

## Hijamah (Cupping), an Important Regimen in Unani Medicine -A Review Article

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### Abstract

### Review Article

Unani Medicine is Comprehensive System of Medicine as its is based on the Principles of Father of Medicine Hippocrates/ Buqrat (460-377 BC) who proposed pivotal theories regarding Tib (Medicine), especially Unani Medicine is Concerned, *Nazariya Mawalid-e- Salasa* (Tri- Matter Theory), *Nazariya Akhlat* (Humoural Theory), *Nazariya Tabiya't* (Physic) along with these theories Unani Medicine also follows some basic factors which are called as Umoor e Tabiya (Natural factors/Physiological principles). One of the unique feature of Unani Medicine principles is that it follows Holistic approach in management and prevention of Halat Sehat (Health State) and Halat Maraz (Diseased condition). Treatment Module comprises of four different and solid types which is always kept in mind while looking solutions for any abnormal situation and these are Elaj bil tadbir (treatment by regimens), Elaj bil Ghiza (dietotherapy), Elaj bil Dawa (treatment by Unani medicines) and as a last but not least option Elaj Bil Yad (treatment by Surgery). Elaj bil Tadbir is gaining very much attention in preventing and treating different diseases like Joint disorders, skin diseases and various life style disorders like High blood pressure. Out of different regimens discussed in Unani Medicine one of them is Hijamah.

**Keywords:** Hijamah, Cuping, Unani Medicine, Hippocrates, Cups, Health.

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## INTRODUCTION

Al-Hijamah is an Arabic word that refers to the practice of cupping therapy, which involves the application of cups (Seenghi) on the skin to create suction. This traditional method is believed to improve blood circulation, promote healing, and remove toxins from the body. It has been practiced for centuries in various cultures and remains a significant part of traditional medicine. It is being used all across the globe for managing and preventing different diseases along with life style disorders. Al-Hijamah (cupping) is one of the most commonly employed regimens of Ilaj Bil Tadbir (IBT) and has been in use through ancient times for treatment and prevention purposes.

### Historical Background

The practice of *Hijamah* (cupping) has been around for thousands of years. It was systematically used by ancient Unani physicians. The oldest known medical

book, written in Egypt around 1550 BC, mentions using *Hijamah* to "remove morbid materials" from the body through bleeding. Later, *Jalinus* (Galen), a well-known physician, also used this method. During the Islamic era, *Hijamah* became popular again after being forgotten for some time. It is reported that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) recommended and practiced *Hijamah* therapy. He is also reported to have said, "The best treatment is cupping and puncturing the veins [1, 2].

### Types of Hijamah

Depending upon the method of the application of *Hijamah* it is classified into two types:

1. *Hijamah-Bila-shurt* (Non-invasive cupping or Dry cupping)
2. *Hijamah-Bil-Shurt* (Invasive cupping or wet cupping or cupping with scarification) [3-6].

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## Mechanism of Action

Several suggestions have been put forth but the precise mechanism of action of cupping therapy is still unclear. The different effects of cupping therapy have been described by six different modes of action. The molecular and mechanical underpinnings of the pain alleviation that cupping therapy produces are the subject of three of these ideas. The following are these theories:

1. The pain-gate
2. The conditioned pain modulation
3. The reflex zone

The rest three proposed mechanisms of action are meant to explain the beneficial effects of cupping therapy which include an increase in.

- i. *Dauran -e-khoon* (blood circulation)
- ii. Immunomodulatory effects
- iii. Toxins and wastes removal [1].

## Preparation

Dry cupping is an easy process that usually need for little setup. Gaining the patient's written and verbal informed consent, making sure that only the appropriate amount of skin is exposed for treatment while protecting the patient's safety, privacy, and dignity, and making sure the skin is clean and dry before starting the cupping session are the main steps in getting ready for dry cupping. Wet cupping necessitates extra precautions in addition to the dry cupping because of the possibility of exposure to bio-hazardous materials. The practitioner and all other people involved in the process must wear the proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in order to protect both the patient and themselves. Wet cupping may be considered a clean operation, but it is best to proceed with caution and take the appropriate precautions to protect patients and avoid any problems. It is advised that the safety precautions listed below be followed when carrying out the procedure.

**Skin Preparation:** Betadine, rather than alcohol, should be used to prepare the skin.

**Disposable tools:** Each patient should be treated with disposable surgical blades and cups.

## PPE:

Sterile gloves, gowns, and drapes are examples of the proper PPE that should be worn by everyone involved in the process, including the cupping therapist and assistants.

## Disposal of Trash:

The proper sharps and biohazard waste containers should be utilized to dispose of cups, blades, and other disposable materials used throughout the procedure [7].

## Benefits of Cupping Therapy

Studies suggest cupping provides different types of stimulation which may be beneficial for various conditions like in chronic pain, knee osteoarthritis, planter fasciitis, tension, headache, migraine some skin conditions like plaque psoriasis, chronic rashes and it also improves blood flow to specific areas reduces muscle stiffness and other beneficial effects of Cupping therapy is also noted in disease of face, throat, teeth, eyes, and ears [8].

