



## Importance of *Ghiza* (Diet) in Geriatrics with Special Reference to Unani Medicine

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### ABSTRACT

Role of *Ghiza* (Diet) in health and disease is accepted in Unani system of medicine since thousand years. Hippocrates (BC 460-370) elaborated the importance of *Makul* (diet) for healthy life according to age. This concept said that diet becomes *Badal Ma Tahallul* (wear of tear). It plays an important role in maintaining the harmony of *Akhlat Arba* (four humors). In the old age, one should be careful about schedule and quantity of *Ghiza*. Legend Unani philosophers and physicians had given attention towards its essentiality to save and promote the health of elders. They elaborated types and *Mizaj* (temperament), as well as quantity of *Ghiza* systematically. Unani scholars recommended specific diet in specific seasons, ages and in specific diseases. This review article aims at surveying the classical unani literature to explore the diet and its essentiality in elderly.

**Keywords:** Ghiza; Akhlat Arba; Geriatrics; Health; Unani Medicine

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## INTRODUCTION

Aging is a process of gradual and self-generated change, leading to maturation through puerility, puberty, and young adulthood and then decline through middle and late age while Senescence may be define as the process by which the capability of cells to divide, to grow, and to functions are lost over time, in the last leading to an repugnance with life; it can be said that the process of senescence or aging terminates in death.<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>

There are many theories regarding the cause of aging, and it is believed that a composite interaction between an individual and his or her environment during his life span is an appropriate concept of human ageing. And it can be said that in relation to extraneous variables that affect ageing, nutrition is most important one. Animal studies have shown that life expectancy can be significantly lengthened by restricting food intake. Nutritional factors have been shown to contribute importantly for many diseases that occur in late life.<sup>4,5</sup>

The Unani system of medicine is one of the oldest and well acceptable systems of medicine practiced in different parts of globe. Its main emphasis is on promotion and on prevention of health in all age groups. According to concept of Unani medicine, *Ghiza* (Diet) is key for good health; its proper quantity is responsible for normal functioning of the body and maintains the internal environment. This concept has been given by Unani philosophers and they also said about its digestion and metabolism comprehensively. Arastu (Aristotle) said that life depends upon *Ghiza*, nutritive faculty and *Hararat-e-Gharizia* (innate energy).<sup>6</sup> Good diets are necessary for good health of all ages. Due to deficiency of proper diet chances of disease increase. So we should try to provide proper diet to the *Mashaikh* because it is believed that healthy diet has important influence on longevity.<sup>1,6</sup>

### NUTRITIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF *MASHAIKH* (Elderly)

#### Caloric Needs

Regarding optimum management of nutritional illnesses of *Mashaikh*, a noesisof the nutritional needs of *Mashaikh* and the impact of disease on these needs is essential. For more beneficial management, equilibrium between calorie expenditure and intake is essential. Caloric counterbalance indicates an amount of energy intake that maintains regular body weight. Caloric malnutrition is shown by weight loss while, an excess of calorie intake is indicated by an increase in weight.<sup>7,8</sup>

#### Protein Needs

With an estimate about 0.8 g per kg of body weight is the commended protein uptake for *Mashaikh*. It is advocated that the balanced diet of a *Mashaikh* thought to constitute of 12% to 14% of the entire caloric uptake from different sources of protein.<sup>7,8</sup>

### **Fluid or Water Intake**

*Mashaikh* are at most expectant risk towards dehydration as there is an age-associated diminution in thirst sensation and extravagant fluid loss. Daily prescribed fluid consumption (water) is said to be around 30 millilitres per kg body weight.<sup>7,8</sup>

### **Under nutrition in *Mashaikh***

Under nutrition is prevalent among elders, and is associated with raised risk of morbidity, prolonged hospitalizations, and increased mortality. A number of factors contribute to it.

