

## Preventive Strategies For Mother And Child Health Through Unani System Of Medicine- A Literary Research

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Maternal and child health (MCH) has long been an issue of paramount importance on a worldwide scale. A global maternal death rate of less than 70 per 100,000 live births by 2030 was set as an objective by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Significant advancements have been made in the field of MCH until now. Despite India's efforts to reduce maternal mortality rates (MMR), significant challenges remain, reflecting the vulnerability of pregnant women, infants, and children under 5 years of age to infections and diseases. It is necessary to explore the suggestions and guidelines for pregnancy, the pregnant mother, and the child through USM.

**Aims and Objectives:** This study is set to collect and compile all the measures advocated for mother and child care mentioned in classical Unani literature.

**Methodology:** Related Unani literature was searched in classical textbooks, manuscripts, journals, and printed materials. Various search engines like Google Scholar, PubMed, Medline, etc., with relevant Unani terminologies like 'mother and child care in Unani,' 'ANC Care in Unani,' etc., were explored.

**Observation and Finding:** Unani classical literature has revealed a complete description of the prevention of maternal and child health. Food supplements and different regimens, as well as drugs for newborns and pregnant mothers, have been indicated.

**Conclusion:** The Approach of Unani medicine is valuable for MCH, emphasizing preventive care, nutrition, and traditional practices. By integrating Unani principles with modern healthcare, we can promote the well-being of mothers and children, aiming for lifelong health and development.

**Keywords:** Unani medicine; Mother and Child Health; Tadabeer Wiladat; Tadabeer Naumawlod; Fitam; Weaning; Taqmeed; Tahneek; ANC.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Maternal health refers to the health of women during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postnatal period<sup>1</sup>. Making sure mothers and their infants achieve their maximum potential for health and well-being should be the goal at every stage. It is an important aspect for the development of any country, in terms of increasing equity and reducing poverty<sup>2,3</sup>.

Epidemiology: According to the WHO, more than 810 women die every day from complications of pregnancy and childbirth.

<sup>2,4,5</sup> The lifetime risk of death from maternal causes such as haemorrhage, hypertension, sepsis, and unsafe abortion is 1 in 180 worldwide<sup>5-12</sup>. In 2020, about 287,000 women died globally during pregnancy, delivery, and postpartum, most of them preventable with timely, skilled care<sup>9,13</sup>. Ending preventable maternal deaths remains a global priority, reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). India's development vision, "Sabka Sath Sabka Vikas, includes maternal and child health<sup>14-16</sup>.

Annually, around 140 million births occur; skilled birth attendance rose from 58% in 1990 to 81% in 2019. Maternal deaths declined by 38% over two decades, but the 3% annual reduction is insufficient to meet SDG targets<sup>17</sup>. By 2030, the global goals aim to reduce maternal mortality to 70 per 100,000 live births, and neonatal and under-5 mortality to <12 and <25 per 1,000, respectively<sup>16</sup>.

India must develop women-centred, culturally acceptable, cost-effective, and accessible strategies. Integrating traditional or community providers (locally termed as Dai), people's health traditions, and indigenous systems such as Ayurveda and Unani with modern structures can enhance outcomes. Unani medicine offers a holistic approach, preventive care through natural remedies, and lifestyle guidance, aligning well with maternal-child health needs. Classical Unani guidelines include adequate nutrition, rest, minimal heavy work during pregnancy, and attentive care to ease delivery—practices embedded in culture for centuries.

Unani's preventive strategies, when integrated with modern healthcare, can help India achieve maternal mortality <70/100,000 and child mortality <30/10,000 by 2030<sup>3,18-20</sup>.

## 2. METHODOLOGY:

Approximately 131 articles and research papers were reviewed, of which 78 were selected. Out of 8 magazines, 2 were chosen; from 10 annual government reports, 2 were selected. Among 3 different manuscripts, only 1 was included, and from around 152 classical textbooks, 48 were selected.

To clarify its substance, the gathered material was painstakingly arranged thematically into the following categories:

- Preventive measures concerning the Unani medical system
- Mother and child health, and
- Modern concepts for prenatal, post-natal, and intra-natal care.
- Explanation of the concept of "tadabeer-e hamala,
- Unani & Contemporary perspective on Mother and Child Health.