- ❖ To move the material from one location to another, such as when cups are put below the breast line for Menorrhagia.
- ❖ Hijama e Nariya is preferred when there is a sign that an organ has gone cold and needs to be warmed up.
- ❖ Hijāma is applied to the same area of the body when air accumulates there; in particular, Hijāmat-e-Nariya works better for intestinal colic caused due to flatulence.
- ❖ Hijāma is also used to relieve excruciating pain in any area of the body. Either the evacuation of trapped air or the redirection of materials away from the region of discomfort, Hijāma is therefore recommended for sciatica on the dorsal and medial aspects of the thigh [9].

## Cupping Points on Body

Some important Cupping points or sites chosen in different *Amraz* (diseases) in Unani Medicine are as follows:[10]

Place of Body	Disease
Guddi (Nape of the neck)	Heaviness of eyebrows, eyelids, itching in eyes and kund zehni (stupidness) etc.
Between Shoulders	Haemoptysis, Shoulder pain, Throat pain, liver diseases, spleen diseases
On Hands	Headache, Meningitis, Pyrexia, and Gas formation.
Below Breasts	Menorrhagia and Puerperium
Between Flanks	Metritis, Proctitis, Orchitis and Metrorrhagia
Above Navel	Colitis, Stomach-ache, Metritis
Between Buttocks, and above anus	Sciatica, pain in thigh, buttocks, and haemorrhoids
Calves	Renal pain, Metritis, Amenorrhoea, anaemic, and flabby females etc.

## Contraindications

It is essential to take into account the contraindications when administering cupping therapy in order to protect patients' health and safety. Avoiding

regions with open wounds, bone fractures, or deep vein thrombosis (DVT) is one of these contraindications. Notably, cupping shouldn't be applied directly to eyes,

lymph nodes, veins, arteries, nerves, varicose veins, skin lesions, body orifices, or inflammatory skin areas [11].

Cupping should be avoided if the skin is excoriated, leaking, or diseased since it may raise D-dimer levels, which could indicate blood coagulation or other negative consequences. Patients who are elderly, young, pregnant, or menstruation should not undergo cupping therapy. Additionally, patients who have high blood cholesterol are more likely to experience cardiovascular problems as a result of cupping therapy [12].

### Complications

Cupping therapy is generally regarded as a safe procedure although there are a few cases of mild-to-moderate adverse reactions which can be either preventable or non-preventable. All avoidable side effects of cupping therapy are Scarring, burns, bullae, abscesses, blood-borne and skin infections, pruritus, anemia, and panniculitis are reactions in sterile technique or instrumentation are frequently blamed for these problems. While Headaches, lightheadedness, exhaustion, vasovagal syncope, nausea, sleeplessness, and the Koebner phenomenon-the emergence of new skin lesions as a result of the treatment unavoidable side effects of cupping therapy. Because they mostly rely on the patient's reaction, these adverse events are classified as nonpreventable [11-13].

Wet cupping is more commonly responsible for infection, vasovagal syncope, and scarring. Localized erythema and ecchymosis at the cupping sites and there is higher chance of burns during dry cupping with fire suction [14].

### Management

Management plays a key role in using Hijamah (cupping therapy) effectively, and it mainly depends on the patient's Mizaj (temperament). For weak patients with a hot temperament, remedies like Tiryaq-e-Farooq and Dawa-ul-Misk can be given after Hijamah. For those with a choleric temperament, Arq Gulab (rose water), Arq Kasni, and Sharbat Anar (pomegranate syrup) are recommended. If the patient has a cold temperament, sour foods or drinks are beneficial after the therapy [10].

## DISCUSSION

Needless to say that we are living in an era where human beings are encountered by various diseases and Medical fraternity is working tirelessly to find solutions and treatment of all diseases and frankly speaking its not possible to find cure for all diseases ,so its better option to find an alternate way to combat the situation one of them is doing some alteration in our life style or way of living which is very much responsible of producing many problems .So if we can increase the Immunity of people as we all noticed during Covid- 19 Pandemic not every person was affected with the

infection and if infected the outcome or complications were of different intensity. Cupping therapy is a safer method to treat various diseases or conditions provided all safety parameters were taken into account as if the immunity of that particular person is compromised even a minor negligence could be fatal or life threatening. As after taking all precautions some adverse effects are inevitable in such condition person's own immunity plays very important role in deciding the intensity of inevitable complications of Hijamah.

## CONCLUSION

Unani Medicine strictly follows Holistic approach in managing and treating various diseases and has very strong principles and regimens for a wider range of diseases right from very early days the procedure of Cupping has been in use for treating and preventing many diseases but the wait is still on for research study done on larger sample size to generalize the use of Cupping therapy, yes there is now SOP for doing Hijama and is being followed by Unani Physicians across the globe for preventing and managing various diseased conditions because this therapy is relatively inexpensive, easy to administer and free of serious side effects .So in order for large section of population to be benefited from this unique regimen which is a boon for Unani System of Medicine but we are not Using Cupping therapy with its all potential due to research gap which underlines its efficacy along with its result on larger sample size. Its need of the hour that all Government Unani and private Unani institution to corroborate and do clinical research on its safety parameters with large sample size.

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