Changes in taste, problems with oral hygiene, swallowing, dentition, loss of appetite may contribute in lessened food intake. Functional limitations might confine access to food. The shopping and preparation of food is problematic for seniors, and they may merely depend on prepared foods. Despite of it Physical limitations also hamper actual eating process, which may become so time taking that food is no longer remains palatable. *Mashaikh* with memory problems might forget to eat. Financial limitations of senile age groups are also associated with under nutrition.<sup>9</sup>

### **NUTRITIONAL ASSESSMENT OF MASHAIKH**

Nutritional assessment accounts of gathering data suchlike dietetic history, elaborated physical health check, biochemical and anthropometric measuring and any drug-diet interactions. The assessment of *Mashaikh* begins with a detailed nutritional history accompanied by physical health check and biochemical measuring.<sup>7</sup>

### **THE UNANI CONCEPT OF AGING**

Unani philosophers have divided human age into four age groups i.e.<sup>10,11,12,13</sup>

- ***Sin-e-Namu* (GrowingAge)** from birth to 35 years
- ***Sin-e-Shabab* (Maturity)** from 25 to 40-45years
- ***Sin-e-Kahul* (MiddleAge)** from 40 up to 60 years
- ***Sin-e-Shekhukhat* (Senility)** above 60 years

They believed that the *Mizaj* (temperament) of all ages are different and there is change in *Mizaj* from *Sin-e-Namu* to *Sin-e-Shekhukhat*, *HarRatab* (hot-wet) to *BaridRatab* (cold-wet).<sup>10,11,12,13</sup> *Mashaikh* also have Decline in *Hararat e Ghariziya* which ultimately leads to *Nuqsaan e Af'aal e Tabayiyya*,<sup>12</sup> so they should be given diet different from that of young so that the diet

may fulfill their body needs. Because the *Akhlat Arba* which are formed by these *Makul wa Mashrubare* responsible for *Taghzia-e-Aza*.<sup>6</sup>

### **Definition of Ghiza (Diet) in Unani Medicine**

From ancient unani scholar, Father of medicine Hippocrates to the successors, the concept of *Ghiza*(Diet) is the chief issue for maintenance and improvement of health till now. The followers of Unani and Arab system of medicine have given full attention towards the definition, types, *Hazm* (digestion) and *Istehala* (metabolism) of *Ghiza*.

It is mentioned in classical texts that the Food is the substance which enhances the essence of the body but does not alter the quality.<sup>14,15,16,17</sup> or it can be said that food is the substance which after entering the body changes in such a manner, that it becomes incorporated into the body.<sup>18,19</sup>

Eminent Unani scholar Razi had advocated that body needs the food to overcome the continuous dissolution from birth to death.<sup>20</sup>

### **Tadabir-e-Mashaikh (contrivances of Elderly)**

The Arabic word *Tadbeer* means management<sup>21</sup> and literary meaning of *Sheikh* is to become old<sup>22</sup> according to Unani system of medicine the person who exceed the age of sixty years is considered to be in age of *Shiekhukhat*<sup>12</sup>

Legend Unani philosophers like Galen, Abu SahalMasihi, IbnRushd, RabbanTabri, Razi and Ibn Sina<sup>23</sup> described the contrivances in context of diet, bath, sleep, drinks, sexual intercourse, exercise, defecation and micturation.

The aim of *Tadabir-e-Mashaikh* is

- To protect *Ratubat-e-Gharizia* and *Hrarat-e-Gharizia* as long as possible.
- To prevent the conversion of *Mizaj* from *HarRatab* to *BaridYabis*.
- To avoid production of *Ratubat-e-Ghariba*.
- To remove the waste from the body through natural methods and channels.
- To protect body from hazardous extrinsic factors.<sup>24</sup>

### **Ghiza-e-Tadabeer (contrivances of diet)**

Greek-Arab physicians have suggested principles about *Ghiza* of elder and *Mashaikh*; it should be according to their *Mizaj* (temperament).<sup>25</sup>

Unani physicians believed that different types of food should be given to *Mashaikh*,<sup>13,26,27</sup> but the quantity and quality of diet should be according to their digestive capacity. Frequent meal but small in quantity is recommended.<sup>26, 16</sup> Viscous, tenacious and flatulence yielding diet should be

avoided.<sup>26, 16</sup> Beet root and spinach are specially advised.<sup>13,26,27</sup> Regarding non veg, meat of chicken or goat is recommended.<sup>13,26,27</sup>

