



Received on 09 September, 2014; received in revised form, 29 November, 2014; accepted, 06 January, 2015; published 01 May, 2015

UPBRINGING OF CHILDREN AND ROLE OF UNANI MEDICINE IN CHILD HEALTH CARE: A REVIEW

Azizur Rahman¹ and S. Javed Ali^{*2}

Department of Kulliyat¹, Department of Medicine², National Institute of Unani Medicine, Bangalore - 91 India

Keywords:

Infancy, Adolescence,
Unani Medicine, Child Care

Correspondence to Author:

S. Javed Ali

PG Scholar, Department of Moalajat (Medicine), Room No.16 Unit II Boys Hostel, NIUM CAMPUS, Bangalore, India.

E-mail: jav.alig@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: Infancy is the most important period of human life, because a infant grows up to be a healthy teen and adult, parents should have to take precautions seriously so as to impart a healthy life to their child, since the immunity of children is not so strong as that of adults so they are prone to diseases and illnesses, the medicine used in conventional system of medicine for such pediatrics ailments are also associated with a number of side and adverse effects, ancient Unani scholars had elaborately discussed about the care of children during their developmental period right from delivery to adolescence, Unani scholars also emphasizes use of common herbs which are free from any side effects for day to day ailments of children. This paper presents Unani medicine concept of human health and role of unani medicine in upbringing of a healthy child.


INTRODUCTION: Health is a state of complete physical mental and social well being and not merely the absence of any disease (WHO).^{1, 2} Prying of Human health starts from pregnancy to whole life. Infancy is the period from birth to the time the child is able to stand up.^{1, 3} Each step is very important during this part of life and parents should take precaution seriously to preserve the health of child.⁴ According to Unani Medicine, the *Mizaj* (temperament) of this age is *Har Ratab* (hot wet) and this age is observed as an age of growth and development to achieve the basic milestone.^{5, 6, 7} Health needs carefulness about itself. It is believed that if the physiological functions of the body are normal, health exists.^{6, 7}

There is a pile of literature in Unani system of medicine about prevention and promotion of kid health. The legend philosophers of Unani system, like Ibn Sina (Avicenna), Ibn Hubel Baghdadi, Rabban Tabri and others, have described their views regarding child health in detail and also suggested regimens and drugs for betterment of infants.

Management of Infancy:

Management just after Normal Delivery:

After normal birth cut the umbilical cord at four finger distance from the umbilicus, then tied it with a soft clean and lightly twined woolen thread.^{8, 9} The cut end of the umbilical cord is dressed with a piece of clean cotton soaked in olive oil. Dusting the wound with fine powder made of equal parts of turmeric, Indian kino, *Anzaroot* (*Astragalus saaracola*), Cumin seeds and Lichen.^{10, 11} After cutting and packing of umbilical cord, feed the baby two drops of honey. Clean ear and nose with cotton bud. Dropping of oil in nostrils is also prescribed.¹

QUICK RESPONSE CODE 	DOI: 10.13040/IJPSR.0975-8232.6(5).1820-25
	Article can be accessed online on: www.ijpsr.com
DOI link: http://dx.doi.org/10.13040/IJPSR.0975-8232.6(5).1820-25	

Care of Skin:

After delivery the face and skin of the baby should be cleansed as early as possible with saline water and salt, so as to tone up the skin.^{6, 11, 12, 13} Care should be taken to prevent the saline entering into the baby's nose and mouth. The nostrils should be cleansed with the tip of the little finger.¹⁰ A little olive oil should also be dropped in eyes. In order to dilate the anus the little finger should be used.^{10, 12} At this stage the body should be bathed with lukewarm water.^{10, 12, 14}

Manipulation:

Eyes are wiped regularly with a piece of soft linen. The bladder is gently pressed to assist the voidance of urine.¹¹ At the end of each session arms should be placed by the side of thighs and the head covered up with a light turban or a properly fitting cap.¹⁰

Sleep:

It is essential that sleeping arrangements should be made in a room which has been shaded from the direct sunlight.¹¹ In bright light baby cannot sleep peacefully and wakes up frequently. Cover the eyes during sleep,³ the head should be kept slightly rose on a small pillow and care should be taken that there is no twisting of the back, neck, arms and legs of the baby.^{9, 10} Gentle rocking and singing of lullabies are good for the baby's temperament and sound sleep.^{10, 13}

Bath:

