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CORRELATION BETWEEN THE MODERN CONCEPT OF DIABETES MELLITUS AND UNANI CONCEPT OF ZIABETUS SHAKARI

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ABSTRACT

Diabetes mellitus a chronic metabolic disorder characterized by persistent hyperglycemia is one of the most prevalent non communicable diseases globally. Similarly Unani talks about a condition named Ziabetus shakari which exhibits the clinical features of excessive thirst and excessive urination. Aim of this review is to explore the correlation between the modern biomedical concept of Diabetes Mellitus and its classical depiction in the Unani system of medicine. This explores the similarities in etiology, symptoms, and diagnostic criteria while highlighting the humoral imbalance specially Balgham and saudha as central to the Unani pathophysiology. Also this evolves historical descriptions by ancient Unani scholars mentioned in Unani classical texts, modern pathophysiology and diagnostic criteria for diabetes mellitus and contemporary studies evaluating Unani approaches; differences appear in etiological models insulin glucose dis regulation vs Su I mizaj. Also this review briefly emphasizes on Unani management strategies such as Ilaj bil dawa (Dietotherapy), Ilaj bil tadbeer (Regimental therapy), Ilaj bil dawa (Pharmacotherapy) and their relevance in current integrative approaches. Understanding the correlation may enhance holistic management strategies and promote evidence based validation of Unani practices.

Keywords: Ziabetus shakari, Diabetes mellitus, Mizaj

INTRODUCTION

According to modern medicine Diabetes Mellitus is a chronic metabolic disorder characterized by elevated blood glucose levels caused by insulin resistance and progressive dysfunction of pancreatic Beta cells. (Satapathy et al., 2025) Modern medicine describes the most common symptoms of Diabetes Mellitus as polydipsia, Polyuria, Weight-loss, Ketonuria, Fatigue, Blurry vision, Irritability, Vulnerability for infections, Unhealing wounds etc. (Mayo Clinic, 2025). Similarly Unani medicine talks about a condition with the symptoms of Increased thirst, Increased appetite, Increased frequency of urination, and sweet urine. This is known by various names in Unani system of medicine such as "Ziabetus", "Ziasaques", "Qaramees", "Dolab" and "Dalaqul kulliya" (Rizwana et al., 2015). These overlapping clinical findings make it possible to compare Unani preventive and therapeutic recommendations with modern based management. Understanding the similarities and differences can improve integrative care and drive research into traditional interventions.

METHODOLOGY

Key contemporary sources were extracted from available resources such as academic databases, Thesis, reports, Journals, literature sources and reputable organizations available on web since 1995 to 2025 focusing on definitions, Sign and symptoms, diagnostic criteria and clinical

complications of diabetes mellitus and Ancient Unani classical texts,(Such as Canon of medicine),Medieval Islamic medical texts, peer reviewed articles and reviews on Ziabetus in Unani literature and clinical studies focusing on historical description on Ziabetus and Its characteristic features , therapeutic suggestions and Unani diagnostic criteria for Ziabetus. Major sources used are cited throughout.Then the collected datas were analyzed and summarized.Summary was formulated after a thorough reading of all the study materials.Research report was finalized by tha summarized facts extracted from both Unani classical texts and current research informations from the journals.

DATA ANALYSIS

Classical Unani Description of Ziabetus
Hippocrates the first most known Unani scholar from Greek has mentioned a condition with excessive urine output and wasting of the body. Jalinoos another well known Greco Arabic scholar has mentioned about diabetes as a condition called“Diarrhea urinosa” (Excessive urination) and “dipsakos” (Excessive thirst).(Firdaus et al.,2022; Fahad et al.,2018; Nazamuddin et al.,2014) Avicenna the most known scholar of Unani has mentioned about diabetes using the name “Dolab” (Water wheel)and “Zalaql kulliya”(Diarrhoea of kidneys) in his treatise Canon of medicine.He has mentioned a detail description about this disease.He has mentioned it as a sweet urine disease which is characterized by excessive urination, increased appetite and sweet urine.(Firdaus et al.,2022; Fahad et al.,2018; Nazamuddin et al.,2014) Zakariya Razi has mentioned about diabetes as there's dribbling of the urine due to the lack of retentive power, whatever enters passes out immediately ; therefore patients suffers with a persistent thirst.(Rizwana et al.,2015)

Several other Unani scholars such as Majoosi, Jurjani, Azam khan etc have talked about diabetes too.(Fahad et al.,2018)

Unani Vs Modern Concept of Clinical features and Complications

Both modern and Unani medicine shares an area of convergence while talking about the core clinical features of the disease.According to modern medicine diabetes Mellitus is characterized with the following symptoms of Polyuria, Polydipsia, Ketonuria, Fatigue, Irritability, Polyphagia, Weighloss and Unhealing wounds.(Mayoclinic,2025).While talking about the complications modern medicine mentions about Nephropathy, Retinopathy, Neuropathy, Vulnerability for infections, Liver damage and Atherosclerosis.(MSD Manual,2024) While Unani mentions about the symptoms as Increased thirst, Increased frequency of urination, Passage of diluted urine, sweet urine which attracts insects like ants, Urinary dribbling and Urinary incontinence. (Rizwana et al.,2015; The complications mentioned in Unani classical texts are Zooban(Emaciation), Sexual dysfunction, Gangrene formation and General debility (Rizwana et al.,2015; Fahad et al.,2018)