Unani scholars had also advised that diet should be taken after *Hammam* (bath).<sup>26, 16</sup> Use of little amount of honey, milk, rice and dates along with diet is also recommended. Secretion from the stomach and intestine should be eliminated by laxatives.<sup>13,26,27</sup> Beet root is advised before meal as laxative.<sup>26</sup>

The food items known to eliminate *Ratoobat* from intestine are advised. Milk is recommended for nutrition and *Tarteeb* (moistness).<sup>26</sup> Hot temperament *Murabba* is also recommended. In fruits figs and *AluBukhara* are advisable.<sup>12</sup> Beet root and Barley water are the best diet for *Mashaikh* but it is mentioned in classical texts that one should not enforce the *Tabiyat* for meal.<sup>28</sup> Avoidance of hot condiment, *Moalid Sauda* and *Balgham* diet (Phlegm and black bile yielding diet).<sup>26</sup>

Drinking of water immediately after and during meal should be avoided.<sup>18,6</sup> *Mashaikh* are advised to take meal at the time of hunger only and salty diet should be taken first.<sup>19,23</sup>

For better sleep moist and hot diets are recommended.<sup>26</sup> Sleeping should be avoided on empty stomach as it causes dryness in the body. Diet should be according to their physiology. Unani scholars also recommended the use of moist diet in case of excess dryness in the body.<sup>19,23</sup>

If the digestion of *Mashaikh* is good, diet should be taken in small quantum and identical.<sup>29</sup> Sour diet cause early maturity so should be avoided.<sup>30,31</sup> Innate energy and digestion are weak in *Mashaikh*. In winter, hot and wet diet prescribed. For preservation of health of *Mashaikh* good, nutritive and digestible diet should be given;<sup>13,15,16,32</sup> and property and proportion of diet should be maintained to moderate.<sup>16</sup>

Syrup made of honey is useful as it prevents obstruction and joint pains. Use of garlic and onion is advised.<sup>12</sup> Use of *Haleelah* and *Zanjabeel*.<sup>33</sup> The digestive faculty of old is weak and physical work is also minimal so they should take a less amount of food.<sup>34</sup> *Ghaleez* and delay to digest diet like *Hareesa*, *khushkgosht*, *tanoorki roti*, *Masoorki dal* etc are better to avoided, because they may lead to *Istisqa*(Ascitis)and *Hisat-e-Masana*(Urinary bladder Stone).<sup>13,14</sup> Vegetables like *Kasni*, *Kahu*, *Khabbazi*, *Chuqandar*, *Zanjabeel* may be used. *GaramMurrabah* and fruits like *Injeer*, *Akhrot*, *Badam*, *Angoor*, *Toot*, *Munaqqa* are also useful.<sup>12,13,14</sup>

### Prescribed Dietary supplement

The dietary food supplements which are recommended by Unani scholars are listed here with references of classic Unani text.

Food supplement	Reference
Honey	12,13,26,27
Milk	13,26,27
Meat of chicken and lamb	13,26,27
Olive oil	26
Small size fish	26

### Fruits and dry fruits

Name	Reference
Muskmelons	34
Grapes	12,13,14 ,34
<i>Haleelah</i>	33
Wal Nut	12,13,14
Almond	12,13,14
Mulbery	12,13,14
Large Raising ( <i>Vitis</i> )	12,13,14
Prunus	33
Dates	13,26,27, 33

### Vegetables and Cereals

Name	Reference
Beet root	13,26,27,28
Spinach	13,26,27
Rice	13,26,27
Barley	28
Garlic	12
Onion	12
Ginger	12,13,14
Pistacia Galls ( <i>Kasni</i> )	12,13,14
The Lettuce ( <i>Kahu</i> )	12,13,14
Common Mallow	12,13,14
Black pepper	12

## CONCLUSION

The dietary requirements of *Mashaikh* are different from adults or young, *Mashaikh* are more prone to under-nutrition due to one or different reasons, unani scholars had elaborately discussed the type, amount, timings of diet to be taken by aged; the knowledge of Unani medicine may be used for a healthy and prolonged life of *Mashaikh*.

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