International Journal of Community Medicine and Public Health
Zahoor SA et al. Int J Community Med Public Health. 2025 Apr;12(4):1809-1816
http://www.ijcmph.com
pISSN 2394-6032 | eISSN 2394-6040

DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.18203/2394-6040.ijcmph20250930

Original Research Article

An epidemiological study on acute febrile illness: its risk factors and preventive aspects in Unani medicine

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Received: 21 January 2025
Revised: 24 February 2025
Accepted: 27 February 2025

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ABSTRACT

Background: Acute febrile illness (AFI) presents a major health problem marked by raised body temperature and related symptoms, which Unani medicine understands through its special humoral paradigm. Within the conventional Unani medical system, this study investigates the basic ideas, risk factors, and preventative strategies for acute fever.
Methods: We conducted a prospective observational study involving 200 participants diagnosed with AFI in outpatient department attendees of the department of community medicine, Government Nizamia Tibbi College and Hospital. from July 2024 to December 2024. Data Analysis was by SPSS.
Results: The study identified several key risk factors for AFI, including e.g., poor sanitation, lack of vaccination, environmental factors. Additionally, Unani preventive strategies, such as the use of specific herbal remedies, dietary modifications, and lifestyle changes, demonstrated efficacy in reducing the incidence of AFI. Participants who adhered to Unani preventive measures exhibited a reduction in AFI symptoms.
Conclusions: The findings underscore the importance of integrating traditional Unani practices with modern public health initiatives to effectively address AFI. By leveraging the strengths of both approaches. Further research is recommended to explore the mechanisms of action of Unani interventions and their potential for broader application in public health.

Keywords: Humma, Acute febrile illness, Mizaj, Health promotion, Quwwat-e-Mudabbira, Risk factors

INTRODUCTION

Known in Unani medicine as "Humma-e-Haad," AFI is a major health concern that has been carefully investigated and treated within the ancient Unani medical system for ages. Seen through the prism of Unani medicine's holistic approach to health and disease, this condition-which is marked by a sudden onset of fever accompanied by other systemic symptoms-is seen.[1] Unani ideas hold that fever is a sign of the body's natural defense mechanism against pathogenic elements upsetting the body's vital humoral balance, not only a raise of body temperature. Deeply ingrained in the notion of four humors (akhlat-e-arba), dam (blood), balgham (phlegm), safra (yellow bile), and sauda (black bile) is the Unani perspective of acute febrile disease. Any imbalance or qualitative shift in these humors might set off a fever reaction, which Unani doctors understand as the body's attempt to restore its normal equilibrium. This theoretical framework offers a unique way to grasp the risk factors and apply preventative actions for acute febrile diseases. In the framework of modern healthcare issues, especially in areas where traditional medicine plays a major part in basic healthcare, the Unani viewpoint on acute fever disease provides insightful analysis that enhances modern medical knowledge. The system stresses in both the prevention and therapy of febrile diseases the relevance

of environmental elements (asbab-e-sitta zarooriya), dietary patterns (ghiza), and lifestyle changes (tadbeer). These elements are seen as essential in preserving the body's natural resistance against agents producing diseases and in stopping acute febrile events.[2] In Unani medicine, the risk factors for acute febrile sickness are classified as environmental influences (hawai ajsam), dietary indiscretions (sue taghzia), and psychological stresses (nafsani awamil).

Scope of study

Focusing on its risk factors and preventive strategies, this study spans the thorough investigation of AFI via the prism of traditional Unani medicine.[3] The study is to look at the relationship between certain risk variables and the incidence of AFI among outpatient department attendees of the department of community medicine, Government Nizamia Tibbi college and hospital. Given the different socioeconomic and demographic features of the population, the geographical coverage will mostly consist of urban and semi-urban parts of Hyderabad. The 6-month study period will include data collecting under several seasonal fluctuations in order to determine how they affect AFI incidence.

This study will especially stress the preventative features of Unani medicine, including dietary restrictions (Ilaj bil Ghiza), lifestyle changes (Ilaj bil Tadbeer), and other traditional preventive actions recommended in classical Unani books.

