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Review Article

## Role of *Dalak* (Massage) in management of Depression: A Review

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### ABSTRACT

BismillahirRehman Nirraheem, Nahmaduhu wa Nusallihil Ala Rasoolihil Kareem. Health is an essential component of life and it is necessary to live happy life. Health and diseases not only affect individual but also affects society. There are number of factors which are responsible for health and disease. According to Unani System of Medicine *Asbab-e-Sittah Zarooriyah* and *Ghair Zarooriyah* are important factors amongst them. Balance in these factors produces *tabai khilt* (normal humor) such as *Tabai balgham* (normal phlegm), *tabai safra* (normal yellow bile), *tabai sauda* (normal black bile) etc, these *tabai khilt* produces good health and any disturbance in it leads to ill health/disease, because disturbances in components of *asbab-e-sittah zarooriyah* leads to increase in abnormal *khilt* such as *ghair tabai sauda* (abnormal black bile), *ghair tabai balgham* (abnormal phlegm), *ghair tabai safra* (abnormal yellow bile) etc. *Harkat-wa-Sukoon Nafsan* is a component of *asbab-e-sittah zarooriyah*, disturbance in it leads to *ghair tabai sauda*, which is responsible for psychological disorders such as anxiety, depression etc. There are number of regimens such as *Ilaj-bil Ghiza*, *Ilaj-bil-Tadabeer*, *Ilaj-bil-Dawa* and *Ilj-bil-Yad*, used to maintain health, for prevention and to control the diseases. One of the best example is *dalak*(massage) which is a component of *Ilaj-bil-Tadabeer* and play a very important role in management of depression. Some studies also proven its efficacy in the management of depression and many other diseases. Time, season, age, locality etc. play very important in it.

**Keywords:** depression, *Dalak*, *Asbab-e-Sittah Zarooriyah*, *ghair tabai sauda*, *khilt*,**Article Info:** Received 08 June 2019; Review Completed 19 July 2019; Accepted 20 July 2019; Available online 15 August 2019**Cite this article as:**Sana-Ur-Rehman, Perveen A, Islam F, Hassan A, Role of *Dalak* (Massage) in management of Depression: A Review, Journal of Drug Delivery and Therapeutics. 2019; 9(4-s):653-656 <http://dx.doi.org/10.22270/jddt.v9i4-s.3270>**\*Address for Correspondence:**

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### INTRODUCTION:

According to Unani System of Medicine there are numbers of regimens for preservation (maintain) of the health and prevention of diseases, among them *dalak* is very important which plays very significant and effective role in preservation, promotion of health, prevention and treatment of different diseases. *Dalak* is a component of *ilaj bil tadbeer*, it is alternative of exercise, exercise is active form while *dalak* is passive form. Many studies proven the effectiveness of *dalak* in depression.

### DALAK (massage therapy)

In Unani system of medicine *dalak* is known as massage. Massage is a Unani word, which is derived from *massein*, which means *gunthna* (dough) <sup>1,2</sup>. It (massage) is one of the oldest and most widely practiced regimens that is used for restorative, preventive as well as therapeutic purposes. *Dalak* (Massage) is a type of exercise in which surface of

body is rubbed with hands or devices, to increase the blood circulation and remove the waste materials from the body. Several types of *Dalak* (Massage) are mentioned in Unani classical literature e.g. *Dalak Layyan* (Soft massage) is sedative and relaxant, *Dalak Khashan* (dry and hard massage) etc. It is considered as a type of exercise. it executes the same function as exercise i.e. it disintegrates the waste product, liquify the viscid matter, produces energy and strengthens ligament, tendons and muscles. *Dalak* (Massage) is indicated by Unani physicians in chronic arthralgia, muscular weakness, paralysis, sciatica, gout, melancholia, uterine complications, obesity, sprain, neuralgia etc. <sup>3</sup> It is defined as the systematic manipulation of the soft tissues for therapeutic or palliative purposes. It is frequently used as preventive, curative and rehabilitative purposes since centuries <sup>4</sup> The art of massage was very familiar in physicians of ancient Greece. Hippocrates "father of medicine" in 5th century BC stated that the way to health is scented bath and an oiled massage every day <sup>5</sup>. Massage is

generally used, with some research support, to relieve pain from musculoskeletal disorders and cancer, rehabilitate sports injuries, reduce stress, increase relaxation, decrease feelings of anxiety and depression, and aid in general wellness<sup>4</sup>.

