-i- Kafuri, Habb-i- Qabiz. Fauzia basher Safuf-i-chutki (Ghani 2010, NFUM-1, Standard Unani treatment)	
2.	Qā bđ (Constipation)	Suppository made of pure solidified honey or honey mixed with a small quantity of wild mint (<i>Mentha longifolia</i>) Honey is given by mouth (Shah 2007) Shafa (Suppository) prepared with Turanjabeen (<i>Alhagi maurorum</i>) or Namak (salt) and Khatmi (<i>Althaea officinalis</i> Linn.) is used (Bashir 2022, Jamal 2013) Roghan Badam Shirin (NFUM-I)	Mulayyin (Laxative) Mulayyin, Mugharri Mulattif, Musakkin-i-hararat, (Ghani 2010)
3.	Zukām wa Su'ā l (Cold and Cough)	Gum acacia (<i>Acacia greggii</i>), Gum tragacanth (<i>Astragalus gum</i>), powdered Quince (<i>Cydonia oblonga</i>) seeds and extract of liquorice (<i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i>) mixed with sugar are given daily in small doses with fresh milk (Shah2007) Decoction prepared with Unnab (<i>Zizyphus jujuba</i>), Banafsha (<i>Viola odorata</i>), Asl al-Soos (<i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i>), Gauzaban (<i>Borage officinalis</i>) is given orally (Arzani 2010) Sharbat –i-Zufa, Habb -i Sual, Halwa Jauz, Dayaquza, Ma' al-Asl (honey water) and Lauq Sibyan (Majusi 2010, Baghdadi 2010) Dawa-ul-Luk	Qabiz, Mulattif, Munaffis Qabiz, Mulattif, Munaffis, Musakkin safra, Mugharri (Ghani 2010)
4	Dyspnoea	Linseed (<i>Linum usitatissimum</i>) mixed with honey is used as linctus (Shah 2007)	Muhallil warm, Habis, Qabiz, Dafa'i-Amrad-i-Balghamiya (Ghani 2010)
5.	Qula' (Stomatitis)	Powder of 21g each of turmeric, Post Anar (Rind of pomegranate), Gulnar (pomegranate blossom) and Sumaq (<i>Rhus coriaria</i>), 14g of Mazoo (<i>Quercus infectoria</i>) and 7g of Shib-i-Yamani (Alum) (Sina 1993) Liniment prepared with Asal us-Sus (<i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i>), Safaidda (zinc oxide) Roughan Gul (Rose) and mom (wax) is applied in the mouth (Razi 1991) Zuroor-i-Qula (NFUM-I)	Hbis, Qabiz, Musakkin Safra, Mudammil Quruh, Dafa'i-Ta'fun Mulattif, Muhallil-i-Auram, Qabiz (Ghani 2010)
6.	Qa'i(Vomiting)	Syrup of Maikhoosh Anar (Sweet and Sour Pomegranate) or decoction of mint leaves with Aab-i-Anar (Baghdadi 2010) Sharbat –i-Anar or Sharbat –i-Seb (Majusi 2010)	Habis, Qabiz, Musakkin josh-i-Safra wa Khun, Hazim, Kasir-i-Riyah (Ghani 2010)
7.	Zahir (Dysentery)	Powder of Halun (<i>Lepidium sativum</i>) and Zeera (Cumin cuminum) mixed with ghee (Kabeeruddin 2015) Sharbat-i-Belgiri (NFUM-I)	Hazim, Kasir-i-Riyah (Ghani 2010)
8.	Deedan-i-Ama (Worm infestation)	Afsanteen (<i>Artemisia absinthium</i>) mixed in milk.3 or Darmana Turki (<i>Artemisia maritima</i>) mixed in milk (Baghdadi 2010) Oral administration of small amount of Aab Dirmana Turki (<i>Artemisia maritima</i>) with milk or Sugar is used in case of round worms (Bashir 2022) Safoof-i-Muqliya	Muhallil-i-Auram, Qatil wa Mukhrij-i-Deedan Qatil wa Mukhrij Deedan (Ghani 2010)
9.	Tukhma (Indigestion)	Amla (<i>Embolica officinalis</i>) extract and cloves with the Quincy juice can be given orally (Baghdadi 2010) Safoof-i-Chutki (NFUM-I)	Habis, Qabiz, Musakkin, Kasir-i-Riyah (Ghani 2010) Hazim
10.	Waja'a al-Uzn (Earache)	Drop made of oil prepared with Barberry (<i>Berberis vulgaris</i>), rock salt, lentil (<i>Lens culinaris</i>), Myrrh (<i>Commiphora myrrha</i>), colocynth (<i>Citrullus colocynthis</i>) seeds or Juniper (<i>Juniperus osteosperma</i>) is boiled and filtered (Shah 2007) Wine containing Shibb (Alum) or Zafran (<i>Crocus sativus</i>) is used as eardrop (Tabari 2010) Raughan-i-Turb (NFUM-I)	Dafa'i- Ta'fun, Mushil, Muhallil Mudammil Quruh, Habis, Jali, Dafa'i-Ta'fun (Ghani 2010)
11.	Nafakh wa Maghs (Flatulence and Colic)	Decoction of Anisoon (<i>Pimpinella anisum</i>) and Pudina (<i>Mentha longifolia</i>) (Ghani 2010) Safoof –i-Hazim (NFUM-I)	Kasir-i-Riyah, Hazim, Musakkin-i-Alam (Ghani 2010)
12.	Pharingitis	Syrup of mulberry (<i>Morus nigra</i>) (Shah 2007) Boiled Masoor dal (<i>Lens culinaris</i>) with sweet sour pomegranate (<i>Punica granatum</i>) (Baghdadi 2010) Sharbat-i-Sadar, Sharbat-i-Toot Siyah (NFUM-I)	Mulattif, Munaffis, Muhallil-i-Warm Habis, Qabiz, Musakkin Josh-i-Safra (Ghani 2010)
13.	Su'ul-Qinya (Anemia)	Juice of Pomegranate, and Apple, Jaggery, Sumbul ul tib, Maweej Munaqqa (Ghani 2010) Sharbat Foulad, Dawā' al-Kurkum (Kabeeruddin 2015)	Mufarrih, Muqawwi, (Ghani 2010)
14.	Ru'af (Epistaxis)	Oral administration of Shira-i-Tukhm-i- Kahu (<i>Lactuca sativa</i>), Shira-i-Unnab (<i>Zizyphus vulgaris</i>) and Lu'ab Bihidana (<i>Cydonia oblonga</i>) Instillation of nasal drop prepared with Kafur (Camphor) mixed with almond oil Sharbat -i-Nilofar, Sharbat –i-Anjbar, Sharbat –i-Unnab, Sharbat-i-Khashkhash (Standard Unani Treatment)	Mukhaddir, Musakkin, Dafa' i-Tashannuj, Mukhaddir muqami, Musakkin, (Ghani 2010)
15.	Bawl fil-Firash (Nocturnal Enuresis)	Oral administration of powder Sa'd (<i>Cyperus rotundus</i>), Kundur (<i>Boswellia serrata</i>), Khulanjan (<i>Alpinia khulanjan</i>), Habb al-Aas (<i>Myrtus communis</i>), Juft Balut (<i>Quercus incana</i>) and Gulnar (<i>Punica granatum</i>) Oral administration of Sa'd (<i>Cyperus rotundus</i>) 3.5 gm, Kundur (<i>Boswellia serrata</i>) 3.5 gm, sugar 7gm in morning Ma'jun Falasifa, Ma'jun Kundur, Ma'jun Balut (Standard Unani Treatment)	Muqawwi-i-Asab, Habis, Qabiz, Mujaffif Muqawwi-i-Dimagh wa Qalb, Muqawwi-i-Asab, (Ghani 2010)

