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Health Management of the elderly peoples (Tadabeer-e-Mashaikh) with reference to canon of medicine

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Abstract

Theoretical and practical knowledge of Unani System of Medicine is based on *Umoor-e-Tabiyah* (Seven Principles), whereas temperament and humor has great worth. Throughout the *Canon of Medicine*, Avicenna invokes the humors as real entities responsible for health and sickness. The *Canon* is not merely a medical history of its time, but rather a basis for understanding human health and disease in an integral, panoramic approach. There is no absolute temperament, that is, there is not one universal temperament to which we compare the health of an individual. Also, there is not one temperament that is the best or the optimum for all types of geographical locations. Life is sustained by heat, and grows by moisture." *Rutubat* (Moisture) attributes health preservation to the maintenance of the normal level of *Hararat-e-Ghareeziya* (innate heat), senescence to its weakness, and death to its extinction. Innate heat of the body and its organs is also described as a temperament on a scale between hot and cold in comparison with the individual's population of origin. When peoples reach older age than *Rutubat* (moisture) and *Hararat-e-Ghareeziya* (innate heat) decreased.

Keywords: Canon of Medicine, Elderly Peoples, Health Management, Tadabeer-e-Mashaikh

Introduction

Medicine is a science through which we figure out the states of the human body, what makes it healthy and what takes away health, so that to preserve the health when present and restore it when gone^[1]. Geriatric medicine or clinical gerontology, as a branch of medical sciences specifically deals with health problems as well as care and treatment of older people^[2, 3].

In Persian medical manuscripts chapter related to geriatric medicine is generally mentioned under a subject namely "Tadabeer-e-Mashaikh" or elderly devise. There, the physiology of senescence is meticulously discussed in terms of principal fundamentals such as temperament, humors, spirits, faculties or forces and functions^[4]. The proper balance of the humors within the body determines the health state of the body and mind, that is, the humors determine the physiological state of health^[5, 6].

General Description

Briefly, health management of the elderly is in the combined use of moisturizing and warming foods, drinks, and baths; extended sleep by staying in bed longer than young people; constant induction of urine; evacuation of phlegm from the stomach through the intestines and bladder; preservation of moisture through gentle massage in quantity and quality with oil rubbing; and walking or riding. The weak should be massaged often, applying a generous amount of moderately warm perfume, and rubbed with oil after sleep to stimulate the animalistic faculty; then use walking and riding^[7, 8].

General Remarks on the Regimen of Old Age

In brief, the regimen appropriate for old people consists in giving those forms of aliment, drink, and baths which render the body warm and moist (i.e. moistening, calefacient food; warm or hot soft water baths). There should be extended sleep by staying in bed longer than young people. The flow of urine should be continually assisted by diluents; the mucus should be helped out of the stomach by way of the bowels and urine. The nature is too soft, and this needs correcting^[8, 9].

Dalk (Massage): Massage with oil, moderated both in quantity and quality so as to fall short of occasioning lassitude, is beneficial ^[8].

Riyazat (Exercise): Walking or horse-riding is taken after the massage. The choice depends -on which is too fatiguing. If both forms of exercise are fatiguing, repeat the massage once or twice ^[9].

Naum (Sleep): the air of the room: some pleasantly redolent aromatic should be used to perfume the air which is breathed, using one which is moderately "hot." After sleep, the body should be anointed- with oil in order to stimulate the sensitive faculties. After this the horse-riding or walking exercise may be taken ^[7, 8, 10].

Ghiza (Diet) of the Elderly: Foods should be divided into small portions and served in two or three servings according to their digestive strength and weakness. They should eat at three o'clock in the afternoon, good bread with honey; at seven o'clock in the evening; and after bathing, they should eat something that softens the bowels (as we will mention); and eat at dark good nutritious food. If the individual is strong, then the food portion should be increased slightly. They should avoid every dense food that generates black bile and phlegm and every sharp biting food, like pickles and spices (except when they are applied as medicine); however, if they do eat from the first type [that they should not], such as salty food such as eggplant, dried meat, flesh from the hunt, fish with hard flesh, watermelon, and cucumber, or make the mistake of eating from the second type, such as pickles, sardines, and milk, they should be treated with antagonists of each food type. Soothers should be used if it becomes obvious that they have waste, and fed with a moisturizing diet after cleansing and some soothers with the food. Milk benefits those that digest it and do not get distension in the liver or bowels. Milk induces sleep and moisturizes. The best is that of goats and donkeys. Donkey's milk does not curdle easily and is fast to digest, especially if mixed with salt and honey. The animal should not graze on pungent, hot, acidic, or salty plants. Leafy vegetables and fruits consumed by the elderly should be like chard, celery, and a little of leek cooked in murri and oil, especially before the main course, to help indigestion. They will benefit from garlic if they are used to it. Ginger jam is a good medication for them, and so are other hot jams; therefore, they should be ingested according to the heat they generate and the digestion they promote and not according to the dryness they incur ^[8-10].