## 3. OBSERVATION AND FINDINGS:

After the thorough systematic review, some of the observations and findings are illustrated in the following tables-

**Table No-01- Recommendations and advice for Mother Care**

Water	Drinking water for a pregnant woman should be ma'a jaiyadul Jauhar (Wholesome water).
Food	Food should be lateef, muqawwi, and zood hazm (i.e., Soft, easy to digest, and nutritious) Food should be small in quantity and frequently suggested.
Residence	The residence of pregnant women should be open and well ventilated.
Avoidance during pregnancy	All types of emotions leading to mood upset. Intimate partner violence (IPV). Journeys. Physical activities in the first trimester must be avoided. Any sports like jumping, racing, slipping, stumbling, weight lifting, etc. Contraindicated drugs and regimens like strong purgatives, laxatives, diuretics, and emetic drugs, etc. Narcotic drugs and alcohol. It is harmful to get wet in the rain and sleep in a moist room during pregnancy. Avoid blood donation, leeching, hijamah (wet cupping), and venesection.

Dressing for pregnancy	Clothing for pregnant women should be loose-fitted, according to the season.
Su-al-qinya (Iron deficiency anaemia)	Muwallide Dam Aghzia wa Advia (haematinic diet and drugs) are recommended during pregnancy.
Zoafe ishteha (low appetite)	In anorexia crushed fox grape, fennel, and anisoon mix with 12 gm of white sugar, sprinkle with powdered rock candy and dried ginger are advised.
Constipation in pregnancy	Wheat bran, fibre diet supplements advised.
Nausea	Stringent raboob, like rebaas's rub, and fruit juice are recommended.
Abdominal pain	Equal parts of cinnamon, fennel seeds, and mastagi (Resin of <i>Pistacia lentiscus</i> ), mixed with brown sugar can be administered after meals.
Midwives & Labour Room	<p>Midwives should be educated, experienced, skilled, and familiar with the necessities of the delivery room and delivery procedure.</p> <p>Additionally, the midwives had her nails manicured and kept proper cleanliness at the time of birth and didn't get in touch with any infectious patients within a month.</p> <p>Only two to three wise, trained, and expert midwives were enough.</p> <p>Labour room must be moderate (meaning the environment temperature, humidity, lighting, cleanliness should be controlled and kept within safe, comfortable limits.)</p>
Tasheele wiladat wa tadbeere usre wiladat (to facilitate and recommended regimens)	<p>Take a hot bath and sit in lukewarm water.</p> <p>Eating cinnamon makes childbirth easier, while administration of Roghane Badam Shireen in empty stomach is promoted to normal delivery.</p> <p>Local application - violet oil, lily oil, olive oil, chicken fats, and mucilage gently massage the belly and back.</p> <p>Use of Roghan-e-methi as an enema is also useful to ease the labour.</p>
Special diet recommendations during induction of labour	<p>When the labour pain is severe and delivery becomes difficult, then roghandar Shorba (oily gravy), especially sips of fatty chicken, are advised frequently.</p> <p>If pain increases, then the following drugs are advocated: -</p> <p>Hing, Sudab, Bahruzah, Mur, Jaushir, and Kibriyat – grind, filter, and make tablets of 500 mg each, and take them with a decoction of lobia (Black-eyed pea).</p> <p>One gram of mushktramashi with aabe abhal.</p>
The regime that is helpful for normal delivery	Abzan (sitz bath), massage locally under the stomach area, and pubic area with the help of Roghane Kheeri (Cucumber oil) and practice up and down exercise regularly, are helpful in ease of labour.
Isolation	Pregnant women should stay away from patients with infectious diseases, like measles, chickenpox, mumps, cholera, plague, etc.
Post-natal care	<p>If the placenta remains inside, try fumigation with formulations having mur, hing, bahruza, jaushir, and kibriyat.</p> <p>Recommend good perfume and consumption of maa ul laham.</p> <p>If profuse discharge occurred after delivery -treat it like menorrhagia.</p> <p>If less discharge is there, manage through diet.</p>
Umbilical cord care	First, cut the cord four fingers away from the navel and apply clean woolen cloth with olive oil.

	<p>Tie the umbilical cord to the knot at two places, one near the child's navel and the other three or four fingers above, then the umbilical cord is cut between these two knots.</p> <p>In India, instead of olive oil, the cloth is soaked in mustard oil; kataan is best for this process, as mentioned by Gilani, but muslin can be used in place of fabric.</p> <p>It is advised to sprinkle the following drugs after cutting the umbilical cord - Haldi, Dam ul akhwain, Anzroot, Zeera, and Ushna.</p>
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Table No-02- Observation and Findings for Child Care

