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Dalk (Massage): A Unani Therapeutic Manipulative Procedure in Rehabilitation of Psychosomatic and Neurological Disorders

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Abstract

In Unani system of medicine, *Dalk* known as massage is an ancient mode of treatment. Massage has been generally used for its preventive, therapeutic and rehabilitative purposes since the time of Buqrat (Hippocrates). It has been mainly advised in the management of various neurological and psychological diseases. Several clinical trials have recognised its efficacy in these diseases on scientific parameters. This review article aims to explore the preventive as well as therapeutic application of *Dalk* (massage) in perspective of classical Unani texts and their various indications in psychosomatic and neurological diseases.

Keywords: Dalk; Unani; Massage; Psychosomatic Diseases; Neurological Diseases

1. Introduction

Massage is one of the oldest forms of restorative therapy. It was first practiced in a structured way perhaps in Chinese and Mesopotamian civilizations more than 5000 years ago. The art of massage was very familiar in physicians of ancient Greece. Hippocrates "father of medicine" in 5th century BC said that the way to health is scented bath and an oiled massage every day [1]. The word "massage" is derived from Arabic word "mass" means to touch, feel, and pressure; or from the Greek word "massein" implies to knead. Hippocrates (460-375 BC) was the first person who discussed the uses and contraindications of massage. He realized massage as an organized therapy. Another Unani physician Asclepius advocated massage and physical therapy as the third most important mode of treatment. Galen (125-195 AD) wrote about 16 books related to exercise and massage and discussed massage in detail [2]. It is an important regimen in the management of psychosomatic and neurological diseases. In Unani system of medicine *Dalk* is practiced since the time of Hippocrates.

2. Dalk (Massage)

Massage is a type of manual kneading or manipulating the soft tissues to relieve pain, discomfort and stress to preserve or promote health and wellness [3]. It is a scientific way of treating some forms of disease by external manipulations, applied in an array of ways to the soft tissues of the body [4]. In Unani system of medicine, *Dalk* simulates with massage; it is a form of *Riyazat* (exercise) under taken by hands as a manipulative technique over the muscles to produce *Hararat* (heat), hence causing *Tahallul* (dissolvent) and *Riqqat* (liquidity) in *Fuzlat* (morbific matter). It also strengthens the *Autar* (ligaments) *wa Azlat* (muscles) and evacuates the *Fuzlah* of *Hazm Akheer* (waste metabolites of the body) [5, 6]. In Unani literature, time of massage is not precisely mentioned in terms of minute or hours, but it has been discussed depending upon the different conditions as follows:

1. Strength of massaged organ
2. *Mizaj* of organ to be massaged
3. Type of oil used
4. *Mizaj* of disease and person
5. Condition of disease (acute, sub-acute, chronic)
6. Condition of patients (healthy, obese, lean and thin)
7. Season
8. Desired outcome [7].

3. Mechanism of Action

The mechanism of action of *Dalk* (Massage) is based on two basic concepts i.e. *Tanqiya-e-Mawad* (elimination of morbid matter) and *Imala-e-Mawad* (diversion of morbid matter). *Tanqiya-e-Mawad* means excretion of morbid *Akhlat* and excessive fluids out of the body, therefore maintaining the normal quality and quantity of four body humors. *Imala-e-Mawad* (diversion of morbid matter) acts through diversion of the morbid fluids from affected organ towards the normal sites, from where these matters can be easily expelled out of the body [6, 8].

4. Indications of Dalk (massage)

In present day scenario the most common conditions regarded for visiting a clinic or hospital includes headache, anxiety, insomnia, stress and depression [9]. In Unani system of medicine medicated massage is indicated for the promotion of health as well as therapeutic purposes mainly in Psychosomatic and Neurological disorders such as headache, migraine, insomnia, neuralgia, hemiplegia, facial palsy etc. Massage has a great potential in alleviation of these disorders and the following table delineates the various indication of massage in Unani medicine:

S.N.	Name of diseases	Roghaniyat (Therapeutic Oils)
1	<i>Amraz Ras Har Sada</i>	<i>Roghan Gul, Roghane Beid, Roghane Neelofar, Roghane Banafsha</i> [10]
2	<i>Amraz Ras Barid Sada</i>	<i>Roghane Yasmeen, Roghan Baboona</i> [10]
3	<i>Amraz Ras Yabis Sada</i>	<i>Roghane Gul, Roghane Kaddu, Roghane Badam, Roghane Banafsha, Roghane Neeloofar</i> [10]
4	<i>Amraz Ras Balghami</i>	<i>Roghan Ban, Roghan Zabaq, Roghane Nargis, Roghan Nargis, Roghane Nargis, Roghan Sosan, Roghane Zaitoon</i> [10]
5	<i>Suda Har Sada</i>	<i>Roghan Kaddu, Roghan Kahu, Roghan Neelofar, Roghan Gul, Roghane Banafsha, Roghan Laboob Saba, Roghan Gul mixed with Sirka</i> [10-12]
6	<i>Suda Barid Sada</i>	<i>Roghane Badam Talkh, Roghane Suddab, Roghane Ghar, Roghane Kheri, Roghane Baboona, Roghane Nargis, Roghane Zabaq, Roghane Sosan, Roghane Khardal, Roghane Shoneez, Roghane Balsan</i> [10, 12]
7	<i>Suda Reehi</i>	<i>Roghane Baboona, Roghane Shibbat</i> [10]
8	<i>Suda Yabusi</i>	<i>Roghane Kaddu, Roghane Banafsha, Roghane Neelofar, Roghane Badam, Roghane Kunjad</i> [10-11]
9	<i>Suda Balghami</i>	<i>Roghane Yasmeen, Roghane Suddab, Roghane Sosan, Roghane Gul, Roghane Hindi</i> [10]
10	<i>Suda Saudawi</i>	<i>Roghane Baboona, Roghane Zafran mixed with Roghane Kaddu, Roghane Sosan, Roghane Nargis, Roghane Marzanjosh, Roghane Laboob Saba, Roghane Banafsha, Roghane Neelofar, Roghane Kahu, Roghane Khashkhash</i> [10-11]
11	<i>Suda Zoef Dimagh</i>	<i>Roghane Nargis, Roghane Badam</i> [10]
12	<i>Shaqqeaq Har</i>	<i>Roghane Banafsha, Roghane Neelofar, Roghane kaddu, Roghane Gul</i> [10]
13	<i>Sehar Yabis</i>	<i>Roghane Kaddu, Roghane Qinnab, Roghane Banafsha, Roghane Badam, Roghane Khashkhash, Roghane Laboob Saba, Roghane Kahu</i> [10-11]
14	<i>Sehar Ratoobi</i>	<i>Roghane Baboona, Roghane Kheeri</i> [10]
15	<i>Wasawis Saudawi</i>	<i>Roghane Badam</i> [12]
16	<i>Malenkholia Sada</i>	<i>Roghane Banafsha, Roghane Khashkhash, Roghane Kaddu, Roghane Kahu</i> [10]
17	<i>Nisyan Barid Yabis</i>	<i>Roghane Badam, Roghane Baboona, Roghane Kheeri, Roghane Sosan, Roghane Yasmeen</i> [10]
18	<i>Amraz Asab Balghami</i>	<i>Roghane Dhatoora, Roghane Qust, Roghane Bed- Anjeer, Roghane Haft Barg, Roghane Moom, Roghane Beesh, Roghane Mubarak, Roghane Kalan, Roghane Choobchini, Roghane Harmal, Roghane Zaitoon, Roghane Bishkupra, Roghane Balsan, Roghane Shoneez</i> [10-12]
19	<i>Amraz Asab Barid Ratab Sada</i>	<i>Roghane Zaitoon, Roghane Qust, Roghane Handooqi</i> [10]
20	<i>Amraz Asab Yabis Sada</i>	<i>Roghane Badam, Roghane Banafsha, Roghane Kaddu</i> [10]
21	Neurologic Pain due to <i>Burudat</i>	<i>Roghan Sosan, Roghan Nargis, Roghan Ghar</i> [13]
22	Neurological Pain due to <i>Hararat</i>	<i>Roghane Hina</i> [13]
23	<i>Khadar Balghami wa Ratoobi</i>	<i>Roghane Qust, Roghane Farfiyun, Roghane Tukhme Mashmash Talkh, Roghane Hartal</i> [10]
24	<i>Tashannuj</i>	<i>Roghane Qust; When spasm starts slowly, then Roghane Banafsha, Roghane Kaddu</i> [14]
25	<i>Tashannuje Imtalai</i>	<i>Roghane Hina, Roghane Zaitoon Kuhna, Roghane Zuft, Roghane Ban, Roghane Joz, Roghane Qust, Roghane Suddab</i> [10]
26	<i>Tashannuje Yabis</i>	<i>Roghane Banafsha, Roghane Badam, Roghane Sosan, Roghane Hina, Roghane Kaddu</i> [10]
27	<i>Falij</i>	<i>Roghane Qust, Roghane Nardin, Roghane Farfiyun, Roghane Shoneez, Roghane Balsan, Roghane Kaknaj, Roghane Zabaq, Roghane Badam Talkh, Roghane Badam kuhna, Roghane Utraj, Roghane Nargis, Roghane kheeri</i> [10-11, 13-15]
28	<i>Laqwa</i>	<i>Roghane Akhrot, Roghane Zaitoon, Roghan Qust, Roghan Ban, Roghan Suddab, Roghan Habbul Khazra, Roghane Balsan, Roghane Kaknaj, Roghane Zabaq, Roghane Badam Talkh, Roghane Utraj</i> [13-15]
29	<i>Laqwa due to Yaboosat</i>	<i>Roghane Banafsha, Roghane Khatmi</i> [13]
30	<i>Rasha Barid</i>	<i>Roghane Sosan, Roghane Qust, Roghan Qisaul Himar, Roghane Darchini, Roghane Nardin, Roghane Zabaq, Roghane Khardal, Roghane Baboona</i> [10, 13, 15-16]

