

A 30 Years Old Female Recovered From Shaqeeqa (Migraine) With Unani Formulation: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

Background: Recurrent unilateral, throbbing headaches of moderate to severe intensity, frequently accompanied by nausea, photophobia, and phonophobia, are the hallmarks of migraine, a common and incapacitating primary headache disease. 15.2% of people worldwide suffer from migraines, which are a major contributor to years spent disabled, especially for women. A full remedy is still unknown despite significant progress in both conventional and modern medicine. According to Unani medicine, migraines (shaqeeqa) are caused by either a buildup of gaseous and viscous substances in the head or temperamental imbalances.

Case Study: This case study presents a 35-year-old female with chronic migraine unresponsive to modern medication, who was treated with a traditional Unani compound formulation containing Ustukhuddus (*Lavandula stoechas* L.) flowers, Filfil Siyah (*Piper nigrum* Linn.) seeds, Kishniz khushk (*Coriandrum sativum* Linn.) seeds, and Misri (sugar candy).

Results: After 40 days of daily administration, the patient reported complete resolution of nausea, a significant reduction in headache severity (VAS score reduced from 6–7 to 1–2), and decreased frequency of migraine episodes.

Discussion: The therapeutic effects of the compound formulation are attributed to the neuroprotective, sedative, anti-inflammatory, and carminative properties of the ingredients, as described in Unani medicine. This case supports the potential efficacy of Unani compound formulations in migraine management, highlighting the need for further research to validate these findings in larger populations.

Keywords: Migraine, Shaqeeqa, Unani Medicine, Suda'a, Headache.

1. INTRODUCTION

Migraine is a primary headache disorder usually characterized by recurrent episodes of attacks lasting anywhere from 4 to 72 hours. Typically, these attacks are characterized by pulsating pain located unilaterally, having a moderate to severe intensity aggravated by routine physical activity (even walking or climbing stairs), and usually associated with nausea and/or photo- and phonophobia.¹

Approximately 15.2% of people worldwide suffer from this prevalent handicap, which ranks first among women and second in terms of years lived with a disability. ² In 1990, there were 732.56 million migraine sufferers worldwide; by 2021, that number had risen to 1.16 billion, a 58.15% increase. ³

Public health systems in several nations have significant challenges due to migraine, particularly in China, India, and the United States, which are recognized for having high rates of sickness. India leads the globe in disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) with 8,096,330.9, according to 2021 data. 4.

In Unani medicine, migraine is referred to as shaqeeqa, derived from an Arabic word, 'shaq,' meaning 'half part,' hence the name Shaqeeqa. ^{5,6} According to Unani medicine, it is caused by Sue mizaj maddi (imbalance in temperament due to change in matter) and/or due to bukharat (gaseous) or rutubat-e-ghaleeza (viscid matters) that accumulate in the weaker part of the head. ⁷ There are various therapeutic approaches for migraine, as well documented in classical Unani literature. Unani physicians have described in detail the various herbs that have been used to treat migraines, such as Ustukhuddus (*Lavandula stoechas* L.), Ayarij faiqra, Afiun (*Papaver somniferum*), Banafsha, Kishniz (*Coriandrum sativum* Linn.), Filfil siyah (*Piper nigrum* Linn.), Badyan (*Foeniculum vulgare*), Imli (*Tamarindus indica*), etc. ^{5,6,7}

2. CASE PRESENTATION

A 35-year-old married female consulted at Unicure Unani Health Care Center, Nala Road, Patna, with the complaint of chronic headache with a VAS score of 6-7, with weekly episodes of headaches that persisted for several hours followed by nausea, vomiting, and photophobia, along with a long-term history of abdominal distension. She had no history of fever, head trauma, syncope, seizure, infections, hypertension, diabetes mellitus, sinusitis, meningitis, encephalitis, epilepsy, or other disorders. She had no family history of migraine. She had been taking modern drugs for the last 3 years. During the treatment she experienced dependency on the drugs, and at the same time she experienced dullness, lethargy, and inactivity. That's why she was eager to switch the medication and opt for any alternative treatment. After the complete history, she was advised an Unani compound formulation containing Ustukhuddus (*Lavandula stoechas* L.) 1 part, Filfil Siyah (*Piper nigrum* Linn.) ½ part, Kishneez (*Coriandrum sativum* Linn.) 1 part, and Misri (sugar candy) 1 part. This formulation was ground and powdered, and 3 grams orally early morning before breakfast for 40 days.

