

THE VALUE OF HIJAMA (CUPPING) AS A THERAPY IN UNANI SYSTEM OF MEDICINE – WITH REFERENCE TO PROPHETIC MEDICINEDr. Mohd Saqlain^{1*}, Ferasat Ali² and Aliya Parveen³^{1,2}Department of Kulliyat, Faculty of Unani Medicine, AMU, Aligarh.³Department of Community Medicine, RUMCH & RC, Jaipur.***Corresponding Author: Dr. Mohd Saqlain**

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ABSTRACT

Hijama is a traditional concept thought to help in medical conditions and has become increasingly more popular in certain environments. We present a review on *Hijama* with its potential applications in Unani system of medicine with a focus on the Islamic perspective of this technique.

KEYWORDS: Hijama, Islamic perspective.**INTRODUCTION**

The word *Hijama* is used in Unani System of Medicine for cupping. It is the application of suction cups to the skin to draw out stagnant, congested blood and Vital Force, as well as other stagnant or morbid humors. Usually, the cups are made of glass, but they can also be made of bamboo, bone, horn or metal. The classical method for creating suction in the cup is to use fire to consume the air within it. But more recently, squeezable cups with a rubber top, or cups drained by suction pumps are also used.

Hijama (Cupping) may be non invasive or invasive. *Hijama bila shurt* (Non invasive cupping) is simply placing the suction cups on the skin. *Hijama bil shurt* (Invasive cupping), or Scarification and Cupping, is a form of bloodletting that involves first making an incision on the skin, then applying the suction cups to suck out small amounts of blood. *Hijama* has become increasingly available to the public in the recent years. "*Hijama* - therapy is an ancient medical treatment that relies upon creating a local suction to mobilise blood flow in order to promote healing".^[1] It is still practiced in rural areas as it was practiced thousands of years ago, but recently has been acknowledged in the western society. The most interesting fact is that it was recommended by the prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of God be upon him (PBUH)) many thousand years ago, however, the western countries were unaware of its effects until recently.^[2]

Concept of cupping in Unani system of medicine

Unani system of Medicine is the traditional, indigenous holistic healing system of Western civilization. It was first codified and systematized by the Greek philosopher

Physician Hippocrates in the 4th century B.C.E. and subsequently developed and expanded by other physicians, most notably Galen, Dioscorides and Avicenna.

The term Unani system Medicine or Unani Tibb is used in Islamic world, it is also known as Greek Medicine. "Unani" is the Arabic word for "Ionian", or Greek.

Greek Medicine was the original source and inspiration for many other natural, holistic and alternative medical systems that developed in Europe and the United States in the 18th and 19th centuries, which include homeopathy, naturopathy and chiropractic. The exemplary life and teachings of its founder, Hippocrates has provided a shining source of inspiration to natural healers down through the ages.^[3] Unani System of Medicine founded by Hippocrates (460-377 BC) based on the concept of balancing body humours. Their misbalance causes diseases, whereas restoration of the balance leads to health. Unani medicine involves four elements-earth, air, water and fire; four natures-cold, hot, wet and dry, and four humours- blood or sanguineous humor (which is hot & wet), phlegm (cold & wet), yellow bile or choler (hot & dry), and black bile or melancholer (cold & dry). This system of medicine strives to find the best possible ways by which a person can lead a healthy life with least sickness. It describes 6 essential factors for maintaining health and preventing diseases called *Asbab-e-Sittah-e-Zaruriah*, which includes-air, food & drinks, bodily movement & repose, psychic movement & repose, sleep & wakefulness, and evacuation & retention. All diseases can be treated on by pharmacotherapy (*Ilaj-bid-dawa*), in which drugs of animal, mineral or plant origin are used in crude form,

