

EFFECT OF HIJAMA *BIL SHART* (WET CUPPING) AND COMPOUND UNANI FORMULATION IN THE MANAGEMENT OF *WAJA'AL-ZAHR* (LOW BACK PAIN)- A CASE STUDY

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Article Received on 26/05/2025

Article Revised on 17/06/2025

Article Accepted on 08/07/2025

ABSTRACT

Low back pain is the most common and challenging circumstance in healthcare. LBP, a disease that costs about \$135 billion a year, is the leading cause of disability and the sixth largest contributor to global health burden. Data on LBP prevalence and risk factors in developing countries like India are rare. A specific kind of Unani rigid treatment involves cupping therapy. There is one particular treatment that can provide overall assistance. Therefore, along with a prescribed compound Unani formulation, which has long been used as a good analgesic in the Unani system of medicine, wet cupping is a successful, safe, practical, and affordable treatment plan for individuals with low back pain.

INTRODUCTION

Low back pain (LBP) is an extremely debilitating medical condition that is characterized by pain and discomfort that is localized above the inferior gluteal folds and below the costal margins, with or without leg pain.^[1] The posterior area of the body, which stretched from the lower edge of the twelfth ribs to the gluteal creases^[2], was referred to as the "low back." According to the National Center of Health Statistics, the prevalence of low back pain (LBP) is 23% for people ages 18 to 44 and 35% in those aged 45 to 65. LBP has been recognized as a health, social, and economic burden in Western nations.^[3] LBP is the most common musculoskeletal condition, well-documented, and common.^[1]

In the Unani system of medicine, the perception of incongruity in the body caused by sudden changes in temperament, or *Sue-Mizaj-Mukhtalif* (variable impaired temperament) and *Tafarruq-i-Ittiṣal* (loss of continuity), is known as *Waja* (pain).^[4,5]

Ibn-i Sina defined "Waja" as one of the unnatural (abnormal) conditions that affect the body, and that is a 'feeling of incongruity'.^[6,7]

Waja'al-zahr, also known as *Waja' al-Khasira*, *Kamar ka dard*, *Darde Pushi*^[8], Low back pain (LBP), lumbago, is a common condition that affects the muscles, nerves, and bones of the back, which are situated between the lower fold of the buttocks and the lower edge of the

ribcage. From a slight aching to a sharp stabbing feeling, pain can vary.^[9] Low back pain or *Waja'al-zahr* can be either superficial or profound. Cold-impaired temperament, phlegm predominance, physical exertion, improper sitting posture, increased sexual activity, weak kidneys, premenstrual pain, labor pain, portal vein and aortic congestion, and more can all contribute to it.^[10]

There are three kinds of low back pain: acute (lasting less than six weeks), sub-chronic (lasting six to twelve weeks), and chronic (lasting more than twelve weeks).^[9]

Several Unani scholars define *Waja'al-zahr* (low back pain) as follow.^[4] *Waja'al-zahr* is derived from both internal and external muscles, as well as ligaments surrounding the lumbar and lumbosacral region, because of *Su-i-Mizaj*, according to *Al-Qanoon*, *Ibn-i-Sina*. The buildup of raw phlegm and excess *buroodat* (*Balgham-i-kham*) results in this fasaad in mizaj. Additionally, ghaleez riyah accumulation in the lumbar and lumbosacral regions may be causing it (Ibn Sina, 2007).^[11]

Zakaria Razi stated that the *hazm-i-kabdi* and *hazm-i-urooqi* are the primary causes of *Waja' al-Mafasi*. As a result, the abnormal chyme (*Rutubat e mukhatia*) produces abnormal humours, especially raw phlegm, which accumulates in the joints and causes pain, swelling, and tenderness. Therefore, it is determined that the accumulation of phlegm in and around the lumbosacral region is the only cause of pain and

inflammation, whereas the derangement in *hazm-i-kabdi* and *urooqi* is the primary cause of *Waja'al-zahr* (Razi, 1997).^[11]

According to *Taj-ul-Hikmat*, LBP is characterized as a pain that is felt centrally or throughout the lower back and interferes with day-to-day activities.^[4]

Akbar Arzani defined the LBP as *Dard-e Pusht* in *Tibb-e-Akbar* and said that *Sue-Mizaj Barid Sada of Pusht*.^[4] was responsible for it.

Ibn-i-Hubal Baghdadi described LBP in *Mukhtarat-fit-Tibb* as *Pahlu ka dard*, which is brought on by *Sue-Mizaj-i-Haar*, *Kasrat-i-jama*, and kidney involvement.^[4]

Unani physicians used a variety of treatment methods, such as diet, medication, and regimens, to manage pain. *Waja'al-zahr*, a form of *Waja' al-Mafasil*, is the term used to describe low back pain. It is treated using *Amraz-i-Mafasil's* treatment regimen, which includes medication, diet, and surgery. According to Baig and Quamri (2015), specific treatment methods for low back pain include *Takmeed* (Fomentation), *Zimad* (paste), *Tila* (liniment) of *Roghaniyat* (oils), *Dalk* (massage), *Hijama bila Shart* (dry cupping), *Hijama-bil-Shart* (wet cupping), *Fasd* (venesection), etc.^[11]