It dissolves the morbid matters and assist the quwa (faculties) for therapeutic and preventive purpose. There are different forms of dalak (massage). Dalak-e-layyan (gentle massage) is one of them. It is done with oil or without oil slowly with slight pressure by palm and digits and it produces relaxation in muscles and increase ratobat (moisture) in body and induce sleep. The Father of Medicine (Hippocrates) mentioned about dalak that "physician ought to be skilled in numerous things, particularly in rubbing". The use of oil during a specified dalak has a preservative action on the tissue fluids of the massaged organ. Dalak (massage) on head with oil which has munawwim (sedative) property is effective, beneficial and advocated in Malankholiya (depression)<sup>6</sup>.

Dalak is one of the very important regimes among the procedures of Ilaj Bil Tadbeer for neurological and musculoskeletal disorders<sup>7</sup>.

### MECHANISM OF ACTIONS

The mechanism of action of Dalak (Massage) is based on holistic approach of two fundamental concepts i.e.

1. Tanqiya-e-Mawad (Elimination of morbid humour/matter)

2. Imala-e-Mawad (Diversion of humour/morbid matter).

1. Tanqiyae Mawad (Elimination of morbid humour/matter) means the resolution and excretion of morbid humors and excessive fluids from the body, thereby maintaining the normal quality and quantity of four bodily humors<sup>3,8</sup>.

2. Imala-e-Mawad (diversion of morbid matter) acts through diversion of the morbid fluids from the site of affected organ to the site where from it is easily expelled out from the body tissues. It also induces sedation, analgesia and increases blood circulation<sup>9</sup>. Both are actually responsible for the maintenance of normal health.

- In early days of childhood (when start walking in their 3rd year of life). Dalak should be done lightly when they wake up from the sleep in the morning and be given bath<sup>3</sup>.
- In Youngsters, the whole body should be massaged slowly with Roghan-e-Zaitoon Shireen (sweet olive oil) after digestion of meal.
- In elderly persons moderate massage is very effective if done with oils, it may be done twice a day in lean and thin persons.
- In Pregnant Women, massage is strongly recommended to back, abdomen and pubic area, few days before the delivery with Roghan-e-Zanbaq and Roghan-e-Kheeri as it helps in easy passage for foetus at the time of delivery<sup>8</sup>.

### PROCEDURE OF DALAK

Dalak (Massage) is done with hands or by other means. It involves working and acting on the body with gentle pressure by using expertise hands sometimes with fingers, elbows, knees, forearm, feet, or with a massage device. Massage can promote relaxation and well-being of the patient.

### TIMING OF MASSAGE (AWQAT-E-DALAK)

Timing of massage exclusively depends on the type and nature of massage. Principles for massage according to Unani literature are:

- Dalak (Massage) should not be done immediately after taking food.
- Dalak (Massage) should not be done in empty stomach.
- Dalak (Massage) should be done in the morning.
- Dalak (Massage) can also be done in the evening but 3-4 hours after dinner. Timing of massage also differs according to changes in weather.
- Dalak (Massage) should be done at noon; in Mausam-e-Rabi (spring season) and Mausam-e-Kharif (autumn)<sup>10</sup>.
- Dalak (Massage) should be done in the morning; in Mausam-e-Saif (summer season).
- It should be done in afternoon in Mausam-e-Shita (winter season)

### CONTRAINDICATIONS OF DALAK<sup>11,3</sup>

Dalak is not recommended in following conditions.

- Humma (fever)
- Septicaemia
- The organ having any purulent condition.
- Warm-e-Mafasil Haad (Acute Arthritis)
- Warm-e-wareed (phlebitis) & Warm-e-shiryān (Arteritis)
- Qurooh-e-Jildiya (skin ulcers)

### SCIENTIFIC REPORTS

In recent years, many clinical trials (various studies) have been conducted which have proved the effectiveness of Dalk (massage) in various diseases especially in psychological and neurological diseases.