Tahneek	After cutting the cord, the baby first licks the honey is termed as “Tahneek”. Honey boost the immunity in neonates.
Special care of eyes, ears nose	Special care of ear, nose, and throat through wipes and applying a few drops of oil on the nose are recommended.
Tamleeh	Massage of the newborns with salted water which is termed as “Tamleeh”. Rose petals are suggested for skin tone-up.
Taqmeed (swaddling)	The birth attendant should taqmeed the baby’s limbs, nose ears, and eyes. Especially try to strengthen an upright head, and stimulate the anus through the small finger.
Bathing care	During bathing, the baby should be kept prone, water should not enter inside the ear.
Strategies for improving the quality of milk of the mother	<p>Jayyed al kaimoos (nutritious diet), islahe ghiza (dietary modification) – rice, milk, chicken, meat, egg, gram, carrot, turnip, hareerajat and halwa.</p> <p>Use of decoction of wild mint, hyssop, wild thyme, or mountain origanum, served with a cordial prepared from the seed.</p> <p>Suggest emesis with syrup of vinegar or warm water.</p> <p>Light wine or syrup or vinegar separately or mix.</p> <p>Sweet beverages and drinks like grape juice, etc.</p> <p>Prefer sound sleep.</p> <p>Salted fish and radishes should also be included in the diet.</p>
Guidelines for the feeding mother	<p>A lactating mother should perform moderate exercise daily.</p> <p>Squeezing the milk before feeding., while keep the breast gently pressed to prevent hurting the throat.</p> <p>Taking a better nutritious diet, get moderate sleep, while avoid fast and don’t eat spicy foods.</p>
Feeding duration	The normal period of breastfeeding is two years of age.
Feeding schedule	According to Avicenna, breastfeeding in the early should be fed only two or three times a day.
Concept and selection of Wet Nurse (Murzia)	<p>If the mother is unable to feed for any reason, hire a good Murzia (wet nurse) to feed the baby.</p> <p>She should have a moderate temperament, good complexion, pinkish coloration, be young, aged between 25<sup>th</sup> to 35<sup>th</sup>, fatty and strong neck, broad chest, and have good manners.</p> <p>The breasts of the feeding mother should become large.</p>

Weaning	<p>Weaning should be slow and gradual.</p> <p>Chewed the bread and softened it, bread soaked in dilute honey, wine, or milk, followed by a small drink of plain water. Sometimes a few drops of diluted wine are also given.</p> <p>It is good to feed the baby after the oil rub and bath.</p>
The recommended season for weaning	Recommended a suitable season for the weaning is spring-ideal time to wean children, if necessary, summer is also a good time, and weaning can occur at the end of winter.
Lebas (Dressing) for the children	Children must wear loose-fitting, soft, lightweight, comfortable dresses.
When the baby starts to talk	<p>It is suitable to take him very gently in elegant and clear language and train him to talk.</p> <p>If delays in talking, then the honey is to be rubbed by finger, below his/her tongue, daily in the morning.</p>
Child growth	After the first week, the baby's weight begins to grow, and by the fifth month of age, the baby's weight doubles, while at the age of twelve, it triples.
Teething	The swollen gum should be rubbed with oil and gently squeezed with the fingertips. Additionally, turpentine resin or honey combined with chamomile oil is applied.
Common diseases in children and their management	
Diarrhea	<p>Local application: Applying fomentos made from rose, celery, anise, or cumin seeds to the belly is recommended.</p> <p>The abdomen is covered with a plaster of cumin and rose seeds, which are prepared from vinegar or millet seeds that have been boiled in vinegar.</p>
Constipation	<p>Rat droppings, plain or burnt lily root, or pure solidified honey combined with a little amount of wild mint can all be used as suppositories.</p> <p>A gram-seed-sized amount of olive oil containing turpentine resin is applied gently to the abdomen, and honey is administered orally.</p>
Cough	Pour a lot of hot water over your head.
Stomatitis	<p>Sometimes, powdered violets can be applied locally either alone or in conjunction with roses and a little bit of saffron. Carob beans are also helpful.</p> <p>Gum ulcers can be treated using myrrh, galls, and scales of olibanum that have been crushed fine and combined with honey.</p>
Discharging ears	It is treated with dressing the ear with a wick dipped in honey, wine, or spirit containing a small quantity of alum, saffron, or niter (powder of potassium nitrate).
Earache	This is treated with prepared and filtered oil droplets, which may contain juniper, lentil, myrrh, barberry, rock salt, or colocynth seeds.
Conjunctivitis	<p>Barberry mixed with milk should be painted over the lids.</p> <p>Followed by eyes bathed with a decoction of chamomile and juice of wild basil.</p>
Colic	This is caused by the bad milk and diarrhea; the abdomen should be immediately fomented with warm water, wax, or oil.
Intestinal Worms	<p>Babies often carry little worms, which are located close to the anus.</p> <p>Tapeworms are relatively uncommon, but roundworms are not as prevalent.</p> <p>The roundworms are administered a tiny amount of milk-mixed absinthe water, based on their tolerance.</p>