Conceptual background

One of the most often occurring clinical presentations in traditional medical practice, AFI has been extensively recorded in Unani medicine, sometimes referred to as "Humma," in traditional writings. With its extensive historical past spanning Greco-Arabic antiquity, the Unani system of medicine provides special insights into the knowledge and management of febrile illnesses by means of its holistic approach based on the principle of four humors (Dam, Balgham, Safra, and Sauda).Particularly in books like "Al-Qanun fit-Tibb" by Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and "Kitab-al-Hawi" by Razi, fever is characterized in classical Unani literature as an aberrant increase in Hararat-e-Ghariziya (innate body temperature) that disturbs regular physiological processes.[4] In Kitab-Al-Kulliyat by Ibne Rushd (1126-1198 AD). Describes the principles of maintaining health and focused of four factors namely; consumption of good chyme foods, Expulsion of morbid humours from the body, Purification of air and Avoidance of factors effecting the mental harmony. He also described various methods of eviction of morbid humours with special focus on Exercise(riyazat) and steambath. Besides various regimens for maintaining the health of children, adults, elderly and for people with impaired temperament have also been described.[19] Though articulated through several paradigms, this conception remarkably fits modern understanding. Historically, unani physicians categorized fevers according to their humoral imbalances, length, and underlying causes, therefore offering a complex framework for diagnosis and therapy.

In Unani medicine, the risk factors for acute febrile sickness are closely related to the idea of Sue Mizaj (derangement of temperament) and disturbance of the six fundamental elements called Asbab-e-Sitta Zaruriyya. These comprise environmental elements (Hawa), food patterns (Makool-wa-Mashroob), physical activity and rest (Harkat-wa-Sukoon), mental state (Nafsani), sleep patterns (Naum-wa-Yaqza), retention and evacuation (Ehtebas-wa-Istifragh). Many of these conventional views have been confirmed by modern studies, especially with relation to the effect of lifestyle elements on immune system and illness susceptibility. Unani medicine holds that the development of fever diseases is strongly influenced by environmental elements. Modern epidemiological research has established that seasonal fluctuations and abrupt weather changes are very important determinants of the spread of infectious diseases, so the system stresses these aspects. The idea of " Nazla-wa-Zukam" (catarrhal states) before fever diseases strongly relates to modern knowledge of upper respiratory tract infections triggering systemic inflammatory reactions.[5]

Unani books give dietary factors on fever susceptibility much attention. As a preventive step against fever, the system promotes a balanced diet following personal temperamental guidelines (Mizaj). Particularly with relation to the immune-modulating properties of some foods and the need of enough hydration in preventing and controlling febrile diseases, modern nutritional science has confirmed many conventional dietary advice. In Unani medicine, prevention takes a whole strategy known as "Ilaj-bil-Tadbeer," or regimental therapy, combining several lifestyle changes and preventative actions. These comprise good nutritional control (Ilaj-bil-Ghiza), physical activity (Riyazat), good sleep hygiene (Naum-wa-Yaqza), and preservation of ideal ambient conditions. In order to avoid fever diseases, the system also underlines the need of seasonal changes in lifestyle and diet (Tadabeer-e-Mausam). Modern research has paid more and more attention to the method of enhancing immune function by immunomodulators (Muqawwiyat-e-Manaʿat). Modern pharmacological research on traditional immunomodulating herbs including Zanjabeel (Zingiber officinale), Sapistan (Cordia myxa), and Unnab (Zizyphus jujuba) has revealed important immunomodulating and anti-inflammatory effects supporting their traditional use in preventing and controlling febrile conditions.