Research has confined the use of massage therapy as an effective tool for pain management without producing adverse reactions that can occur with medication

Some of them are;

- Smith et al. found that massage has a positive psychological effect in improving general mood, decreasing anxiety, stress and depression.
- In a Meta-analysis of 37 RCTs. US department of health concluded a meta-analysis of 17 clinical trials that massage therapy is helpful in reducing depression.
- Falkensteiner et al. revealed that massage therapy is a non-invasive, cost-effective intervention in reduction of somatic signs and symptoms such as pain, anxiety, and depression in severely ill cancer patients<sup>5</sup>.
- A randomised clinical trial conducted in national institute of Unani medicine, Bangalore show the statistically and clinically significant result in patients of hemiplegia<sup>12</sup>.

Depression is serious and very rapidly developing mood disorder in all nations, all communities, high and low (all) socio-economic group, all age groups and all genders. Female are more prone to it. It is a common mental disorder, characterized by persistent sadness and a loss of interest in daily activities that a person normally enjoys, it is also

accompanied by an inability to carry out daily activities for at least two weeks. In addition, there may be a loss of energy, changes in appetite, changes in sleeping pattern, anxiety, reduced concentration, indecisiveness, restlessness, feelings of worthlessness, guilt, hopelessness, thoughts of self-harm and committing suicide<sup>13</sup>.

Depression is a serious mental health concern that will touch most people's life directly or indirectly. It can affect a person's ability to work, affect the relationships, and destroy their quality of life. At its peak, severe depression can lead to suicide<sup>14</sup>.

It is the leading cause of ill health and disability worldwide. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15-29 age group by depression. More than 300 million people living with depression, more than 18% increment in depression is noted between 2005 and 2015<sup>15</sup>.

As per National Mental Health Survey (NMHS) 2015-16 in India, 1 in 20 people over 18 years of age have ever suffered (at least once in their lifetime) from depression amounting to a total of over 45 million persons with depression in 2015<sup>16</sup>.

In Unani system of medicine, depression is not mentioned as disease rather than it is mentioned as a symptom or group of symptoms of Malankholiya (melancholia) in which mental functions of the individual are changed leading to constant grief, fear, and dubious aggression. The patient finds deserted and occupied loneliness<sup>17</sup>. According to Unani scholar Allaama Najeebuddin Samarqandi Malankholiya is a disease in which there is change in feeling, behaviour and mood of patient. At times patient becomes overanxious and his thoughts and thinking process gets disturbed. Person suffering from Malankholiya becomes easily irritable, prefers loneliness and become fearful on usual things<sup>18</sup>.

Allama Najeebuddin Samarqandi in his book stated that when Malankholiya advances its signs and symptoms become severe. Patient become suspicious, doubtful and always thinks about mis-happening or misfortune<sup>18</sup>.

Initial symptoms of Malankholiya are wrong thoughts, fear for no reason, quick arousal of anger, preference for loneliness, palpitation, giddiness, tinnitus<sup>19</sup>.

### CAUSES OF MALANKHOLIYA (Depression)

According to mutaqaddimeen (old Unani physician) the cause of Malankholiya is ghalba-e-ghair tabai sauda (abnormal black bile) but according to mutakhirreen, the actual cause of it, is not known<sup>20,21</sup>.

Yohanna bin Sarafiyoon stated that meaning of Malankholiya is dur and khauf(fear)<sup>20</sup>.

According to Unani scholars there are number of factors responsible for it but Ghair Tabayi Sauda (Abnormal black bile) is the main cause and basis of psychological and psychiatric disorders e.g. anxiety, depression, melancholy etc.<sup>17</sup>.

Following may be strong pre disposing factors for depression:-

Bahut ziyada gham (grif),

Khoof aur fikr (fear)

Aksar bedar rahna (asleep most of the time),

Accumulation of such things which removed mostly from body (Aisi cheez ka ruk jana jo aksar bahti ho) i.e. haiz (menses), bawaseer (Piles), ruaaf (epistaxis), dora se hone wali saudwi qai, etc.<sup>22</sup>.