Low back pain (*Waja'al-zahr*) is one of the most common musculoskeletal disorders resulting in discomfort and disability globally. To treat such conditions, Unani medicine, a traditional healthcare system, provides a number of regimental therapies, such as cupping (*Hijama*), which includes wet cupping (*Hijama-bil-shart*) and dry cupping (*Hijama-bila-shart*).^[12] Jalinoos claims that wearing a hijama can help resolve *Ghaleez Khilt*.^[13]

The imbalance of humors, which builds up in particular regions, is the underlying cause of all diseases. By using *Hijama-bil-Shart*, we simply remove these morbid items from the impacted area.^[9]

Wet cupping, also known as *Hijama-bil-Shart*, is an effective therapeutic technique for treating a number of painful conditions.^[14] *Hijama*, that's means to "to suck" in Arabic, is an extensive, traditional healing method that has been used both historically and nowadays. There is growing evidence that hijama may help treat pain-related conditions and lifestyle issues. Early Egyptian and Chinese medical practices have documented their use.^[15] This regimen may be the best option for treating mild backaches because of its many advantages and low risk of injury. By creating superficial skin scarification to open the skin barrier and creating a pressure gradient and traction force across the skin and underlying capillaries to drain interstitial fluids^[14], a minor surgical excretory procedure called "wet cupping" increases blood clearance and waste excretion through the skin. It is a form of physical therapy that lowers pain, increases

subcutaneous blood flow, and activates the autonomic nervous system.^[11] Sites for cupping therapy are chosen based on the condition being treated. The most frequently applied areas are the back, chest, abdomen, buttocks, and legs. Cupping can also be used to treat other areas, like the face.^[16]

Most parts of the world, in particular developing nations, have long relied on traditional medicine to treat a variety of ailments, and plants have been used for centuries.^[17]

Waja' al-Khasira, a *Balghami amraz* that arises from the body's the preponderance of *Balgham* or *Buroodat*, is treated by a number of single medications and compound formulations described by USM. Thus, medications containing the compound Unani formulation *Habb-i-Sūranjān* in *haar yabis mizaj* and *Mājoon Ushbā*, which contains *Sūranjān*, *Hānzal*, *Ghāriqoon*, *Tūrbud*, *Mūqil*, etc., were chosen.^[18]

The Unani system of medicine has for centuries used *Habb-i-Sūranjān*, a significant compound preparation, as an effective analgesic. The National Formulary of Unani Medicine (NFUM) Part 1 and *Qarabadeen Majeedi*^[19] both mention the pharmacopoeial formulation of the compound *Habb-i-Sūranjān*. The components of *Habb-i-Sūranjān* are highly effective in managing various forms of *Waja' al-Mafasil*.

Cassia angustifolia, *Pterocarpus santalinus*, *Santalum album*, *Smilax china*, *Rosa damascena*, *Cinnamomum zeylanicum*, *Piper cubaba*, *Borage officinalis*, *Cuscuta reflexa*, *Polypodium vulgare*, *Smilax officinalis*, *Terminalia belerica*, *Nardostachys jatamansi*, *Terminalia chebula*, and *Qand safaid*. There are some examples of polyherbal Unani compounds.

In the Unani system of medicine, it is frequently used to treat inflammatory conditions without causing any adverse effects.^[20]

CASE REPORT

On April 20, 2025, a 45-year-old man who had been complaining of lower back pain for four months came to the Clinical Research Unit (Unani), Goa, Outpatient Department (OPD). A systemic and physical examination was conducted. Patient demographics were documented, including age, sex, marital status, and religion. He did not have a history of hypertension, diabetes, or trauma. His temperature was 98.70 F, his pulse rate was 74 beats per minute, his respiratory rate was 20 beats per minute, and his blood pressure was 140/80 mmHg. His ECG and lumbosacral spine X-ray were both normal. Table 1 shows the patient's investigations before the start of treatment.

Table No. 1: Investigations before Wet cupping.

Investigations	Case
Hb (gm%)	14.7g/dL
HbA1C	4.6%
ESR	09mm/Hour

Hb: Hemoglobin, HbA1C: Glycosylated hemoglobin, ESR: Erythrocyte sedimentation rate.

The procedure of wet cupping, or Hijāma-bil-Shart:

The required materials, such as a surgical blade number 11, a kidney tray, and disposable cups, were prepared before the procedure began. Before the procedure, blood pressure, respiration, temperature, and pulse were recorded. After ensuring the patient was comfortable in the prone position on the bed, wet cupping began over the lumbo-sacral region. The lower back was cleaned with betadine solution, and a surgical blade was used to scratch the skin in the designated area. Once more, cups were used for full oozing following pricking.

The observation was intended to ensure that blood was properly oozing in the lower back cups. The cups were removed after the blood had coagulated, and a piece of sterile gauze was used to wipe away any impure blood before applying an antiseptic solution bandage. Patients were instructed to rest for at least ten minutes following the procedure. On days 0, 7, 14, and 28, back pain was measured using the VAS.