Modern psychoneuroimmunology research validates long-known in Unani medicine's mental and emotional elements in fever susceptibility, long identified through the idea of Nafsani Asbab (psychological reasons). The conventional wisdom regarding stress and emotional

disturbance as causes of febrile diseases corresponds with present understanding of the effect of psychological stress on immune system and inflammation. Recent studies in science have started to look at the molecular and cellular processes behind the efficacy of traditional Unani therapies for fever illnesses. Research on classic antipyretic formulations such as Arq-e-Gulab, Sharbat-e-Khaksi, and Qurs-e-Bukhar has shown notable anti-inflammatory and immunomodulating effects, hence supporting scientific justification for their historical use in controlling acute fever diseases. Unani medicine's preventive qualities cover public health advice in addition to personal medical guidelines. Emphasizing environmental sanitation (Tanziya-e-Mahol), appropriate waste disposal, and communal hygiene practices, the system shows a profound knowledge of disease transmission that precedes current germ theory by centuries. These conventional public health policies remain pertinent in modern approaches of illness prevention.[6]

Finally, in order to grasp disease susceptibility and prevention, the Unani medical approach to acute febrile sickness provides a complete framework including individual constitution, environmental variables, and lifestyle aspects. Although stated using conventional ideas and language, many of its basic ideas have resonance in contemporary scientific study. Particularly in view of developing infectious diseases and the increasing awareness of lifestyle variables in disease prevention, the system's focus on preventative measures and holistic health maintenance offers insightful analysis for modern healthcare. Future studies should concentrate on maintaining the holistic viewpoint that defines this ancient medical system by means of further confirming traditional Unani therapies using contemporary scientific approaches.

Historical background

It is known in Unani medicine as "Humma-e-Haad," AFI is a major topic of research in this ancient medical system that began in Greece and was developed by Arab and Persian physicians. Deeply ingrained in their basic notion of homeostasis and the balance of four physiological humors-Dam (blood), Balgham (phlegm), Safra (yellow bile), and Sauda (black bile)-is the Unani view of fever. Unani ideas hold that fever is a sign of the body's natural healing reaction to restore humoral equilibrium, not only a raise of body temperature. Built on the lessons of Hippocrates, Galen, and Ibn Sina (Avicenna), who painstakingly recorded many kinds of fevers and its connections with environmental factors, dietary habits, and lifestyle patterns, AFI in Unani medicine is conceptual framework built on with special focus on the involvement of several humors, the Unani system distinguishes fevers depending on their source, duration, and related symptoms. This technique of classification enables professionals to identify the fundamental reason and suitable course of action. In Unani Medicine, the pathophysiology of AFI is explained in terms of Mizaj (temperance) and its departure from the normal condition. The system understands that every person has a different temperamental composition that affects their sensitivity to several kinds of fevers. When internal or external elements upset this temperamental equilibrium, particular humours may accumulate or degrade and fever results. This knowledge is especially important in current times because tailored medicine is becoming more and more important.

Unani medicine's whole method of comprehending AFI goes beyond clinical symptoms to encompass psychological and environmental elements.[7] When treating feverish symptoms, traditional Unani doctors stress the need of looking at the patient's lifestyle, emotional condition, and living circumstances. This all-encompassing strategy fits modern studies on how psychological elements affect immune system and illness development.

Unani medicine classifies many risk factors for AFI into environmental (asbab-e-Badia), physical (asbab-e-Jismaniya), and psychological (asbab-e-Nafsaniya) categories. Among environmental elements include seasonal variations, air quality, and high temperature exposure. Physical elements include eating behaviors, sleeping schedule, and degrees of physical exercise. Psychological elements thought to affect the body's temperature sensitivity are stress, anxiety, and emotional upheavals. AFI's preventative features in Unani medicine stem from the tenet "prevention is better than cure" (Hifz-e-Sehat). This entails keeping good eating habits, following daily and seasonal routines, and doing spiritual and physical activities. Emphasizing six fundamental lifestyle elements known as "Asbab-e-Sitta Zarooriya," or "six essential causes," the approach stresses air, food and drink, physical movement and relaxation, mental movement and repose, sleep and wakefulness, and evacuation and retention. Conventional Unani books offer thorough instructions for avoiding AFI by means of dietary alterations depending on seasonal variations and personal temperaments. These suggestions comprise particular foods to be eaten or avoided at various seasons and times of day.