In summer season baby should be bathed with tepid water and in winter with moderately warm water. The bath is best given after a prolonged spell of sleep and on empty stomach.^{6, 14} The baby should be bathed two or three times a day. Care should be taken to prevent water from getting into the ears.^{11, 14} After the bath, baby should be wiped dry with soft linen. A little oil dropped into the nose, cleanses the eyes and lids should be done.¹⁰ They are advised to be keeping a bay from cold bath.^{8, 15}

Infant Feeding:

Jalinoos (Galen) states that best diet for children is milk of mother.^{9, 16} The following instruction should be followed during the nursing and feeding of infants. Baby should be fed as for as possible on mother's milk as it is nearest to the blood from

which the baby has grown up as the fetus.^{10, 12} The breast feeding in the beginning should be given only two or three times a day¹¹ and avoidance from large feeds especially during the first few days.¹⁰ Mohammad (PBUH) stated that: "Don't appoint the mad wet-nurse".^{12, 17} It would also be better to give the baby a little pure honey before the initial feed.^{10, 11} Mother should not breast feed the baby when she herself is hungry or fasting.¹⁰ More breast feeding leads to indolence.¹⁶

Amending the quality of milk:

If milk is too thick or has an unpleasant odor, it should be withdrawn and exposed to air for some time before feeding the baby and treated with liquefying medicine such as decoction of wild mint, hyssop, wild thyme or mountain origanum, served with a cordial prepared from the seeds.^{10, 18, 19}

Insufficient Lactation:

If the milk is scanty, carrots and carrot seeds are extremely beneficial. When the cause is malnutrition, mother should be given a broth made of oats, husked barley or some other suitable cereals. It would be useful to have the roots and seeds of fennel or seeds of black cumin added to the broth.^{10, 18, 19}

Extravagant Lactation:

When the secretion of milk is excessive and produces fullness and congestion in the breast, the quantity of food should be reduced and a less nourishing diet is given. The breasts and surrounding parts of chest should be painted with the liniment made of cumin seeds and vinegar. A little salt may be added to the water given for drinking after meals.^{10, 18, 19}

Regimen for the Suckling mother:

The suckling mother or nurse should take moderate exercise daily and eat wholesome food. During the period of nursing, she should abstain from sexual intercourse as it would activate the menstrual flow and make the milk foul and deficient.⁷ Mother should avoid Onion, Garlic, *Rai* (*Brassica nigra*), *Hing* (*Ferula assa-foetida*), *Ajwain* (*Trachyspermum ammi*) and hot spices. Sleep should be encouraged to assist digestion. During first few days, no more than three daily feeds are given.^{10, 18, 19}

Weaning:

When the baby begins to ask for things other than milk, it should be allowed to take them gradually without any forcing. When the incisor teeth begin to erupt, milk should be gradually supplemented with food articles which are not very hard⁷ and difficult to chew. Care should be taken not to overload the stomach. It is good to feed the baby after the oil rub and bath. At food eating age give him honey which increases the urge of food. When breast feeding is stopped, light food such as broth and easily digestible meat should be given. Weaning should be slow and gradual. If the baby keeps on crying for the breast milk, nipple may be coated with a paste made of one gram each of powdered myrrh (*Commiphora myrrha*) and Purslane seeds (*Portulaca oleracea*).^{10, 18, 19}

Baby in action:

Exercise is natural and instinctive to babies as nature forces them to activity. Light exercise is recommended. It is for this reason that they are not able to sit quietly at one place. When the baby begins to stand up and toddle about, it should not be forced to sit and walk against his wishes otherwise his legs and back would get deformed. During canine teeth eruption, hard things should not be given to chew because teeth would be damaged. Rubbing of chicken fat promotes the eruption of teeth.^{10, 11, 13} During eruption of teeth give light diet. Massage of the neck with olive oil is also beneficial during dentition. When the baby begins to talk, the root of the tongue should be regularly massaged.^{10, 18, 19}

Diseases of Children:

In the treatment of infants the first consideration should be given to the management of the diseases of lactating mothers because a healthy mother assures healthy baby.¹⁹

The various diseases which affect the children will be described now.