Site of cupping: As seen in Figure No. 1, the cupping site is the lumbosacral region.

Size of cups: Cups measure 5.2 cm (2 pieces).

Number of cups: Two cups were used.

Number of sittings: There are four settings once weekly

for four weeks.

Study period: 28 days.

**Figure No. 1: Application of cups in the lumbosacral region.****Table No. 2: Effect of wet cupping on VAS.**

VAS	Score
0 th day	8
7 th day	6
14 th day	4
28 th day	2

Intervention and follow up: According to references found in classical Unani literature and Unani Pharmacopeial formulation, Habb-i-Sūranjān 2 tablets twice a day after meals and Mājnoon Ushbā 10g twice a day after meals with water orally for 28th days.

Table No. 3: Ingredients of Habb-i-Sūranjān.^[18]

Drug	Scientific name	Dose (g)
Sūranjān	<i>Colchicum autumnale</i>	1 part
Post-ī-hālela zard	<i>Terminalia chebula</i>	1 part
Shāhm-e-hānzal	<i>Citrullus colocynthis</i> Schard	1 part
Mūqīl	<i>Commiphora mukul</i>	1 part
Tūrbud	<i>Operculina turpethum</i>	1 part

Table No. 4: Ingredients of Mājnoon Ushbā.^[18]

Drug	Scientific name	Dose (g)
Sāna makki	<i>Cassia angustifolia</i>	80
Sāndal sūrkḥ	<i>Pterocarpus santalinus</i>	60
Sāndal sāfāid	<i>Santalum album</i>	60
Chobchīni	<i>Smilax china</i>	60
Gule Sūrkḥ	<i>Rosa damascena</i>	60
Dārchini	<i>Cinnamomum zeylanicum</i>	40
Kabāb chini	<i>Piper cubeba</i>	40
Gāozubān	<i>Borago officinalis</i>	40
Aftūmoon	<i>Cuscuta reflexa</i>	40
Bisfāij	<i>Polypodium vulgare</i>	40
Ushbā	<i>Smilax officinalis</i>	40
Post balelā	<i>Terminalia belerica</i>	20

Sumbūluttēb	<i>Nardostachys jatamansi</i>	20
Hālela siyāh	<i>Terminalia chebula</i>	15
Post-ī-hālela zard	<i>Terminalia chebula</i>	10
Qānd sāfaid	White sugar	2 k

DISCUSSION

Cupping therapy is a long-standing complementary and traditional medical technique. Its potential advantages in treating pain-related illnesses have recently come to light. According to the case series' findings, wet cupping offers a chance to ease low back pain. In our case series, we followed up with patients who had lower back pain four months. Because Tanqiya-i-Mawād removes the morbid matter from the affected site, Hijāma bil Shart can work wonders in such situations. As per Jālinus, Hijāma becomes extremely useful when the humours become extremely thickened in the affected joint. It facilitates the detoxification of Akhlāt-i-fāsida from the body by opening the skin's pores, improving blood circulation, supplying fresh blood to the affected area, and strengthening the body's elimination system. It extracts and removes the unbalanced attributes, such as *Hār* (heat), *Bārid* (cold), *Ratab* (moistness), *Yābis* (dryness).

Natural plant products are an essential component of the Unani medical system. A variety of illnesses are being treated with unani polyherbal formulations (UPFs). In addition to *Habb-ī-Sūranjān*, a compound Unani formulation that has been used for centuries as an effective analgesic for all forms of *Waja' al-Mafasil* in the Unani medical system. *Mushil-i-Balgham*, *Mushil-i-Safra*, *Mushil-i-Sawda'*, *Mohallil-i-Waram*, *Musakkin-i-Alam*, *Dafa-i-Niqris*, *Muqawwi-i-Asaab*, *Munawwim*, and *Musaffi-i-Dam* are just a few of the pharmacological actions that are well-known.

A study by Akhtar *et al.*, the analgesic properties of *T. chebula*, *Colchicum*, and *Aloe* are primarily responsible for the clinical improvements of *Habb-ī-Sūranjān*. In addition to reducing swelling and tenderness, *Colchicum*'s anti-inflammatory properties are also important for joint pain and painful joint movement.

This polyherbal formulation is used to treat inflammatory disorders, and some of its ingredients have been described for their anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties.

In Mājoon Ushbā-treated arthritic rats compared to arthritic control rats, Ganesan *et al.* demonstrated that the inflammatory immune response was significantly inhibited, as evidenced by a decrease in paw swelling and histopathological and radiological abnormalities.

Informed consent: Before the intervention began, the patient's informed consent was obtained, and they expressed their willingness to participate in the study.

CONCLUSION

The most common musculoskeletal condition was low back pain. because there is not much evidence to support conventional treatments for low back pain. Low back pain seems to respond well to cupping therapy. When it comes to low back pain, cupping therapy is recommended. To relieve the body's local congestion, it encourages bleeding through the tiny, superficial vessels found in the muscles (Razi, 1991). This case highlights the potential of wet cupping as a safe and effective treatment for low back pain. No negative side effects were reported, and unani formulations were well tolerated.

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