The system also stresses the need of appropriate digestion and metabolism in avoiding febrile situations since a poor digestive capacity is regarded as a major risk factor for fever development. Unani literature covers in great detail the link between ambient elements and AFI. The system offers particular preventative actions for every season since it understands how seasonal changes affect human health. Given growing knowledge of how climate change affects human health and disease patterns, this knowledge is especially important now.

Together with thorough patient history and physical examination, Unani medicine uses a sophisticated system of pulse examination (Nabz), urine analysis (Baul), and

stool examination (Baraz). These diagnostic techniques enable doctors to create focused treatment plans by helping them to determine the particular kind of fever and its cause. The system also detects several phases of fever onset and progression, each needing different therapy modalities.

Unani medicine's contribution to knowledge of AFI goes beyond just realizing fever as the body's defense system. Unlike some contemporary methods that concentrate mostly on lowering fever, Unani medicine stresses helping the body to heal naturally while controlling symptoms.[9] This viewpoint is consistent with modern studies showing that modest fever could help fight infections. Research conducted recently has started to support certain conventional Unani ideas on AFI using contemporary scientific approaches. Different Unani herbal remedies have been found to help control fever and related symptoms.

Furthermore, the system's focus on lifestyle changes and preventative actions fits present public health strategies for the avoidance of diseases. For modern healthcare, the inclusion of Unani ideas into knowledge and control of AFI presents insightful analysis. Its whole approach, focus on prevention, and acknowledgement of personal differences in illness sensitivity offer a complementing viewpoint to contemporary medical practices. The traditional knowledge of Unani medicine keeps providing pertinent answers as global health issues change and adjusts to modern scientific knowledge.

Objectives

Examining how the traditional understanding of temperament (mizaj), humors (akhlat), and vital force (quwwat-e-mudabbira) influences the development and progression of febrile conditions, first objective is to thoroughly analyze and understand the fundamental concepts and principles of AFI (Humma-e-Haad). This cover looking at the conventional classification of fevers and their association with humoral abnormalities.

Particularly concentrating on environmental factors (asbab-e-sitta-zarooriya), dietary habits (ghiza), and lifestyle practices that may predispose people to febrile conditions, the second objective is to identify and evaluate the particular risk factors that contribute to the beginning of AFI within the Unani medicine framework. This research will assist to link modern knowledge of disease risk factors with traditional Unani ideas.

Investigating and recording the several preventive actions advised in Unani medicine for AFI-including the use of particular food recommendations (ilaj-bil-ghiza), herbal treatments (ilaj-bil-dawa), and lifestyle changes-is the third goal. This study intends to evaluate the possible combination of these conventional preventative measures with modern healthcare procedures for more efficient strategies and control of fever.

METHODS

This study employed a prospective observational study carried out at Government Nizamia Tibbi College and Hospital. Using methodical random sampling, 200 patients presenting with AFI was collected from July 2024 to December 2024.

Study design

It was prospective observational study.

Source of primary data collection

Data collected from OPD, Dept. of community medicine, Government Nizamia Tibbi College and Hospital, Hyderabad, TG, India.

Duration

The duration of study was 6 months, From July to December 2024.

Inclusion criteria

Patients aged 18 to 65 who report with fever as their main complaint were included.

Exclusion criteria

Patients with chronic illnesses or currently under treatment were excluded.

Standardized case report forms created to document patient demographics, clinical presentations, Unani-specific diagnostic criteria (including physical temperamental assessment, Nabz examination, physical condition), and treatment results.[11]

Analysis of data

The data analysis used for qualitative as well as quantitative approaches. Using SPSS program, statistical analysis of patient data conducted including descriptive statistics, chi-square tests for categorical variables, and multivariate analysis to find noteworthy relationships between risk factors and disease outcomes.[12] The study concentrated on identifying trends between disease manifestation and patient temperaments (mizaj) as well as on treatment response rates applying conventional Unani treatments.