either as a single drug or in compound form; regimental therapy (*Ilaj-bil-tadbir*) in which Unani physicians have described various methods like cupping (*Hijama*), massage (*Dalak*), exercise (*Riyazat*), Turkishbath (*Hammam*), venesection (*Fasd*), leeching (*Taleeque*), and cauterization (*Aml-e-Kai*). It also includes dietotherapy (*Ilaj-bil-ghiza*) in which alteration in the quantity and quality of the diet is done, depending on the nature of the disease and surgery (*Ilaj-bil-yad*) if unavoidable. Unani physicians have also laid emphasis on *tabiyat*, *Tabi'at* as abstracted from renowned ancient Unani philosophers may be defined as that it is the supreme planner of the body (*Muddabir-e-Badan*) that governs its bio-chemical process and physiological functions accordingly and thus maintains homeostasis (equable temperament). Hence *Tabi'at* maintains the *Etadal al- Mizaj* (Homeostasis) through thousands of controlling systems and mechanism for the preservation of individual as well as his species, which operate under the *Quwa Tabiyah*, *Quwa Haiwaniyah* and *Quwa Nafsaniyah*.^[4]

Hijama (cupping) from islamic perspective



The act of performing *Hijama* is a Sunnah of the *Prophet Muhammad* صل الله عليه وسلم and it is extensively reported in a wide collection of authentic ahadith. Its practice is strongly recommended and emphasized in a number of narrations. The practice of *Hijama* forms an integral part of Islamic Prophetic Medicine.

Hijama was a common practice of the *Prophet Muhammad* صل الله عليه وسلم and his companions for the treatment of a range of ailments as well as a form of body maintenance and health promotion.

Al-Hijama is an Arabic word for cupping which is derived from the word '*hajm*' which means 'to suck'. In the Muslim holy book, the Quran, it states: "*And whatsoever the messenger gives you, take it. And whatsoever he forbids, abstain*"... [Qur'an].^[4] This verse tells the Muslims that they should follow the ways of the prophet and the prophet Mohammed (PBUH) recommended cupping and advised people to use it. Narrated Ibn 'Abbas: (The Prophet (PBUH) said), "*Healing is in three things: A gulp of honey, cupping, and branding with fire (cauterizing). But I forbid my followers to use (cauterization) branding with fire*" (Sahih Al-Bukhari).^[5] He also said "*The best medicine with which you treat yourselves is cupping, or it is one of the best of your medicines*" or "*the best treatment you can use is cupping.*" The prophet (PBUH) has mentioned

cupping in approximately 28 holy instructions (ahadith).^[5] The most striking of all is the fact that the sayings of the great prophet Mohammad (PBUH) who did not have any scientific background and was illiterate are in complete agreement with modern scientific data.

According to the 'Sunnah' (The ways of the prophet) the best days to perform cupping are the 17th, 19th and 21st of the Islamic month which fall on a Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. Anas bin Malik ra (May God be pleased with them) stated: '*the Prophet (PBUH) used the treatment of cupping on both sides of his blessed head and shoulders and generally this treatment was done on the 17th, 19th and 21st of the Islamic lunar month.*' (Cited from Tirmidhi by simply Hijama) Ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger (saw) said, "*Hijama on an empty stomach is best. In it is a cure and a Blessing. It improves the intellect and the memory. So use Hijama with the Blessing of Allah on Thursday. Keep away from Hijama on Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday to be safe. Perform Hijama on Monday and Tuesday for it is the day that Allah (swt) saved Ayub from the trial. He was inflicted with the trial on Wednesday. You will not find leprosy except (by having Hijama) on Wednesday or Wednesday night.*" [Sahih Sunan ibn Maaajah (3487).

Importance of Hijama in the Divine Guidance

Instead of putting our words in favor of cupping, we must see the following ahadith that are enough to explain the importance of *Hijama*.

"Indeed in Hijama (cupping) there is a cure". – Saheeh Muslim.

"Indeed, the best of remedies you have is Hijama (cupping)". – Saheeh Al Bukhari.