	Threadworms are treated with a powder containing one part each of Roman ginger and turmeric mixed with two parts of sugar and given with cold water.
Inflammation of the navel	Celtic juice and turpentine resin melted in sesame oil are used to treat it. A tiny amount of the same is applied topically and administered orally.
Vomiting	It may be caused by overfeeding with milk and is treated by giving four grains of cloves by mouth and applying a mild astringent paste to the abdomen.
Common regimens for children	
Parent responsibility/supervision	Children between the ages of 4 and 7 should get close attention and supervision on their behaviour to ensure that they stay within the bounds of moderation. Unani scholars suggest proper guidelines for emotional care, psychological care, etc.
Recommended special regimen	Regarding a child's health, parenting supports children's digestion by encouraging them to take a bath first after waking up in the morning, then play for about an hour before breakfast. Before the next feeding, he is given another bath after playing for a time after breakfast. Water should be avoided as much as possible during meals since it may cause partially digested food to be prematurely absorbed.
Adjustment in bathing frequency-	It is advised to modify the frequency of bathing for individuals approximately six months of age. Reducing the frequency of baths is consistent with Unani beliefs, which seek to preserve equilibrium in the body's natural development.
Increased exercise and play	Simultaneously, there is an emphasis on increasing the duration of exercise and play before meals. This aligns with the Unani belief in the importance of physical activity for overall well-being.
Restriction on drinking 'leven light wine'	Children, especially those inclined towards heat and moisture (temperamentally Haar-Ratab/Sanguine), are advised against consuming 'leven light wine.' Unani principles caution against such beverages due to their potential to increase the bilious humor, which can be harmful to children.
Forbidding light wines	The prohibition of light wines for children is explained by the belief that excess bile elimination, the presumed benefit for adults, is unnecessary for children. Additionally, the excerpt highlights that children's joints do not require additional moistening, unlike adults.
Sweet and pure water consumption	Children are encouraged to drink as much sweet and pure water as they like, promoting hydration and overall well-being. This practice is considered beneficial and is recommended to be continued until the age of fourteen.
Gradual decrease in exercise	As adolescents experience a decrease in moisture levels, the exercise regimen is adjusted accordingly.
Early childhood education and health guidelines	Guidelines for a child's education, physical activity, and health are intricately woven into a holistic approach. This excerpt emphasizes the importance of a progressive education system, mindful physical activities, and restrictions on certain beverages for a six-year-old child.

#### 4. DISCUSSION:

The Unani system of medicine, with its holistic and cost-effective approach, can be beneficial for prenatal care, safe birth, postnatal care, and safe childhood during emergencies, improving the health and well-being of mothers and children. Unani medicine, described in texts like "Tadabeer-i-Hamla Wa-Wiladat (ANC)," offers valuable insights into peri-natal and post-natal care, emphasizing its strength in ensuring maternal and infant health for pregnant patients to manage the difficulties of



pregnancy and maintain the health of both mother and child. properly care and support are essential <sup>21,22</sup>.

MOTHER CARE: Safe motherhood was always on top preference among the health care providers, which is depicted from the review of the classical Unani text. It deals about the drinking water, choice of grains, fruits and other healthier foods. It suggests the wearing style during pregnancy, avoidance of playing, sexual intercourse and journey which may impact the pregnancy. Unani scholars advised to control the excess emotions; either negative or positive, during the period of pregnancy, which also impact the pregnancy. It deals that, the pregnant women should avoid the laxatives, purgatives, diuretics, or emetic drugs. Blood donation, leeching, hijamah (wet cupping), and venesection is also prohibited. Pregnant women should stay away from patients with infectious diseases, because these may be life-threatening ailments for both mother and child. Use of any narcotic drug and alcohol consumption should be avoided. <sup>21-29</sup>

To improve vitality, generalized weakness during pregnancy, preservation of pregnancy and strengthen the fetus, Majoon Hamal Ambari Alvi Khani (5 gm once a day for 20 days) from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> months of pregnancy is advised. <sup>28,29</sup> Further study needed to prove the efficacy of MHAAK. Simultaneously Unani text has illustrated the management of different pregnancy-induced ailments like nausea, headaches, disturbed appetite, constipation, etc.

Anaemia commonly occurs in pregnancy, which was noticed and emphasized their remedy with Muwallide Dam Aghzia wa Advia (haematinic diet and drugs), i.e., common foods that are high in iron include husked grain flour, green leafy vegetables, turnip, beetroot, roasted grammes, and fruits including grapes, pomegranates, gooseberries, bananas, raisins, dates, and unnab.

