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Review Article

Concept of Aging of Skin in Unani Medicine and its Management through Hydration therapy: A Review

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ABSTRACT

Unani medicine is based upon the theory of four humors in the body. The temperaments of individuals are revealed accordingly by the words sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric, and melancholic on the preponderance of the respective humor. Innate fluid (Ratoobat-e-ghareeziya) plays a key role in maintaining equilibrium of innate heat (Hararat-e-ghareeziya). Change in the quality and quantity of Ratoobat-e-ghareeziya, directly affects Hararat-e-ghareeziya. Excessive reduction (tahleel) in Hararat-e-ghareeziya affects in two ways; i.e. Diminished Hararat-e-ghareeziya causes change in physiological functions of the body like in case of skin, when innate fluid of diminished, the skin becomes cold and dry in temperament which leads to wrinkles and early aging of skin. Hydration is one of the important therapies to prevent early aging of skin. Recent studies also reveal that during the aging cell division in the skin, decreases reduce collagen production and change the elastin fibers of structure. The visible changes are a decrease in sebum production and the moisture content, which is why many elderly suffer from dry skin and decreased elasticity of the skin. The result is that the skin is flaccid and puckering. Other factors are your lifestyle, diet, heredity, and other personal habits like smoking can produce free radicals. Free radicals damage the cells, leading to premature wrinkles. This paper aims to present the concept of Aging of skin, prevention and basic principles of management.

Keywords: Aging, Humors, Temperament

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Introduction

The skin is the largest organ of the body, with a total area of 20 square feet. The skin protects us from microbes and the elements, helps to regulate body temperature, and permits the sensation of touch, heat and cold. Skin has two layers: The epidermis, the outermost layer of skin, provides a waterproof barrier and creates our skin tone. The dermis, beneath the epidermis, contains tough connective tissue, hair follicles, and sweat glands. Skin plays an important defensive role in protecting the body against pathogens and excessive water loss. Its other functions are insulation, temperature regulation, sensation, synthesis of vitamin D, and the protection of vitamin B. Severely damaged skin will try to heal by forming scar tissue.¹ Wrinkles, a natural part of aging, are most prominent on sun-exposed skin, such as the face, neck, hands and forearms. Smoking and pollutants also contribute to early aging process of skin. Unani system of medicine is based upon theory of humors, which

presupposes the presence of four humors in the body: dam (blood), balgham (phlegm), safra (yellow bile), and sauda (black bile). The mizaj (temperaments) of individuals are revealed accordingly by the words sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric, and melancholic on the preponderance of the respective humor.

Innate Heat and Innate fluid: - The innate heat is the basic form of thermal energy which powers digestion, metabolism and transformation. Ibn Rushd defines innate heat as Natural heat (hararat taba'i) of the body which is responsible for all the physiological functions of the body². Innate heat is considered as essence of life and mentioned as instrument for physis (Tabi'at)³.

Ibn Sina stated that the innate heat is gifted by God at the time of zygote formation⁴. Akhlat are those moist and fluid parts of the body which are produced after transformation and metabolism of the aliments [5]. According to masihi humors are divided into three categories according to their location;

1. Fluid which is contained within the vessels called as ratubat-al-urooqi.
2. Fluid which is found in the spaces within the cells are called as ratubat-al-tajawif

Ratubat-e-ghareeziyah (Innate Fluid):- it is responsible for binding the organs together and when this fluid is vanished the particles of the organs are shattered. This fluid is also called ratubat asliyah or ratubat ula. This fluid establishes the internal environment of the cells and mizaj of the cells depends on this ratubat. Therefore it is called as intracellular fluid or protoplasm.

Mechanism of Aging of Skin

During the aging cell division in the skin, reduce collagen production and change the elastin fibers of structure. They are stiffer The visible changes are a decrease in sebum production and the moisture content which is why many elderly suffer from dry skin and decreased elasticity of the skin. The thickness of the epidermis decreases and the subcutaneous adipose tissue is thinner. The result is that the skin is flaccid and puckering". Cortisol also has the power to accelerate the aging process of the skin, rapidly enhancing common unwanted aging signs like lines and wrinkles, age spots, and skin dullness⁶.

According to Unani Doctrine aging is due to dissolution of fluids (tahleel-e-ratubat) and inadequate compensation of tahleel through power of digestion (quwat-e-hazima)⁷.