"Hijama is the most helpful procedure for human beings to cure themselves".– Saheeh Al Bukhari and Saheel Muslim.

The importance of Hijama in the divine guidance can further be stressed by the following words which were related to the Prophet SAW on the night of Israa (ascension to the heaven) by angles: "O Mohammed, order your ummah (people) with Hijama (cupping)".– Saheeh, Sunan Tirmidhi.

The Prophet Muhammad صل الله عليه وسلم is reported to have had *Hijama* performed on his head for migraine [Bukhari], on his foot after a sprain [Ibn Majah], on his neck [Abu Dawud], on his hip for hip pain [Abu Dawud] and between his shoulders for detoxification [Ahmed].

Abdullah ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet صل الله عليه وسلم said: "**I did not pass by an angel from the angels on the night journey except that they all said to me: Upon you is cupping (Hijama), O Muhammad.**" [Saheeh, Sunan ibn Majah].

“The best medicine with which you treat yourselves is cupping, or it is one of the best of your medicines.” Or “The treatment you can use is cupping.” [Bukhari: 5371].

“Cupping is the most helpful procedure for human beings to cure themselves.” [Bukhari and Muslim].

Abu Hurairah (*may Allah be pleased with him*) reported that the Messenger *صل الله عليه وسلم* said, “If there was something excellent to be used as a remedy then it is cupping (*Hijama*).” [Sunan Abu Dawud, Sunan ibn majah].

Hijamah (cupping) in Unani system of medicine

Classification of Hijama(cupping)

Depending upon the method of application of *Hijama* it is classified into two types as:

- 1- *Hijama-bila-shurt* (Non invasive cupping)
- 2- *Hijama-bil-shurt* (Invasive cupping or wet cupping)^[7,8,9,10]

Non invasive cupping is characterized by application of cups without making an incision (*pachne*)



Mahajjama Nari Mahajjama Ghayr Nari.

Two different types of *Hijama-bil-shurt* were also described by some Unani scholars as:

- 1- *Zaroori Hijama* (Essential cupping)
- 2- *Ikhtiyari Hijama* (voluntary cupping)^[9,12]

Essential cupping is indicated to treat the specific ailments, described by eminent Unani scholars.

For voluntary cupping induction there are ten specific rules as:

- a- It should be done in mid of *Qamri* (Moon) month.

Invasive cupping is indicated after making an incision on the applicable area.



Both of these are further classified into two types which is also based on the method of application:-

- (A) *Mahajjama Nari* (cupping with fire)
- (B) *Mahajjama Ghayr Nari* (cupping without fire)^[7,11,12,10]

When during application of cups *Mahajjama* any inflammable things is placed in the cup to produce fire to create negative pressure, which helps to get attach it with the surface of applicable area, known as *Mahajjama Nari*.

In *Mahajjama Ghayr Nari* fire does not produce to create the negative pressure, but it is created by any other method (Mostly by vacume pressure pumps).^[7,8,11,9,12,13,10]



- b- The best time in the day for voluntary cupping is just before evening as it is most moderate time of the day.
- c- It should be done in summer weather because due to heat the harmful matter is in more dilute form.
- d- It should be done in such type of persons who have more dilute blood.
- e- It should be advised digestive and anti suppurative syrup before the induction of voluntary cupping.
- f- It should not be done in loose and weak persons.

- g- It is contraindicated in less than two and more than sixty years of age.
- h- It should not be done just after *hammam* bath, except such type of persons who have thick blood.
- i- It is advised that cupping should not be done after heavy work load or heavy exercise.^[9,12]

Methods of application of cups (*mahajjama*)

I- *Hijama-bila-shurt*(Non-Invasive-Cupping):- In ancient period the application of *Mahajjama* or cups on the specific areas was achieved by holding a small flame inside the cup, to create a vacuum pressure, the cups were then placed quickly on the skin over the area to be treated and left place for ten to fifteen minutes. The strength of vacuum pressure was modulated by the size of the flame, the time of to the flame and how quickly the cup was placed on the affected area. Safety precaution are needed when we are using the naked flame and glass around the patients. John Brazier principal of the college of the oriental body balance base in lythem St. Annes has described the following rules for safety precautions during induction of *Mahajjama-nari* as:

- Parts preparation should be done prior to application of *Mahajjama-nari*.
- Cups size should be selected according to the site of cupping.
- Cups (*Mahajjama*) should be clean and should not have any chips and cracks.
- Before induction of *Mahajjama-nari* the temperature of the cup edge should be checked properly, by applying it on your own arm.
- For appropriate vacuum strength, it should be wait up to correct size of flame.^[8,7]

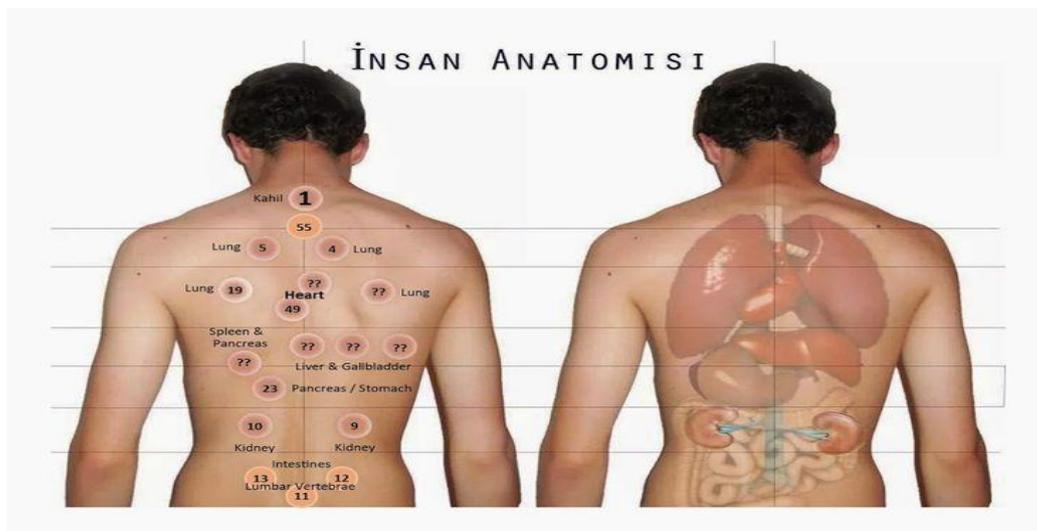
Now a days *Mahajjama-nari* is replaced by vacuum pump-cups which can be used much easily by simply putting the cup on the selected site and then attach a pump to the nipple of the cup to evacuate the air from the cup, due to which a negative pressure is developed. It is easy to adjust the amount of suction required, with the help of these pumps, by releasing the nipple lock. The strong vacuum created by the cupping can leave the patient with minor bruises which usually disappear in few days. Occasionally moving cups are applied after lubricating the skin with thin layer of oil which allows the cups to slide over skin, applying suction to a larger area, it is known as massage cupping.^[15]