Therefore, trials are required to make them evidence-based <sup>22,28-31</sup>. As per Hakim Ajmal Khan, if a miscarriage occurs before seven months of conception, then it is called abortion. <sup>22</sup> Majoone hamal Alvi Khan or Majoone Nashar Aaj daily for 40 days is recommended to prevent the abortion. The above-mentioned description related to abortion is still relevant and needs to be tested so that its adoptability may be generalized <sup>22,26,30,34</sup>.

Literature describes midwives who should be well-educated, experienced, skilled, and familiar with the necessities of the delivery room and delivery procedure. <sup>22,34</sup> There is further description of drugs and regimes used to ease the labour. These drugs and regimes should be applied under supervision and tested to avoid unnecessary opt of cesarean section.

## 5. LABOUR ROOM AND POSTPARTUM CARE:

In century ago, literature defined the concept of labour room, skilled professionals, or Dai (midwives) to assist and the management of labour. They described the management of postpartum care. Regarding the cord care, scholars mentioned that the powder of Anzroot and Dam-ul Akhwain was sprinkled. Dam-ul-Akhwain is hemostatic in nature and used to control the bleeding or oozing of the fluid, hence it may be an effective management of the cord. <sup>35</sup> They advised that after a period of six to seven hours of delivery, breastfeeding of the neonate must be started. After delivery, a discharge of liquid per vagina occurs and is called Nifas (lochia). The color of lochia is blood mixed in the first four days, after that, till the 10<sup>th</sup> day, it turns greenish and finally looks like contaminated water. In classical literature, there are many regimens, like massage, abzan, and diet are recommended for lochia management <sup>22,26,36-39</sup>.

## 6. CHILD CARE, LACTATION & FEEDING

According to Jalinoos (Galen), mother's milk is the ideal nutrition for kids it should be provided to the newborn as much as possible. In the beginning, breastfeeding should only be administered two or three times a day; large feeds should be avoided, especially in the first few days. <sup>39,40</sup>

Care and guidelines for the feeding mother & wet nurse, feeding technique, feeding duration, and feeding schedule are well explained in Unani literature, generally requiring evidence-based trials. <sup>22,35,37</sup> Numerous writings of Unani literature include comprehensive advice on infant care, under the heading of Tadabeere Naumawlod, Hifz Şihħa al-Şabīy b'ad al-fitam and Hifz Şihħa al-Ŧifl, which covers weaning, tahneeq, feeding technique, neonatal care, nursing techniques, managing childhood illnesses with dentition, treatment, and regimen for kids.

It is traditional practice to feed for 2-2.5 years. <sup>22</sup> Scholars further described the duration, feeding time, feeding position, environment, and daily amount of feeding according to age. When the baby's milk teeth grow, then start weaning gradually and start the semi-liquid diets.

Unani scholars advocated for Tahneek, Tamleeh (application of salt on the body), Taqmeet (swaddling), Dalak (Massage), and Hamam (Bathing), which help to grow normally and strengthen the body of the child. <sup>34,42-46</sup>

The child initially tries to observe colors and listen to voices, so hang colorful toys in front of the baby and sing Lori (nursery rhyme), which gives emotional attachment. <sup>22,35,39,46</sup>. Most of them are traditionally practiced in practice, and need to be tested for further generalization.

## 7. MANAGEMENT OF DISEASES IN NEWBORN AND CHILD:

Inflammation of the gums is common during dentition. Honey mixed with chamomile oil or turpentine oil is effective for swollen gums.<sup>22,39</sup> Diarrhea, often due to swallowing purulent gum matter, is treated by substituting milk with egg yolk of half-boiled egg, soft bread, or roasted barley flour cooked in water. Constipation is managed with a honey suppository; honey and olive oil with turpentine oil are rubbed over the abdomen. Unani literature describes the prevention and management of many diseases of childhood and advocates traditional yet rational regimens for maternal and child care, which require evidence-based validation to reduce morbidity and mortality.<sup>22,32,35,37,39,40</sup>

## 8. CONCLUSION:

On the basis of observations and findings, the following conclusions can be drawn: The holistic approach of Unani medicine is valuable for maternal and child health, emphasizing preventive care, nutrition, and traditional practices. By integrating Unani principles with modern healthcare, we can promote the well-being of mothers and children, aiming for lifelong health and development. This comprehensive approach encompasses safe childbirth, proper nutrition, breastfeeding, weaning practices, and creating safe environments for infants and toddlers. By embracing the principles of Unani medicine, we can enhance the health and vitality of future generations, providing data so that USM can be easily incorporated into various national mother and child health programs, ensuring a healthier and happier society

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