



**GENERAL AND DIETARY MEASURES IN DEMENTIA BASED ON TRADITIONAL
PERSIAN MEDICINE**

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Traditional Persian medicine with thousands years background have provided several advices in line with prevention and treatment of different types of diseases. Dementia disorder whose most pervasive type is Alzheimer is a mostly incident disease worldwide and would pose a heavy economic and mental burden on the individual, family and finally the society. Considering the significance of this issue and necessity to prevent from its incidence and inability of the modern medicine in treating it completely, there are some advices given by traditional Persian medicine alone or along with modern medicine in order to prevent or treat this disease as helpful instruments.

Method: In order to study the traditional Persian medicine's dietary advices in order to reduce dementia (*Nesyan*), credible books such as *Razi's Alhavi*, *Avicenna's canon*, *Jorjani's Zakhireye Khwarazmshahi*, *Muhammad Azam khan's Exir E Azam* and *Aqhili's Kholasat Al-hekmat*, *Arzani's Tebe Akbari* and *Ibn-E-Evaz Kermani's Sharhol Asbab Va-al Alamat* were investigated.

Results: Traditional Persian medicine provides three classes of advices in order to prevent and treat dementia (*Nesyān*): lifestyle advices, dietary advices and medical advices. In this article, the lifestyle and dietary advices are investigated based on the traditional Persian medicine schools. In this regard, there are frequently advised issues to consume sweet almond, nut, hazelnut as well as egg and bird's meat, milk and grape products such as raisins which contain high amount of antioxidants, non-saturated fatty acids and cholesterols.

Discussion: The results indicated that the dietary advices by traditional Persian medicine are in line with modern medicine results and these two medical schools are moving along with each other in prevention and treatment of the dementia disorders.

Keywords: Dementia, Alzheimer, Traditional Persian Medicine

INTRODUCTION

Alzheimer is one of the most incident diseases depending on the age which had significant epidemiological growth through recent years. It is estimated that the number of the people has this disorder doubles every 20 years [1, 2]. This disease depends completely on age. In 2011, 1/8 of the people over 65 years and half of the population over 85 years had Alzheimer worldwide. The incidence of this disease increased by 66% during 2000 to 2008 [3]. The costs posed by this disease are as high as possible that about 1% of the GDP is spent on the consequences of this disease [5]. People with Alzheimer die of the disease on average 5-7 years later [2]. In traditional Persian medicine books, forgetfulness is the main sign of the Alzheimer. This disease is one of the most incident disorders of the dementia which in fact is a type of forgetfulness whose origin is

brain coldness and dryness. Forgetting recent events and ability to remember far events, cognitive disorders, and lingual and behavioral abilities disorder are the symptoms of this disease [5, 6]. Based on the high incidence of this disease and its increasing emergence as well as social, economic and psychological heavy burdens for individual, family and the society, it is necessary to prevent and treat this disease more than ever.

METHOD

In order to study the traditional Persian medicine's dietary advices for dementia disorder, credible books such as *Razi's Alhavi*, *Avicenna's canon*, *Jorjani's Zakhireye Khwarazmshahi*, *Muhammad Azam khan's Exir E Azam* and *Aqhili's Kholasat Al-hekmat*, *Arzani's Tebe Akbari* and *Ibn-E-Evaz Kermani's Sharhol Asbab*

Va-al Alamat were investigated and the general and dietary advices for forgetfulness were investigated and extracted [5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13].

RESULTS

In studying the forgetfulness in traditional Persian medicine, there are general measures we evaluate and then different types of the forgetfulness are discussed in individuals and their prevention and treatment advices are investigated.