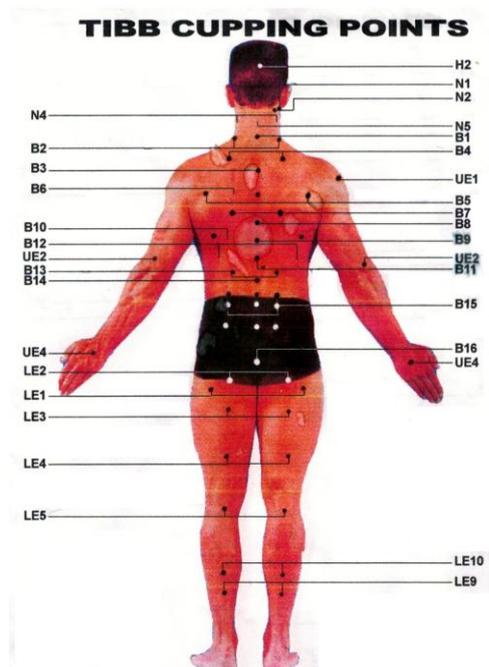
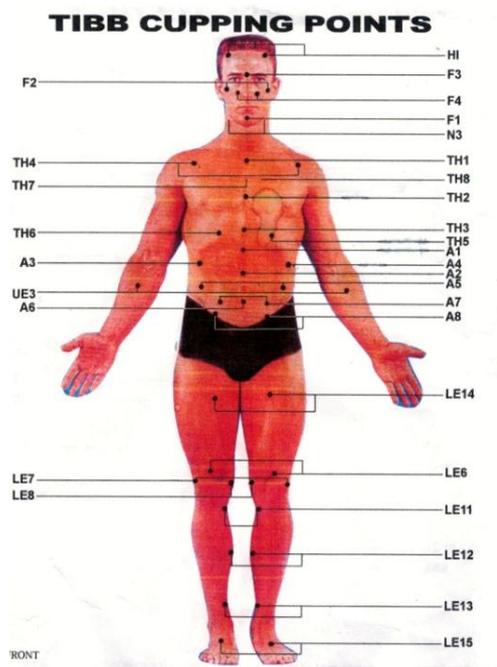
II. *Hijamah-bil-shurt* (Invasive cupping)

For induction of invasive cupping firstly cups are placed on the affected area simply, just like non Invasive cupping and create moderate vacuum pressure for a relatively short duration. This method should be done repeatedly until the affected area should be reddish and swollen. Then *shurt*(incision) is done carefully, if the patient is weak only one *shurt* is sufficient but it should be wider and deeper. If blood is thick(concentrated),then *shurt* is done for two times one for dilute blood flow and other for concentrated blood flow. If blood has some impurities then one more *shurt* may be done to clarify it. So it is clear that if less amount of bleeding is needed than only one *shurt* is sufficient while in case of heavy bleeding requirement many incision may be given.

Sites for *Hijama*(cupping)

Different eminent *Unani* Scholar have described following sites for induction of *Hijama*.





- (1) **Hijama Naqrah:-** It means cupping at the back or neck, which is beneficial in various ophthalmic and nervous problems.
- (2) **Hijama Kawahil:-** when cupping is done in between the both shoulder posterior. It is done in case of palpitation neck pain and shoulder joint pain etc.^[16]
- (3) **Hijama Akhdayn:-** It is done in any of the two *Akhda*(right and left carotid) or lateral side of the neck. It is effected in *amraz-e-raas*(the disease of the head) for eg. Disease of ear, nose, throat, teeth etc. And the disease of other vital organs also.^[13]
- (4) **Hijama Qamahduwa and yafookh:-** *Hijama-e-Qamahduwa* is done on the protuberance behind the ear and the *Hijama-e-yafookh* is done on middle and crown of the head. According to some Unani physicians these types of *Hijama* is beneficial in case of confusion, anxiety and migraine while some other says it is beneficial for eye disease.^[13]
- (5) **Hijama-Tahtul-Zaqan:-** It is done on the chin and it cure the recurrent attack of stomatitis, it is also beneficial in other problems of gums and cheeks.^[17]
- (6) **Hijama-Qutun:-** It is done on the folds of thighs(lions). It is effective in gout,hemorrhoids, elephantiasis, urinary bladder disease etc.^[18]
- (7) **Hijama Fakhzayn:-** It is done on the thighs. Cupping on the anterior aspect of thighs is beneficial for the orchitis and lower limb abscess, while cupping on the posterior aspect of thigh is beneficial in coxalgia,hemorrhoids and anal fissure etc.^[13]
- (8) **Hijama Tahtul Rakkain:-** When *Hijama* is done at the lower aspect of the knee joint. It is beneficial in knee joint pain which is due to accumulation of noxious matter (*Akhlate faidah*), it is also beneficial in abscess and chronic ulcers of lower limbs.^[13]
- (9) **Hijama Ka`abayn:-** It is done on ankle joints and it is beneficial in case of sciatica, gout & early menopause etc.^[13]
- (10) **Hijama Pistaan:-** Cupping is done on breast which is effective in epistaxis and menstrual problems.
- (11) **Hijama Warikayn:-** Means Cupping on hips or buttocks. It is beneficial in the management of piles, proctitis, haematuria, epistaxis, burning micturition, and other disease of kidney and urinary bladder.^[13]
- (12) **Hijama-Maq`ad:-** Means cupping on the anal area, which is effective in case of anal-fistula.^[13]
- (13) **Hijama-Rusuq:-** It is done on wrist joints and is much beneficial in scabies, itching, & ulceration of hands.^[13]
- (14) **Hijama-Uzn:-** When cupping is done on tragus of ear. It is beneficial in heaviness and pain in eyelids.^[13]
- (15) **Hijama-Manakib:-** It means cupping on shoulders joint. Cupping on right shoulder is beneficial in liver diseases and on left shoulders in spleen diseases.