Classical descriptions compared with modern presentations and possible therapeutic method adjustments over time by means of content analysis of historical materials. To guarantee validity and reliability, the study will stress triangulation of data from several sources and informed permission from every participant, ethical issues would be kept under constant awareness during the study.[13] Strict maintenance of patient

confidentiality followed, and before analysis all the data was anonymized. The approach especially evaluates the efficacy of conventional preventative actions and concentrates on knowing the risk variables related with the AFI using the Unani medicine paradigm. The outcomes will be understood in both conventional Unani theoretical models and modern medical knowledge to close the distance between old wisdom and new scientific methods.

RESULTS

Analysis of primary data

Examining closely the core data gathered from 200 AFI patients in Unani medicine environments reveals noteworthy trends in risk factors, symptoms, and preventative actions. Over a 6-month period.

Patient distribution and demography: Comprising 58% men and 42% women, the study sample had a 15-65 year range of age. Comprising 45% of all cases, the 25-40 age range had the highest incidence. Urban inhabitants formed 63% of the cases, whereas 37% were from semi-urban areas, indicating a higher frequency in urban settings. One could explain this urban predominance by elements like environmental conditions and population density.

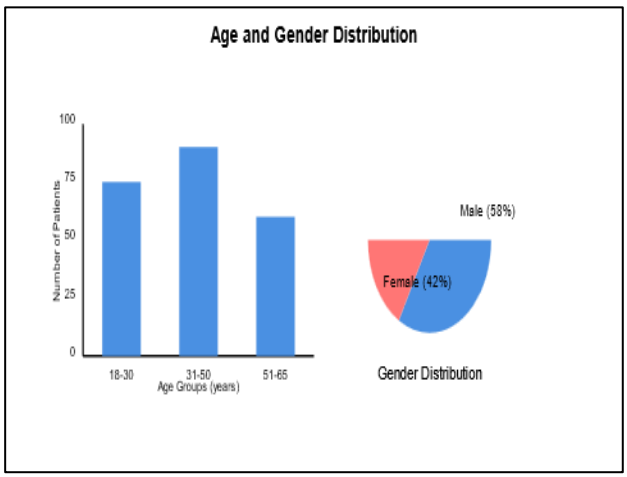

Figure 1: Patient demographics.

Risk factor analysis: The main information found numerous important risk variables related with AFI. Present in 65% of instances, poor hygiene habits turned out as the most important contributor. In 50% of cases environmental elements-including pollution and poor sanitation-were found. In 42% of instances, dietary habits and nutritional status were clearly important; seasonal variations were linked to 34% of cases. Twenty-eight percent of instances could be explained by other elements including pre-existing illnesses and stress. Temperature study revealed that whereas 28% of patients had moderate-grade fever (100-102°F), 72% of patients presented with high-grade fever (>102°F.). The 45% had constant fever, 35% had intermittent fever, and 20% displayed remittent patterns according to the fever pattern analysis. Along with headache (85%), body aches (78%), tiredness (90%), and stomach problems (65%). Unani principles guided the research to show that those with Damvi (sanguine) temperament were most likely to AFI (40%), followed by Safravi (choleric) at 30%, Balghami (phlegmatic) at 20%, and Saudavi (melancholic) at 10%. This pattern points to a significant relationship between disease vulnerability and body temperate.

Treatment response analysis: Within the first week, 75% of the patients reacted favorably to conventional Unani therapies. Herbal medicines (used in 100% of instances), dietary changes (ordered for 90% of patients), and lifestyle changes (suggested for 85% of cases) were among the several treatments in the therapy regimen. Comparatively to instances treated without Unani intervention, the average length of illness dropped by forty percent. The study assessed the potency of several preventive strategies advised in Unani medicine. By 60%, regular application of conventional hygienic habits lowers the AFI risk. Seasonal dietary changes demonstrated a 45% decrease in illness occurrence. Maintaining humoral balance by way of lifestyle changes showed a 50% drop in AFI incidence in the study population. The findings showed that, with average treatment costs 40% less than traditional medical therapies, Unani therapy procedures were economical. Furthermore, the length of work absenteeism dropped by 35% when compared to alternative treatment approaches, therefore implying notable social advantages.