Diarrhea:

It is particularly common during dentition.¹¹ It may be caused by pain in the gums interfering with digestion.¹² A mild attack of diarrhea does not require any special treatment because the body can cope easily.^{10, 19} When diarrhea is profuse, foment

made of seeds of rose, celery or plaster of cumin seeds and rose seeds made up with vinegar are applied to abdomen.^{10, 19, 20} Cold water should be given.^{10, 19, 20} Since milk gets curdled in the stomach, a suitable substitute such as yolk of half boiled egg, soft bread, or flour of roasted barley cooked in water should be given.^{10, 19, 20}

Teething:

Inflammation of gums, swelling of the temporal region and trismus are common during dentition. In these cases the swollen should be gently pressed with fingers.^{10, 19} A piece of *Asalussus* (*Glycyrrhiza glabra* L.) puts in the mouth to make the gums strong.¹¹

Constipation:

Sometimes children develop constipation. This is treated with a suppository made of pure solidified honey or honey mixed with a small quantity of wild mint (*Mentha longifolia*), or plain or burnt lily root. Honey is given by mouth.¹⁰

Gingivitis:

If the gums are inflamed, they should be massaged with oil containing wax. Salted meat is also useful of rubbing on the inflamed gums.¹⁰ Sometimes in cases of gingivitis application of *Roghan zaitoon* (oil of *Olea europaea*), butter is beneficial.¹²

Convulsions:

Convulsions are particularly common during the teething period.^{10, 19, 21} They are treated by rubbing the body with oil of iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), lily (*Lilium bulbiferum*), and henna (*Lawsonia inermis*) or gilli flower (*Dianthus caryophyllus*)^{10, 19} Application of *Roghan Banafsha* (oil of *Viola odorata*) is also beneficial.^{7, 12}

Cough:

When there is a cough or cold, hot water should be poured freely over the head.⁶ Gum acacia (*Acacia greggii*), Gum tragacanth (*Astragalus gum mifer*), powdered Quince (*Cydonia oblonga*) seeds and extract of liquorice (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) mixed with sugar are given daily in small doses with fresh milk.^{10, 20} In cough and rhinitis *Sharbat Khashkhas* is useful.^{12, 20}

Dyspnoea: It is treated with emesis. Vomiting is induced by rubbing olive oil over roots of ears and

root of tongue. Linseed (*Linum usitatissimum*) mixed with honey is used as linctus.^{10, 19}

Earache:

Occasionally children develop earache from *Reeh* (pnumae) or dampness. This is treated with drop made of oil in which barberry (*Berberis vulgaris*), rock salt, lentil (*Lens culinaris*), myrrh (*Commiphora myrrha*), colocynth (*Citrullus colocynthis*) seeds or juniper (*Juniperus osteosperma*) is boiled and filtered before use.^{10, 19}

Conjunctivitis:

Barberry mixed with milk should be painted over the lids, and later on the eyes are bathed with a decoction of chamomile (*Matricaria recutita*) and juice of wild basil (*Ocimum basilicum*).^{10, 19}

Corneal Ulcers:

Sometimes excessive crying produces corneal ulceration with white opacities. These are treated by applying juice of green night shade. Eyes swollen from excessive crying are also treated in the same manner.^{10, 19}

Fevers:

Fevers are treated best by attending to the wet-nurse. Both the baby and the nurse should be given remedies like pomegranate juice mixed with the syrup of vinegar and honey or cucumber juice mixed with a little camphor and sugar.^{10, 19, 20} Sweating is induced by applying juice of fresh bamboo leaves to the head and feet and covering the baby with warm clothing.^{10, 19, 20}

Colic:

This is caused by the bad milk and diarrhea of indigestion. It is generally quite distressing and makes the baby cry and writhe in agony. The abdomen should be immediately fomented with warm water, wax or oil.^{10, 19}

Excessive Sneezing:

This is occasionally the result of inflammation in the vicinity of brain. The treatment is similar to that of inflammation in general. Cooling measures should be adopted and oil with cold temperament to be applied on head.^{10, 12, 19} Where sneezing is not due to inflammation, powdered seeds of wild basil (*Ocimum basilicum*) are blown into the nose.^{10, 19}

Inflammation of the Navel:

This generally occurs when the cord has not been severed properly. It is treated with Celtic juice and turpentine resin melted in sesame (*Sesamum indicum*) oil. A small quantity of the same is given orally as well as applied locally.^{10, 19}

Insomnia:

Sometimes the child becomes sleepless, restless and cries incessantly. In that case sleep should be induced by applying to the head a plaster made of poppy seeds or poppy oil is rubbed over the head and temples.^{10, 19} In disturbed sleep feeding of *Roghan Kadu* (*Lagenaria siceraria*) and its application externally on head is also useful.^{11, 12}

Hiccup:

This results occasionally from bad milk and is relieved by giving a small quantity of coconut mixed with sugar.^{10, 19}

Excessive Vomiting:

It occurs due to overfeeding with milk and is treated by giving four grains of cloves orally and applying a mild astringent plaster to the abdomen.^{10, 19} Use of sour- sweet apple or pomegranate juices is also beneficial.^{11, 12}

Weak Digestion:

In case of weak digestion, a small quantity of extract of embelia and cloves with juice of quince (*Cydonia oblonga Mill*) is given by mouth.^{10, 19}

Nightmares:

These are usually caused by an overloaded stomach. The decomposition of food disturbs the stomach, and its products on reaching the brain excite the imaginative faculty and produce fearful dreams. In such cases the child should not be put to bed with a loaded stomach and is given honey orally to assist digestion.^{10, 19}

Inflammation of Throat:

The swelling of the region between the mouth and the esophagus (pharynx), could be spread to the spine and muscles of neck. Its best treatment is to removal of constipation with a suppository placed in the rectum; the remaining treatment is carried out with syrup of mulberry (*Morus nigra*).^{10, 19}

Abnormal Snoring:

Linseed (*Linum usitatissimum*) ground with honey or ground cumin (*Cuminum cyminum*) mixed with honey is given as linctus.^{10, 19}

Infantile Convulsions:

A powder made of equal parts of castoreum (*Pedimelum castoreum*), origanum (*Origanum vulgare*) and cumin seeds and give in doses of six grains is very beneficial.^{10, 19}

Enteritis:

Sometimes enteritis develop from exposure to cold, take three grams of seeds of water cress (*Nasturtium officinale*) and cumin; ground together sieved and mixed with old clarified cow butter. A small quantity of it is given with cold water.^{10, 19}

Intertrigo:

A dusting powder made of Myrtle (*Myrtus communis*) leaves, lily (*Lilium bulbiferum*) root and dried roses or flour of barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) is applied to site of irritation.¹ In case of irritation in thighs area, application of *Roghan Gul* (oil of *Rosa rubiginosa*) is useful.¹²

Stomatitis:

First rinse the mouth with honey and then apply the sour mulberries or sour grapes.^{10, 19} In case of mouth ulcer applies Roghan gul (*Rosa rubiginosa*) and Roghan Mom mix with Dhania (*Coriandrum sativum*).^{11, 12}

Flatulence:

In cases of *Riahi* pain due to flatulence, feeding the baby with decoction of Anisoon (*Pimpinella anisum*) and Pudina (*Mentha longifolia*) is advised.^{10, 19, 20}

Tonsilitis and Uvulitis:

Tonsilitis and Uvulitis is treated by Masoor dal (*Lens culinaris*) boiled with sour sweet pomegranate and given in little amount to the child.¹²

Regimen for Children:

Children should be carefully attended and supervised regarding their behavior so that they do not exceed the limits of moderation.^{11, 16} Ancient scholars also advised that keep the children away from sadness and fear as may have a negative

impact on their development.^{11, 16} Outburst of violent anger and anxiety should be checked. Ill behavior affects the temperament and produces various types of imbalances,^{10, 12, 19} anger produces an unusual degree of heat in the body and sorrow leads to undue dryness. Similarly mental lethargy dulls the nervous and mental faculties and makes the constitution phlegmatic.⁶ Consequently when child in the morning wakes up, he is given first a bath and then allowed to play for an hour or so before breakfast.⁶ After breakfast, he is left to play for a while and then given another bath before the next feed. As far as possible water should not be given during the meals as it leads to premature absorption of partially digested food.

Children should be allowed to drink as much of the sweet and pure water as they like. At the age of three years, after awakening in the morning light exercise, massage and then bath are recommended. Children should not be given sedatives. The same regimen, with suitable modification, should be continued up to the age of fourteen.^{7, 10, 19}

CONCLUSION: From beginning of life Children should be carefully attended and supervised regarding their diet, sleeping, physical activity, behavior and surroundings etc, as they are more prone to any anomalies than elders, so one has to take care for them sincerely. Legend Unani philosophers have paid great attention about their health and rehabilitation. So following their instruction children may be safe from various disease ailments and may observe a better growth and development; and for minor illnesses herbal drugs advised by ancient Unani scholars may be used as they are free from any apparent side effects.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: The authors are thankful to Library Staff, NIUM, Bangalore for providing necessary literature needed for review work.

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How to cite this article:

Rahman A and Ali SJ: Upbringing of Children and Role of Unani Medicine in Child Health Care: A Review. *Int J Pharm Sci Res* 2015; 6(5): 1820-25. doi: 10.13040/IJPSR.0975-8232.6(5).1820-25.

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