Skin aging occurs when the failure to maintain the dissolution of innate fluid through innate heat or failure to compensate the dissolution via badl ma yatahallal^{3,5}. In Unani system of medicine Hippocrates (460-370BC) stated about aging as a process resulted from the gradual and progressive loss of hararat (heat) from the body, and thus body become barid (cold) and yabis (dry). Aristotle (384-322BC) postulated that a finite amount of internal heat (innate heat) present at the time of birth which is gradually consumed over time and little remains in advance age, leads to organismal aging.

When the ratubat-e-ghareeziyah exceeds the quantity sufficient for the preservation of hararat-e-ghareeziyah then maintenance of all organ of the body continued and also body functioning well. But when the quantity of ratubat-e-ghareeziyah is lesser than the quantity required for the preservation of hararat-e-ghareeziyah then power and faculties of the body becomes deteriorate. In this period ratubate ghareeziyah of the body markedly reduced which leads to marked reduction of the hararat-e-ghareeziyah and temperament of the body organs becomes cold and dry⁵.

Basic Principles of management: - To prevent and manage the aging of skin following mode of intervention can be used.

1. Ilaj-bil -ghiza (Dieto therapy)
2. Ilaj-bil-tadbeer (Regimenal therapy)
3. Ilaj-bil-dawa (Drug therapy)

In Unani system of medicine Food and Drinks is important factors which are included in six essentials of life. Healthy diet and good nutrition reduces the chances of aging of skin. Milk is very beneficial to

prevent aging, especially goat's milk is recommended for nutrition and Tarteeb (moistness). Sikanjabeen (Vinegar + Honey) is a very famous diet which is described by Unani physicians to reduce the chances of aging of organs. Water is necessary for life and basic unit of life i.e. cell is composed of 70% water. Hydration for human body is essential and maintains the cellular structure. For proper hydration of skin drink sufficient amount of water and other liquid items and also application of water from outside is very necessary. The frequent use of a bath will have a refrigerant effect. The bath will help the digestion of the aliment, and the maturation of the humour.³

Daily prayer is the cornerstone of religious practice in Islam, Christain and Sikh community. By doing all these, one will get peace of mind that will reduce stress and inhibits the effects of stress and tension and will prevent the aging. The one who wants to establish these prayers must be physically clean with ablution, baptism and purification through water.

Moderate exercise is playing a key role in maintenance of health. A high level of antioxidant is very beneficial to delay the aging process. Massage the whole body, especially the feet, hands, face and ears while in the shower. If you are extra kind to yourself rub almond oil on your skin before you get into the shower. This simple treatment will maintain the health of the skin and calm scattered thoughts and anxious feelings.

We should use such things which can produce heat and moisture. For e.g. Narjeel (coconut) is recommended as it provides Hararat (heat) and Ratubat (moisture) to the body.

Discussion

The hydration level of the skin is influenced by the environment. A humid and hot environment increases the amount of water embedded in the skin. The skin care routine of an individual also influences the hydration level of the skin. The skin is visco elastic and fluids in the skin are blood, lymph fluid and interstitial fluid. The cold and moist temperament individual's skin is better than the skin of person of cold and dry temperament individuals.^[8] For life it depends on the innate heat, and growth depends on the innate moisture. Indeed the heat is present in and maintained or nourished by moisture. This fluid establishes the internal environment of the cells and temperament of the cells depends on this fluid. When the quantity of innate moisture is lesser than the quantity required for the preservation of innate heat then power and faculties of the body becomes deteriorate. In this period innate moisture of the body markedly reduced which leads to marked reduction of the innate heat and temperament of the body organs becomes cold and dry. In other words we can say; skin aging occurs when the failure to maintain the dissolution of innate fluid through innate heat or failure to compensate the dissolution via badl ma yatahallal.

Conclusion

Unani system of medicine mainly based on humoral theory and temperament of individuals. Innate heat is natural heat (harart taba'i) of the body which deals with all the physiological function of the body and maintained by innate fluid. Aging occurs when the failure to maintain the dissolution of innate fluid through innate heat or failure to compensate the

dissolution via badl ma yatahallal. Food and Drinks is important factors which are included in six essentials of life. Healthy diet and good nutrition reduces the chances of aging of skin. Hydration for human body is essential and maintains the cellular structure. For proper hydration of skin drink sufficient amount of water and other liquid items and also application of water from outside is very necessary.

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