Basic principles of cupping (*Hijama*)

Rabban Tabri & Abul Sahal Maseehi have described three ways for voluntary bleeding

- 1- Cupping for subcutaneous bleeding.
- 2- Leeching for relatively deep bleeding and
- 3- Venesection for bleeding from inner most areas.^[12,19]

So *Hijama* (cupping) is indicated in such type of ailments which can be managed by superficial or subcutaneous bleeding. There are some other principles of cupping which should be keep in our mind as:^[16,11,12]

- *Hijama* should be done after two years of age and up to sixty years of age only.
- *Hijama Naqrah* should be done after completion of *istifragh* of whole body.
- *Hijama Kawahil* should be done slightly above the exact site because if it is done in lower side it results in weakness of stomach and heart.

- It should be indicated that patient should take excess amount of water on the day of cupping.
- In *Balghami* and *Saudavi* temperaments *Tiryaqe Farooq* or *Dawa-ul-Musk* or any other hotter drug should be used before the induction of cupping to liquefy the blood.
- *Muqavvi-maida* drugs (digestive tonic) should be given to the patients prior to the induction of cupping for eg. *Sharbat-e-anar*, *Sharbat-e-Bahi* etc. may be used.
- *Hijama* should be done specially in such type of patients who have relatively dilute blood. If cupping is required in such type of patients who have more concentrated blood than it should be done after *hammam* bath.
- If there is excessive accumulation of noxious matter than *Hijama* should be induced after induction of venesection.
- In Non Invasive cupping induction, if accumulated noxious matter is more concentrated then heavy massage should be done prior to cupping induction.
- If invasive cupping is needed then incision should be made according to quantity & thickness of accumulated matter, if it is relatively thicker then incision should be made deeply.^[16,11,12]

Contraindications of cupping

There are following contraindications of *Hijama* which are described by various eminent scholars of Unani System of medicine:

- *Hijama* is contraindicated before two years and after 60 years of age.
- Just after *hammam* bath except of such type of patients where blood is more thick, cupping is contraindicated.
- In much obese patient.
- In excessive accumulation of noxious matter.
- In much weak and loose body patients.
- Just after sexual intercourse and heavy exercise.^[16,11,12]

Precautions after cupping induction

- Eggs should not be taken after induction of cupping.
- Heavy meal intake is contraindicated just after cupping.
- If patient is weak and of hot temperament then after *Hijama* such type of drug should be used which empower the vital organs. For eg. *Tiryaq-e-Farooq*, *Dawa-ul-musk* etc.
- If the patient is of cold temperament then chicken curry or pigeon curry should be advised after induction of cupping.
- It is better to use sour things to eat after induction of cupping.
- If patient is of choleric temperament then he should be advised to take *arq-e-gulab*, *arq-e-kasni* and *sharbat-e-anar* etc.
- *Hammam* should be advised to the patient after 2 hours of invasive cupping.^[7,11,12]