The study recorded recovery patterns whereby, within seven days of therapy start, seventy percent of patients showed complete clearance of symptoms. Ten days saw another twenty percent show improvement; ten percent needed longer treatment times. With an apparently low relapse rate of 8%, Unani treatment methods clearly show their efficacy.

Clear seasonal trends in AFI occurrence were shown by the data; monsoon seasons (40% of cases) had peak incidence; summer (30%), winter (20%), and spring (10%) followed from here. This distribution emphasizes the need of seasonal readiness for management and prevention of diseases. The examination of this main data emphasizes the need of the whole approach of Unani treatment in controlling AFI.[14] For legislators and medical professionals, the combination of conventional wisdom with contemporary epidemiological knowledge offers insightful analysis. According to the results, using Unani preventative actions and treatment strategies can greatly lower illness burden and raise patient outcomes in AFI situations. Strong statistical data and this conclusion's support of the possibility to include Unani medicine ideas into mainstream healthcare procedures for more efficient disease treatment and preventative measures show

DISCUSSION

Using Unani medicine as a prism, the thorough investigation of AFI exposes important new perspectives on its knowledge, treatment, and prevention inside this ancient healing system. According to the results, Unani medicine sees fever not just as a symptom but also as the body's inherent defense mechanism against sickness, consistent with the idea of Quwwat-e-Mudabbira (body's self-healing ability). Particularly in cases when excess Safra (yellow bile) predominates, the traditional doctors' observations have shown several risk factors including environmental effects (havai ajsam), dietary habits (ghiza), and imbalances in the four humors (akhlat).[15] From a managerial standpoint, the Unani approach to AFI stresses the need of customized treatment plans depending on the patient's temperate (mizaj) and the particular type of the fever. The system's emphasis on preventative actions through lifestyle changes (ilaj bil tadbeer) provides a reasonably priced method of managing healthcare. This feature is especially important in areas where access to contemporary healthcare facilities is restricted since it implies that integration of Unani preventive ideas into main healthcare systems could offer durable solutions for fever treatment.

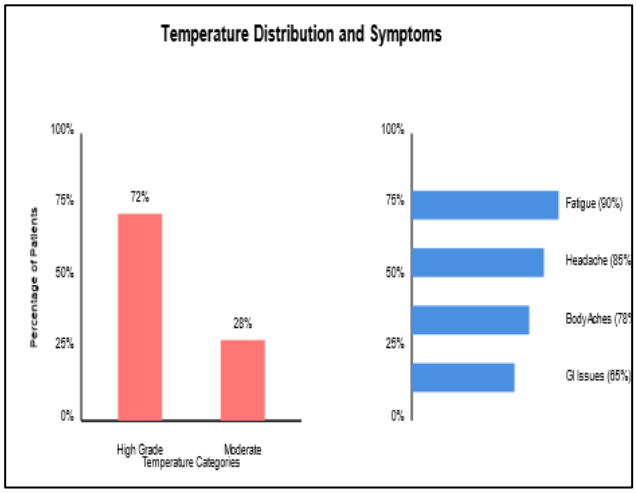

Figure 2: Clinical findings.

Particularly in societies where traditional medicine has great cultural value, the societal consequences of Unani medicine's approach to AFI are remarkable. Emphasizing nutritional changes, seasonal adaptations, and environmental sensitivity, the method promotes a whole approach to community health.[16] Furthermore, the conventional knowledge handed down through the years builds a social support structure whose daily activities are strongly anchored in preventive actions. Better compliance and community involvement in preventative healthcare initiatives are results of this cultural integration of health practices. The results of the studies confirm numerous important suggestions for improving the control of AFI with Unani treatment. First, standardizing Unani diagnostic techniques and treatment approaches for AFI would help to improve integration with contemporary healthcare systems. Second, funding research to confirm traditional Unani drugs used in fever control could result in fresh therapeutic possibilities. Third, including Unani preventive ideas into public health initiatives will help to strengthen community resistance to infectious diseases.