General measures for forgetfulness [6, 11]:

- Consuming foods which strengthen the brain and increase its tissue including:
 - Hindi nutmeg
 - Coconut
 - Nut and dried fig
 - Chicken and Sparrow meat
 - Hazelnut with sugar and red currant
 - Fatless sheep meat
 - Poultry's brain consumption
 - Sweet almond with sugar
- General food abstinence in people with forgetfulness:
 - Cold water
 - Onion, garlic, leek and watercress
 - Mushroom, apple, beans and basil and green coriander
 - Lettuce and poppy
 - Milk and lentil
 - Alcohol

- Purslane
- Heavy foods, since these foods produce phlegm (*Balgham*) and melancholia (Soda).
- Sleeping immediately after food consumption
- Eating several food simultaneously
- Heavy physical activities after food consumption
- Strong mental excitements after food consumption

Here, we investigate the forgetfulness in addition to its particular symptoms and dietary measures.

If the individual with forgetfulness, feel coldness and he is fat and eats and sleeps a lot, in addition to general advices, the followings are advised, too[6, 11]:

- Drink water and honey instead of water with tincture of fennel
- Eating *en brochette* or chickpea stew with chicken, fresh pigeon, sparrow, one-year sheep meats with olive oil.
- Eating above foods with cinnamon, pepper, cumin and cardamom
- Ginger jam consumption
- *Myrobalam* jam consumption
- Consuming cinnamon, ginger, pepper, Chili every morning with or without each other mixed with equal sweet or honey
- The dietary abstinence in this group includes[8,11]:

- Lettuce consumption
- Dairy consumption
- Alcohol drinking
- High amount of water

If the person with forgetfulness is thin and have cold body and feels coldness in major and eats in low amount with short-time sleep, the followings are advised [11, 13]:

- Pottages prepared from poultry or bird chickens and sheep meat
- Consuming head brain of poultries
- Cow oil consumption
- Pottage prepared from vetch and peas and almond

If the individual with forgetfulness is thin and eats in low amount and feels nausea and sleeps a little and feels warmth highly in his/her body and his/her body is always warm, the followings are advised [8, 11]:

- Wheat kernel and sugar porridge
- Pottage of vetch with extract of almond, spinach and cucurbit
- Eating lettuce
- Almond porridge consumption
- Red currant with Hindi nutmeg
- Increasing the food consumption in contrast to other types of forgetfulness

DISCUSSION

Traditional Persian medicine interprets the dry and cold dementia in such a manner compatible with modern medicine definitions

of the Alzheimer. The lifestyle, dietary and medical advices by the traditional Persian medicine are for prevention and treatment of the forgetfulness disorder (*Nesyān*) which in comparison to modern medicine treatments, there are many joint issues. Consuming products of grape such as currant and raisins is one of the main diets advised in traditional medicine in order to prevent from the forgetfulness and Alzheimer and contain natural antioxidants such as phenolic compounds and poly phenolic compounds [14, 15]. Recently, it was proved that these compounds have the anti-dementia activities in brain by inhibiting the oxidative stress and creating amyloid β and its accumulation in brain [16]. Nut, hazelnut and sweet almond grains are among the anti-dementia foods in traditional medicine which contain non-saturated fatty acids [17]. Also, egg and birds egg consumption play an important role in anti-dementia diet. These foods are rich of cholesterol [17]. Simultaneous consumption of cholesterol and non-saturated fatty acids increases the blood HDL which plays an effective role in prevention and treatment of the Alzheimer [17, 18, 19]. Recent studies indicated that the cholesterol is a memory performance enhancement factor [20, 21]. Prospective studies of Reitz et al. on 1130 subjects indicated that the higher level of

serum HDL leads to reduction of the risk of Alzheimer in elders [22]. Before him, *Singh Manoux* et al. indicated that low level of serum HDL is a risk factor for memory performance disorder [23, 24]. On the other hand, inhibited diets in dementia disorder include lower level of cholesterol which seems to be one of the main reasons for inhibiting their consumption. Therefore, it can be observed that the dietary measures in traditional Persian medicine in prevention and treatment of dementia are in agreement with modern medicine advices. Racial-medical studies on treatment of dementia based on the traditional medicine would be needed.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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