3. RESULTS

After completing the treatment regimen, she noted that her nausea had resolved, and her migraine episodes were delayed by a month. Additionally, the severity of her headaches had nearly improved, reaching a VAS score of 1-2 during the last three consecutive months of follow-up.

4. DISCUSSION

Migraine is a common form of chronic headache characterized by episodic pain with throbbing or pulsating character on one side of the head, usually followed by nausea or vomiting. ¹ In Unani literature, this type of headache is termed as 'shaqeeqa. Unani scholars explained the cause of shaqeeqa and revealed that it occurs either due to the sue mizaj maddi (imbalance in temperament due to change in matter) or due to bukharat (gaseous) or rutubate ghaleeza (viscid matter). ⁷

The present case was diagnosed as a shaqeeqa due to bukharat and treated accordingly with a compound formulation of Ustukhuddos, Kishniz khushk, Filfil Siyah, and Misri in the form of sufoof (powder) 3 gm once daily in the early morning for 40 days. Before and after the completion of treatment, complaints of nausea or vomiting ameliorated, and the VAS score of the headache decreased from 6-7 to 1-2, which shows the improvement in the complaints.

Each ingredient in the formulation has a specific role as described in Unani medicine.

Because of its properties as a Munaqqi-i-Dimagh (brain purifier), a Muqawwi-i-A'sab (nerve tonic), a Munawwim (sedative), a Muharrik-i-A'sab (nerve stimulant), a Musakkin-i-A'sab (nerve sedative), and a Kashir-i-reyah (carminative), Ustukhuddos is used to treat a variety of disorders, particularly neuropsychiatric types. ⁸ Further, ustukhuddus has its efficacy in removing the sawda and balgham (black bile and phlegm) from the brain, hence called "Jarub-i-dimagh" (broom of the brain) due to its action of Mushil-i-sawda and Mushil-i-balgham. ^{9,10,11}

Kishniz has properties like Munawwim (hypnotic), Musakkin (sedative), Musakkine alam (analgesic), Mubarrid (refrigerant), Muhallile Waram (resolvent), Dafe Tabkheer, Mufarreah Dimagh, and Kasir-e-Reyah (carminative), and hence it is used in Sahr (insomnia), Suda (headache), Dawar (vertigo), and Zoaf-e-Dimagh (brain weakness). ^{9, 12}

An animal experiment showed that essential oil of kishniz and extract of kishniz have sedative and hypnotic properties. ¹³

Filfil siyah has Muqawwi-i-asab (nerve tonic), Muhallil-i-waram (anti-inflammatory), Kasir-e-Reyah (carminative), Muqawwi Hafezah (increases memory), and Musakkin (sedative) properties. Classical Unani texts mentioned that it is used in shaqeeqa. ^{9,14} It has one of the chemical constituents, "piperine," which showed an antidepressant effect in a mouse model. ¹⁵ In the present case, it was observed that migraine occurred due to the bukharat (gaseous matter) affecting half of the head. It means there may be a relation between bukharat and weakness in the head, which was described by the Unani scholar as a cause of the migraine. ⁷

The compound formulation of Ustukhuddos, Kishniz, Filfil Siyah, and Misri may play an important role in resolving the bukharat that formed in the GIT and reached towards the brain, and simultaneously it may also potentiate the brain because

of the action of their ingredients. This case study has justified the claim of the Unani scholar regarding the compound formulation of Ustukhuddoos, Kishniz, Filfil Siyah, and Misri in the treatment of migraine, but a research study is needed for the further evaluation of the efficacy and safety of this formulation.

5. CONCLUSION

The Unani compound formulation of Ustukhuddoos, Kishniz, Filfil Siyah, and Misri is found effective in the treatment of shaqeeqa caused by bukharat. The ingredients of the formulation are muqawwi dimagh and have the potential to treat the bukharat; that's why the present case complaint and episode of headache have been resolved.

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Competing interest: None

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