16.	Skin eruptions/ Rashes	Powder of Barg-i-Jhao (leaf of Tamarix gallica), Barg-I- Hina (leaf of Lawsonia inermis) and Gul-i-Surkh (Rosa damascus) is sprinkled over the skin rashes ((Standard Unani Treatment)	Qabiz, Muhallil, Mudammil-i-Quruh, Mujaffif, Habis-i-dam
		Liniment prepared with Mom (Wax) and Asfedaaj (Zinc oxide) is used for local application (Tabari 2010)	Mudammil-i-Quruh, Mujaffif, Habis (Ghani 2010)
		Sharbat-i-Unnab, Sharbat -i-Shahtra ((Standard Unani Treatment)	
Unani terminologies and their English term: Muhallil-i-Warm (Resolvent), Qabiz (Astringent), Mujaffif (Siccative), Mufarrih (Refrigerant), Muqawwi (Tonic), Habis (Styptic), Mulattif (Demulcent), Hazim (Digestive),Mulayyin (Laxative), Mugharri (Glutinous), Musakkin-i-hararat (Febrile sedative), Munaffis (Expectorant), Mudammil Quruh (Cicatrizing), Dafa'i-Ta'fun (Antiseptic), Kasir-i-Riyah (Carminative), Musakkin-i-Qai (Antiemetic), Qatil wa Mukhrij-i-Deedan (Anthelmintic,) Mushil (Purgative), Jali (Detergent), Musakkin-i-Alam (Analgesic), Muqawwi, Dafa' i-Tashnnuj (Antispasmodic), Mukhaddir (Narcotic)			

Integration of Classical and Modern Perspectives

The Unani system of Medicine offers extensive literature on promoting and preserving the health of children. Also modern review papers emphasize that Unani pediatric care is not limited to treatment but incorporates lifestyle regulation, hygiene, and nutrition. These classical approaches align well with modern pediatrics' preventive and curative strategies. Herbal medicines like Sharbat Foulad have demonstrated efficacy in anemia management without the gastrointestinal side effects often seen with conventional iron supplements.

CONCLUSION

Unani medicine views childhood as a critical phase of growth and development, recognizing the deep interconnection between physical, mental, and social well-being. By focusing on the root causes of illness and promoting overall health, Unani medicine aims to support children in achieving their full developmental potential. With its rich heritage of safe, effective, and holistic pediatric care, the system offers a comprehensive approach through dietary regulation, gentle regimens, and time-tested herbal formulations that address both prevention and treatment.

To enhance its role in modern healthcare, classical Unani pediatric remedies require contemporary validation through robust scientific research and adherence to standardized safety protocols. Integrating Unani medicine into existing child health programs could significantly contribute to improving health outcomes and reducing disease burdens and disabilities in children. However, large-scale clinical trials are essential to establish efficacy, safety, and acceptance, particularly for addressing the needs of the most vulnerable pediatric populations.

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