Their diet should be moisturizing, promoting digestion and warming and not dehydrating. Among the fruits that soothe their nature and their bodies are figs and pears (in summer) and figs cooked in honey water (in winter); all of these should be served before the main course to promote digestion; also boiled Lablab cooked in salt, water, and oil; and the roots of common polypody (*Polypodium vulgare*), cooked in chicken soup or in the soup of chard or cabbage. If their bowels are soft every other day, then laxatives and softeners should not be used. However, if they are normal one day and constipated for two, then it is sufficient to use Lablab, cabbage water, and safflower pith with barley milk, or the amount of one "walnut" or two (no more than three) of pistacia resin; this will evacuate the bowels without any harm. Also, they will benefit from the compound drug made

of one part of safflower pith and ten parts of dry figs taken in the amount of one "walnut." An oil enema softens the bowels in addition to the evacuation it induces, especially if the oil is sweet. Hot enemas should be avoided because of their drying effect; however, the moist oily enema is the most beneficial if their constipation lasts for a few days. There are other laxative medications that we will mention in the formulary. Evacuation in the elderly must be as possible without *Fasd* (venesection) since moderate diarrhea is more suitable ^[8-10].

Wine of the Elderly

The wine, which is best for elderly persons. The best quality of wine for them is old, red wine, which is diuretic and warming together. They should avoid the young and white wine unless they have bathed after eating and felt thirsty; in this case they should drink light wine with little nutritious value; however, this is not a substitute for water. They should avoid the sweet and obstructive drinks ^[8-20].

Opening Obstruction in the Elderly

The easiest of these (obstructions to open) is the one caused by drinking alcohol. This should be opened with pennyroyal or peppery oxymels, or by sprinkling pepper on wine, or, if they are used to it, by the use of garlic and onion. The tiryaaq (antidote) is very beneficial in treating obstruction. Similarly, tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*) and sea ambrosia (*Ambrosiamaritima*) are beneficial but require moisturizing by bathing and oil rubs afterward and eating meat soups with spelt and barley ^[7-15].

Honey drink is good and prevents obstruction and joint pain. After the obstruction has developed and is felt in an organ or at the feeling of impending obstruction, add the celery seeds and root for treating urinary organs; for stones, cook them with seeds of wild celery; for the lung, cook them with maiden hair fern, hyssop, and cassia ^[8-25].

Massaging the Elderly

The massage of the elderly should be moderate in quality and quantity without touching weak organs or the bladder. For multiple massages, it should be applied with a rough cloth and bare hands since this will be beneficial to them and prevents the relapse of their organ sicknesses. They also benefit from combining bathing and massage ^[8-13].

Exercise of the Elderly

Exercise of the elderly varies depending on the state of their bodies, illnesses, and habits of exercise. For the elderly with moderately healthy bodies, they can do moderate exercise. In the presence of a weak organ, its exercise should be connected to the exercise of the other organs; for example, when the elderly suffer from headache, epilepsy, or the pouring of substances in the neck and the frequent ascension of vapors to the head and brain, they should avoid exercise that requires lowering the head; however, they should exercise by walking, riding, and every exercise that affects the lower half of the body ^[7-13].

If the illness affects a leg, they should use upper body exercises like weight lifting, throwing stones, and lifting stones. If the illness is in the middle part of the body like the spleen, liver, stomach, and intestines, then exercise of the upper and lower extremities should be fine. If the illness is in the chest, then upper body exercise is the only suitable one. They should gradually include the weak organs in the

exercise to strengthen them. These instructions are for the elderly and differ from the other age groups, and also from the very old, that have different tolerance; they should strengthen the weak organs by gradually doing exercises that are suitable to the organs; however, the ill organs may be exercised, but not if they are warm or dry or contain substances that could become putrefied and lack maturation [7-26].

Conclusion

The Canon is a precise and comprehensive text of Ibn-e-Sina's knowledge. It is obvious from the works of Ibn-e-Sina that he deeply emerged in the fountain of knowledge of the Greek philosophy and medicine. The Canon describes medicine as knowledge that can be adopted as medical education and personal guidance even by a common person. One chapter is dedicated to nurture of children, geriatrics and advice for passengers about the transmission of disease from contaminated and polluted water; advice on holding the breath-they are all described in the Canon in a surprisingly knowledgeable level including theory and practice.

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