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Clinical assessment of Mizaj (Temperament) in the patients of *Niqris* (Gouty arthritis)

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Abstract

Hippocrates (460-370BC), the father of medicine and the architect of the Unani system of medicine, was the first to propose the ideology of *Mizaj* (temperament). The notion of *Mizaj* (temperament) is unique to the Unani system of medicine, and the entire system is centered around its core principle. According to this philosophy, each person has a specific *Mizaj* (temperament) that is fixed and cannot be modified. Each person has their own tastes, preferences, dislikes, passions, and abilities. All of these attributes combine to form an individual's elite disposition or *Mizaj* (temperament). The state of a person's health and susceptibility to sicknesses are directly impacted by it. Unani physicians have described an individual's *Mizaj* (temperament) into four categories Damvi (sanguine), Balghami (phlegmatic), Safravi (bilious) and Saudavi (melancholic). Gout, a crystalline arthropathy is an inflammatory response to the Monosodium urate monohydrate crystals formed secondary to hyperuricemia. The objective of the study was to evaluate and analyze the *Mizaj* (temperament) of patients with Gout (*Niqris*). Based on the traditional concept of temperament, the findings of this study have the prospects to avert and manage Gouty arthritis (*Niqris*). The study was executed in A & U Tibbia College, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-05. 40 patients with the confirmed clinical diagnosis of Gout (*Niqris*) fulfilling inclusion and exclusion criteria were enrolled in the study. *Mizaj* of the subjects was evaluated by a standard questionnaire of temperament. In the present observational study, the higher incidence of patients was observed in Balghami (phlegmatic) followed by Damvi (sanguine) *Mizaj*. This study is as per classical Unani literature, so the patient's temperament (*Mzaj*) may be considered a key element in the origin and development of *Niqris*.

Keywords: Balghami, damvi, gouty arthritis, mizaj, *niqris*, safravi, saudavi, temperament

Introduction

Mizaj (Temperament) has been a critical deliberation amongst historical and contemporary-day researchers. The notion of *Mizaj* (Temperament) is unique to Unani system of Medicine and the entire system is based on the philosophy of *Mizaj*. Hippocrates (460-370BC) gave the fundamental theory of *Mizaj* which shows that each person has a particular temperament that is constant and cannot be changed. Each person may be different in their tastes, interests, and abilities. These traits collectively form a person's exceptional character or *Mizaj* (temperament). Blood (*Dam*), phlegm (*Balgham*), bile (*Safra*), and black bile (*Sauda*) are the four biological fluids or *Akhlal* (Humours); an appropriate proportion, according to quality and quantity, constitutes health, and an upright proportion and irregular distribution, create disease. The *Mizaj* (temperament) of the individual is influenced by an excess of any of the four primary body humours (*Akhlal*), and treatment is focused on the correction of that specific humour (*Khilt*). Hence, *Mizaj* (temperament) is a key factor in determining the suitable treatment for any disorder. *Damvi* (sanguine), *Balghami* (phlegmatic), *Safravi* (Bilious), and *Saudavi* (melancholic) are the four fundamental *Mizaj*. *Niqris* is an Arabic term. Most of the Arabic to English dictionaries reveal its meaning as 'Gout' and 'Arthritis'.

Renowned Arab physician *Ibn-e-Hubal* (1222-1233AD) claims in his writings that the name *Niqris* has been derived from the term "*Anqaroots*" which means "the joint of the great toe". Since the disease classically affects the first metatarso-phalangeal joint, hence the name "*Niqris*" [1, 2, 3]. *Hakim Kabiruddin* specifies *Niqris* as the specific pain and inflammation involving ankle and toes, especially the great toe. However, the wrist joint and the joints of the fingers may also get affected [7].

Ibn-e-Sina has elucidated Nigris as follows:

Nigris bears resemblance with other types of *Waja-ul-Mufasil* (arthritis) and it mostly originates from the toes, especially the great toe but sometimes it can originate from

the ankle, plantar side of the foot or from the borders of the foot and then spreads to other parts affecting the whole body so much that viscera too can get affected [3, 6, 7].