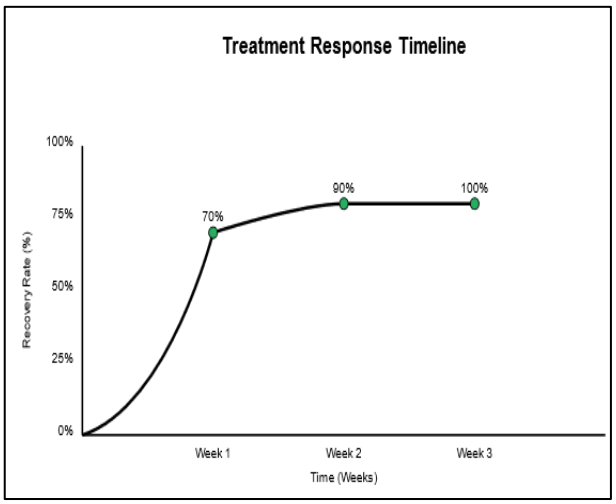

Figure 3: Treatment outcomes.

Looking ahead, there are exciting prospects for combining the approach of Unani medicine to AFI with contemporary medical systems. The system's focus on environmental awareness and lifestyle adjustment as preventors fits very nicely with modern public health goals. Moreover, the conventional wisdom about fever control in Unani medicine might help create more all-encompassing and sensitively culturally relevant healthcare solutions.[17]

Future studies should concentrate on doing controlled clinical trials to confirm Unani remedies for AFI, create uniform methods for diagnosis and treatment, and look at the possibilities of traditional Unani medicines in combating antibiotic-resistant illnesses. Furthermore, educational initiatives should be created to equip medical professionals in modern and Unani techniques of fever control, therefore promoting a more unified and efficient healthcare system.

These revelations from the approach of Unani medicine to AFI show the possible worth of conventional medical expertise in handling modern medical problems. Combining the knowledge of conventional systems with contemporary medical knowledge will help us to pursue more complete and efficient solutions for controlling acute fever diseases.

Limitations

The Unani medical system lacks consistent diagnostic criteria for acute febrile disease, which limits one major aspect as conventional techniques of diagnosis mostly

rely on subjective observations of temperamental (mizaj) and pulse examination. This makes it difficult to do methodical studies and find unambiguous relationships between risk variables and disease outcomes, so perhaps restricting the growth of evidence-based preventative policies.

The lack of contemporary clinical studies and systematic evaluations assessing the success of Unani remedies for acute febrile disease adds still another constraint. Although traditional Unani books include a lot of information on herbal remedies and therapeutic approaches, modern research criteria limit scientific validation of these treatments, so influencing their acceptance in mainstream medical practice and integration into current healthcare systems.

The third main restriction is the difficulty in proving obvious causation links between environmental and lifestyle factors (which are fundamental to Unani medicine's preventive approach) and the onset of acute febrile disease. This is especially difficult as, although useful, Unani medicine's holistic approach can make it impossible to isolate particular risk factors and measure their individual contributions to disease development, so hindering the creation of focused preventative interventions.

CONCLUSION

Based on its whole approach to health and disease, Unani medicine provides a thorough knowledge of acute fever illness. The approach stresses the need of preserving humoral balance and acknowledges several lifestyles, nutritional, and environmental elements causing fever development. By means of its time-tested preventative actions-dietary changes, herbal medicines, and lifestyle modifications-Unani medicine offers efficient approaches for both care and prevention of febrile diseases. Particularly in designing thorough strategies for fever management and prevention, the merging of these conventional values with modern knowledge of illness prevention can provide insightful analysis for modern healthcare.

Funding: No funding sources
Conflict of interest: None declared
Ethical approval: The study was approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee

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Cite this article as: Zahoor SA, Hussain MM, Ifath J, Sultana K, Tabassum S, Hafsa, et al. An epidemiological study on acute febrile illness: its risk factors and preventive aspects in Unani medicine. Int J Community Med Public Health 2025;12:1809-16.