### OCCURRENCE

Very rare in children (according to Rofas)<sup>22</sup>,

According to sex, all genders (male<female, trans gender),

According to age, children very rare, adult<elder,

Unani physicians of ancient times such as Zakaria Razi, Ibn-e-Sina, N. Samarqandi, M.H. Qarshi, Rabban Tabri and some other great Unani scholars described about Malankholiya in ancient literatures<sup>23, 20, 24</sup>.

and also described the role of Dalak (Massage) with oil in Malankholiya<sup>20, 25, 26</sup>.

Hakeem Kabeeruddin in his book "Biyaz-e-kabir" mentioned that, in malankholiya, always choose those measures first which induce sleep. He also mentioned that dalak (massage) with munawwim (sedative) oil such as roghan kahu, on head is very effective and beneficial in managment of malankholiya as it induces sleep and reduce dryness of brain<sup>20, 6</sup>.

Shaikh Ibn-e-Sina in his book, "Al Qanoon" advised dalak (massage) with oil in Malankholiya. According to Shaikh sleep is most beneficial than other things in Malankholiya. He also stated that there is nothing better than sleep in the treatment of Malankholiya<sup>20</sup>.

The Greek Physician, Hippocrates (460-377 BC) was the first medical man who rejected the idea of demonology and offered a new theory that mental disorders were the results of qualitative/quantitative imbalance of body humors<sup>27</sup>.

He stressed the importance of pleasant surroundings, exercise, proper diet, massage, soothing baths, music and some other methods such as bleeding (Fasd), purging (Istefragh) and mechanical restrains (Amal-e-Kai, Hijamat) in the treatment of mental diseases. Zakariya Razi in his book "Kitabul Mansoori" mentioned that sleep is very effective in Malankholiya and insomnia is very harmful<sup>23</sup>.

In Qarabadeen-e-azam, Azam khan stated that Roghan-e-kahu is Murattib-e-Dimagh (produce wetness in brain), Munawwim (sedative), and massage of it is very effective in Malankholiya<sup>26</sup>. According to Hakeem Ghulam Jilani, dalak(massage) of roghan-e-kahu on head is helpful in Malankholiya as it is murattib-e-dimagh (produce wetness), and dafa-e-bekhawabi (remove insomnia)<sup>28</sup>.

In Khazainul advia, Hakeem M Najmul Ghani states that roghan-e-kahu produce tarteeb-e- dimagh (wetness in brain) and induce sleep which is helpful in Malankholiya by producing wetness<sup>29</sup>. Hakeem Kabiruddin in his book "Makhzanul Mufradat" mentioned that roghane-kahu has munawwim(sedative) property and it induce sleep when applied on head<sup>25</sup>. In Kulliyat-e-advia, Hakeem Kabeeruddin mentioned that massage with oil on head induce sleep<sup>25</sup>.

Hakeem Ghulam Jilani also mentioned in his book, Kitabul Murakkabat, massage of roghan-e-kahu on head relive headache, induce sleep, and also produce tari (wetness) in brain<sup>28</sup>.

Roghan-e-kahu is used in malekhuliya as it induces sleep and wetness in the brain<sup>29</sup>.

In Qarabadin-e-majeedi it is mentioned that massage of roghan-e-kahu on head induce sleep, remove dryness of brain, headache and effective in Malankholiya (depression)<sup>30</sup>.

On the basis of above given evidences we can state that the medicine which has properties of Musakkinat-e-aasab-wa-

dimgh (relaxant of nerves and brain), murattibat-e-dimagh (produce wetness in brain) and munawwim (sedative) are effective and useful in management of Malankholiya.

## CONCLUSION:

Unani System of Medicine is providing effective health care facilities since an ancient time. Dalak is practiced since ancient time. It is very effective in different diseases. It is intended to relax the body and mind, mobilize stiff joints, increases flow of blood and lymph, decreases muscular tension and chronic pain, decreases swelling and inflammation, decreases tension and stress, eliminate the wastes, increases energy flow, improve skin tone. It also decreases pain, elevates mood, induce sleep, decrease headache, improve circulation to massaged part, decrease anxiety and depression etc. Clinical trials show its efficacy in various diseases of different system.

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