	DAM				BALGHAM			SAFRWA		SAUDA
	Khalis Dam	Dam-e-Balghami	Dam-e-Sarawi	Dam-e-Saudavi	Luzj	Kham	Mirrah	Khalis	Mirrah	
<i>Ibn-e-Sina</i>	+	+	+	+		+				
<i>Razi</i>						+				
<i>Allama Qurshi</i>	+ (Rare)					+	+	+ (Rare)		+ (Rare)
<i>Qusta bin Luqa</i>					+				+	

Causative humours of Gout according to different Unani physicians

Clinical features (according to the humours):

1. SU’ AL MIZAJ SAZIJ (Simple In-balance of Temperament) [8, 10, 12]

This type of *Nigris* is rare. The intensity of pain is less and resembles to *waja-ul mufassil sazij*. There is no involvement of humours and the clinical features like heaviness, swelling and colour change of skin overlying the affected joint are absent. (Al Qanoon)

2. SU’ AL MIZAJ MADDI (Abnormal substantial temperament)

It can be *Mufrad* (Simple abnormal temperament) or *Murakkab* (Combined abnormal temperament):

i. Mufrad (simple abnormal temperament) [4, 5, 7, 9, 12, 13]

▪ **Damwi (Sanguinous)**

When the causative matter is *Damwi*, the overlying skin of the affected area is red. The swelling is prominent, associated with pain and tenderness. The use of cold substances relieves the symptoms while the use of hot substances troubles the patient more.

▪ **Safrawi (Billious)**

Here, the affected part is red with a yellow hue, however, redness is less marked when compared to *Damwi*. The implicated joint is swollen, but there is intense burning pain over the affected part. Like *Damwi* type, patient gets benefitted by the use of cold substances, whereas warm measures worsen the symptoms.

▪ **Balghami (Phlegmatic)**

Here, colour of the skin overlying the affected joint is not changed or maybe pale or whitish. Inflammation over the affected part is less. There is constant but less intense pain i.e., dull ache and absence of warmth. The patients are flaccid & obese and get troubled with the

use of cold substances and get benefitted from hot ones.

▪ **Saudavi (Melancholic)**

This type turns the skin colour of the affected joint blackish with a bluish tinge. The affected joints become dry. The swelling is hard in consistency. The pain is of low grade. Wet and hot kinds of stuff appease the patient.

Further, it has been observed that the use/ prolonged use of certain substances/ measures increases the production of respective (*Khilt*) humour.

ii. Murakkab (Compound abnormal temperament) [11]

Samarqandi states that when two or more humours (*Akhlat*) are mixed, compound abnormal temperament comes into existence. Treatment with only hot or cold drugs/ measures is not beneficial in such pathologies, the timing of benefits of such treatment also varies. Hence, one treatment is not effective in all phases of disease rather at different times different drugs are required. Manifestation of clinical features of the disease also depends upon the involvement of various combination of humours.

Materials and Methods

It is an observational study, carried out at Ayurvedic & Unani Tibbia College, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-05 during 2012-2014. A comprehensive protocol was framed and approved prior to the commencement of the study. 40 subjects with sign and symptoms of Gouty arthritis as per screening criteria were enrolled for the study. All the screened subjects were then confirmed for the clinical diagnosis. During the enrollment procedure, complete history including general physical and systemic examination was carried out and recorded on a case record proforma. Mizaj of the patients was evaluated on standard parameters (*Alamat-e-Ajnas-e-Ashra*) as described in the classical Unani literature.

Ajnaas-e-Ashra (Ten classical parameters) to assess Mizaj (Temperament)

Parameters	Damwi (sanguine)	Balghami (Phlegmatic)	Safrawi (Bilious)	Saudavi (Malencholic)
Complexion	Ruddy (reddish)	Chalky (whitish)	Pale (yellowish)	Purple (blackish)
Built	Muscular & broad	Fatty & broad	Muscular & thin	Skeletal
Touch	Hot & soft	Cold & soft	Hot & dry	Cold & dry
Hair	Black & lusty thick, rapid growth	Black & thin slow growth	Brown & thin rapid growth	Brown & thin Slow growth
Movement	active	Dull	Hyper active	Less active
Diet (Most suitable)	Cold & dry	Hot & dry	Cold & moist	Hot & moist
Weather (Most suitable)	Spring	Summer	Winter	Autumn
Sleep	Normal	In excess	inadequate	Insomnia
Pulse	Normal 70-80 / min	Slow 60-70/ min	Rapid 80-100/ min	Slow 60-70/ min
Emotions	Normal	Calm & Quiet	Angry	Nervous

Range of Mizaj in numbers

Damvi Balghami Safravi Saudavi Patient’s Mizaj

Observations and results

Distribution of patients according to age

During the present clinical study, the patients were divided into five groups. It was observed that 1 (2.5%) case belonged to the 16-25 years of age group, 6 (15%) cases belonged to the 26-35 years of age group, 14 (35%) cases belonged to 36-45 years of age group, 10 (25%) cases belonged to 46-55 years of age group and 9 (22.5%) cases

belonged to 56-65 years of age group (Table 1 and Figure1).