The disease at first should be treated based on its *Ussole Ilaj* (line of treatment), and *Roghaniyat* (medicated oils) should be used after the evacuation of morbid matters. In Unani system of medicine diseases are treated according to basic principle of *Ilaj Biz Zid* (Heteropathy). Hence, for *Har Amraz* (Hot temperament diseases) *Barid Roghaniyat* (Cold temperament oils) should be used, and for *Barid Amraz* (Cold temperament diseases), *Har Roghaniyat* (Hot temperament oil) should be used.

5. Scientific Reports

In recent years, many clinical trials have been conducted to evaluate the efficacy of massage especially in psychological

and neurological diseases. Some of them are; Smith *et al.* found that massage has a positive psychological effect in improving general mood, decreasing anxiety, stress and depression in a Meta-analysis of 37 RCTs [17]. Lawler *et al.* in a RCT found that preliminary support for the utility of massage therapy as a treatment of choice for migraine [18]. Chaibi *et al.* in a Meta-analysis found that massage therapy might be equally effective as propranolol and topiramate in the prophylactic management of migraine [19]. US department of health concluded a meta-analysis of 17 clinical trials that massage therapy is helpful in reducing depression [20]. Falkensteiner *et al.* revealed that massage therapy is a noninvasive, cost-effective intervention in reduction of

somatic signs and symptoms such as pain, anxiety, and depression in severely ill cancer patients [21]. In a RCT Abdal *et al.* revealed that *Munzija wa Mushile Balgham* and massage with *Roghan-e-Malkangani* has significant effect on voluntary movements of affected limb as compared to control drug [22]. Yasir *et al.* in a clinical trial shows that *Munzija wa Mushil Balgham* and massage with *Roghane Malkangni* is effective in reducing spasticity predominantly in antigravity muscles in post Stroke Spasticity [23]. Haji *et al.* shows in a clinical trial that *Munzija wa Mushil Balgham* and *Dalk Sulb* (Firm Massage) with *Roghane Seer* improved the quality of life in the patients of post stroke hemiplegia [24]. Zarnigar *et al.* in a clinical trial on post stroke hemiplegia found that efficacy of *Dalk* is more significant in total functional gain and independent walking ability than control [25]. Reif *et al.* in a clinical trial found that massage therapy is effective in the patients of Cerebral Palsy. It enhances the hip range of motion, fine and gross motor functions, better cognitive performance and more positive social behavior [26].

6. Conclusion

In Unani system of medicine, *Dalk* has been used for the preventive and as well as therapeutic indications since the time of antiquity. Various trials have been conducted to evaluate the efficacy of massage found to be effective, except few trials which were failed to show their efficacy. It may be due to the wrong selection of therapeutic oil which was discordant to the *Mizaj* of the disease. It is necessary to choose appropriate oil for therapeutic massage according to the *Mizaj* of the diseases to evince better efficacy of the treatment. Unani medicine has endeavored to revitalize this method of treatment. Still standard operating procedures have not been developed for systematic and rational use of massage therapy and are pressing need of the hour.

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