Unani Etiopathogenesis Vs Modern Pathophysiology

According to modern medicine Diabetes Mellitus is a disease with the underlying pathology of abnormalities of Insulin secretion or insulin action or both leading to elevated level of glucose in blood stream. Presentations are varied and results in carbohydrates, fat and protein metabolic dysfunctions.(Banday et al.,2020)

According to Unani Etiopathogenesis of Ziabetus is described as following

- Zof e gurda (Weakness of kidneys)- Jurjani and Azam khan have mentioned



this pathogenesis ;Due to the weak retentive power of kidneys it's unable to store the water derived from liver there for leading to frequent urination and causing excessive thirst

- Ittisa e gurda Va majari e bol (Dilatation of kidneys and ureters)- According to Jurjani due to this dilatation there's inability to retain the water and it quickly passes through.

- Buoodat e badan, Jigar Va Gurda (Coldness of body, liver and kidneys)- Accoring to Jurjani as these become more cold their functions become poor and sedate leading to poor glycemic control and poor water retention

- Su e Mizaj e haar gurda (Abnormal hot temperament of Kidney) – Jurjani, Zakariya Razi and Majoosi have mentioned this point. Further Zakariya Razi has stated in his book Kithab al hawi Due to abnormal hot temperament of kidneys they absorb excess amount of water from circulation and due to lack of Quwwat e masika (Retentive power) it passes the excess amount of water and thereby excessive urination and excess of thirst occurs. Therefore he called this condition as 'Zalaqul kulliya'(Slippery nature of kidneys / Diarrhoea of kidneys)(Firdaus et al.,2015; Fahad et al.,2018)

Modern Vs Unani Concepts of Management and prevention

Modern management of Diabetes compiles of Life style management, Oral hypoglycemics, Insulin and complication specific interventions.(Cleveland clinic,2023) Unani system of medicines advices on the diet regulation and physical activity as the prevention strategies.(Khan et al.,2020) Unani therapeutic measures for Ziabetus is intervened through following steps

1. Ilaj bil Ghiza (Dieto therapy)

- Sugary items like potato, Sweet potato, Pumpkin, Carrot, Banana, Beetroots and Turnip should be avoided.

- Consume vegetables like beans, bitter gourd, fenugreek, lettuce, broccoli and cucumber

- Fruits like papaya, Guava, Star fruit, apple and orange are advisable.

- Consume nuts such as peanuts, Walnuts, almond, pistachio etc

- Avoid red meat

- Fish is advisable (Khan et al.,2020)

2. Ilaj bil dawa (Pharmacotherapy)

Several single herbs mentioned in Unani system of medicine have been proved by clinical trails to have significant hypoglycemic effect. They are

- Karela- Bitter gourd

- Darchini- Cinnamomum zeylanicum

- Meithi – Trigonellafoenum graecum

- Gilo- Tinospora cordifolia

- Jamun- Euginea jambolana

- Tulsi- Ocimum sanctum

- Kachnar- Bauhinia variegata

- Dammul akhwain- Pterocarpus marsupium

- Tahlab- Spirulina platensis

- Neem – Azadirachta indica

- Piyaz – Allium cepa

- Kalonji- Nigella sativum

- Tukhm e khurfa- Portucca olearacea

- Tukhm e kahu- Lactuca sativa

- Lahzan- Allium sativum (Firdaus et al.,2022;Khan et al.,2020; Anzar et al.,2013)

Also several compound Unani formulations have been proven to have significant effects in the therapeutic management of Ziabetus. Some of them are

- Qurs e ziyabatus Khas

- Qurs e kafoor

- Qurs e tabasseer

- Safoof e sandal ziyabatus wala

- Safoof e ziyabatus (Khan et al.,2020)

- Safoof e hindi (Anzar et al.,2013)

- Qurs e Gulnar (Eqbal et al.,2020)

- Qurs e Banafsha

- Qurs e Zahar mohra (Ansari,2025)



3.Ilaj bil tadbeer (Regimental therapy)

- Dalak (Massage)
- Riyazat (Exercise)
- Hijama (Cupping) (Khan et al.,2020; Hadis et al.,2024)

DISCUSSION

The reviewed studies proves that both modern medicine and Unani share overlapping symptomatology specially polyuria, polydipsia, and weightloss. However their explanatory frameworks differ substantially. Both Unani scholars and Endocrinologists emphasizes lifestyle and diet as the causative factors. But they share the area of divergence while discussing about the Etiopathogenesis; While Unani says it's related with Zof e gurda(Weakness of kidneys) modern medicine has an explanation of insulin dis regulation. The major bridge is diagnostic methods used in modern Vs Unani; Unani focuses on subjective diagnosis while modern medicine focuses on biomarkers. Through understanding the correspondences and differences can improve integrative care and guide research into traditional interventions.

CONCLUSION

Comparative study of modern concept of Diabetes Mellitus and Unani concept of Ziabetus strongly proves that through this correlation the therapeutic and preventive measures of diabetes Mellitus can be taken to the next level through integrating both modern and traditional interventions. However there's a lack of clinical trials, safety assessments and standardizations to prove the efficacy of Unani therapeutics; Implementing operational researches on culturally adapted therapeutic and preventive programs linking Unani regimen elements with modern biomedical screening would be useful in bridging the gap in-between.

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