Table 1: Distribution of patients according to age

Age group (years)	No. of patients	Percentage
16-25	1	2.5
26-35	6	15
36-45	14	35
46-55	10	25
56-65	9	22.5
Total	40	100

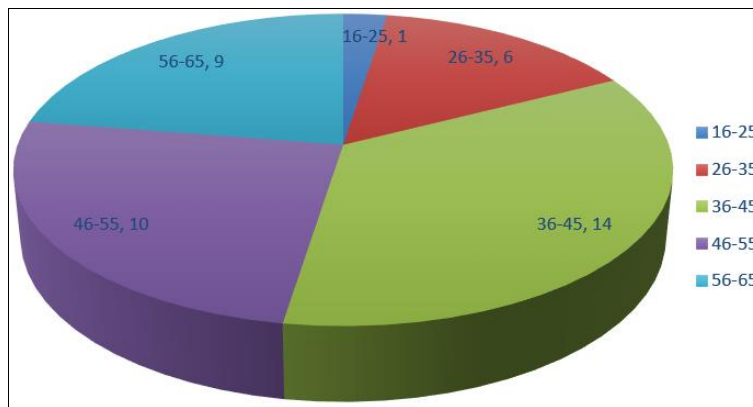


Fig 1: Distribution of patients according to age

Distribution of patients according to temperament (Mizaj)

During present study, patients were divided into four groups according to temperament. It was observed that the incidence of Phlegmatic (*Balghami*), Sanguineous (*Damvi*), Biliious (*Safrawi*) and Melancholic (*Saudavi*) temperaments were 19 (47.5%) cases, 12 (30%) cases, 7 (17.5%) cases and 2 (5%) cases respectively (Table and Figure 2).

Table 2: Distribution of patients according to temperament (Mizaj)

Temperament	No. of Patients	Percentage
Balghami	19	47.5
Damvi	12	30
Safrawi	7	17.5
Saudavi	2	5
Total	40	100

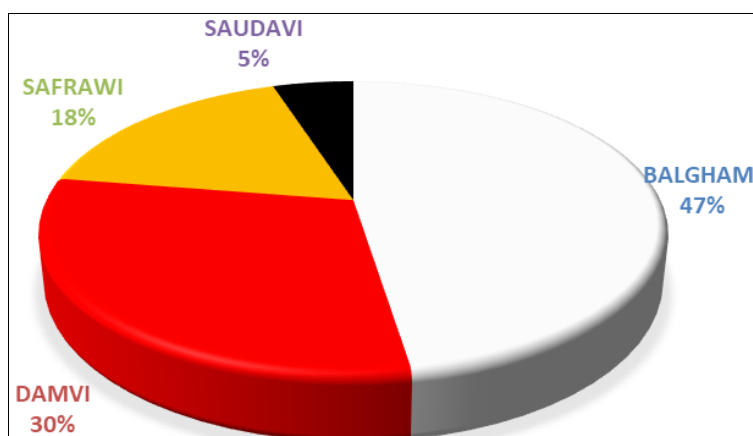


Fig 2: Distribution of patients according to temperament (Mizaj)

Discussion

The results were analyzed according to age of the study subjects, duration of illness and *Mizaj* (temperament) of the subjects. Analysis of the results of 40 cases of Gouty arthritis revealed following facts which are discussed below: *Avicenna*, *Rhazes* and *Allama Qarshi* have clearly associated phlegm (Balgham) with the pathogenesis of gout. In our observation, the patients with phlegmatic temperament (*Balghami Mizaj*) were more in numbers (47.5%), which is in accordance with description mentioned

in classical Unani text followed by *Damwi* (30%), *Safrawi* (17.5%) and *Saudawi* (5%) temperament.

Conclusion

In light of this study, it can be concluded that the patients with *Balghami* (phlegmatic) *Mizaj* followed by *Damvi* (sanguine) *Mizaj* are prone to develop Gouty arthritis. So, the temperament of a patient may be considered an essential factor in the pathogenesis of Gouty arthritis.

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