Non invasive cupping (*Hijama bila-shurt*)

Application of *Mahajjama*(cups) without making an incision (*shurt*) is known as *Hijama-bila-shurt*. It is applied on affected areas by creating negative pressure in side the cups either by holding a small flame inside the cups (*Mahajjama-Nari*) or by using vacuum pump. (*Mahajjama- Ghayr-Nari*). It is specially indicated when absorption is needed, without induction of *istifragh-e-dam*. *Mahajjama-Nari* is more beneficial when noxious matter is relatively thicker.^[9,20]

One important thing regarding the non-invasive cupping is that it should not be indicated until the purification (*tanqiyah*) of body is done properly. There are following eleven conditions in which non invasive cupping can be directed as:

- 1- When transfer of matter is needed from one part to other part of the body then *mahajjama* should be applied at the same part where transfer is needed foreg. *Hijama-e-pistaan* is indicated in excessive menstrual bleeding conditions.
- 2- When natural absorption or retention is needed for eg. Induction of cupping on epigastric region to control the vomiting.
- 3- The condition of swelling in deeper parts when all therapeutic measures fail to treat it then *Hijama-e-bila-shurt* should be done on the affected area, so that swelling become appear on the surface, then it may be treated by local application of specific drugs.
- 4- In case of deep postulated wounds when it is difficult to clean, non invasive cupping is indicated to draw the pus easily.
- 5- When any vital organs is inflamed and it is needed to transfer the inflammation to any other minor organs for *imala-e-mawad* then cupping should be done over the surface area of that minor organ.
- 6- When we want to heat any organ which is effected by excessive cold then *mahajjama* should be applied to absorb the blood and provide heat to that organ. In this condition it is better to applied *mahajjama-nari*.
- 7- When any organ is effected by excessive air perfusion, (*ghalba-e-riyah*) as in *Qoolanj-e-reehi* then *Hijama-bila-shurt* induction help to dissolve it. In this condition non-invasive cupping with fire (*mahajjama-nari*) is more effective.
- 8- *Hijama-bila-shurt* is also beneficial for reduction of dislocated organ For eg. In cervical vertebral dislocation or fractured rib dislocation etc.
- 9- *Hijama* should be done to achieve instant relief from the severe pain of any organ, occurring either due to dissolution of causative matter or transfer of causative matter towards the less sensitive area. For eg. In *Arq-un-nisa* (sciatica) pain is relieved by induction of non-invasive cupping on medial or lateral aspect of thigh.
- 10- When it is needed to increase the size of any organs then *Hijama-bila-shurt* should be directed on that organ.

11- *Hijama-bila-shurt* is also effective for reduction of size of size of any organ, in this situation *mahajjama*(cup) should be applied around the specific organ.^[12,13]

Abul Qasim zohrawi has described that *Hijama-bila-shurt* should be advised especially for such type of areas where *shurt* (incision) could not be tolerated, such as surface areas of liver, spleen, breast, kidney, umbilicus etc.^[11]

According to *ibn-e-Habal Baghdadi*, *Hijama-bila-shurt* is also effective in inguinal area, when *mahajjama* is applied at lower abdomen to pull the intestine above from the scrotum.^[7]

Advantages of non invasive cupping

Jurjani has described following six major advantages of the *Hijama-bila-shurt* (non-invasive cupping).

- It play an effective role to change the direction of matter for eg. *Hijama-e-pistaan* is beneficial in excessive menstruation, similarly *Hijama* should be done on abdominal area to check the epistaxis.^[16]
- It is beneficial to return the displaced organs to its normal position, for eg. In shoulder dislocation by the application of *mahajjama* it can reduct easily, it is also useful in inguinal hernia to return the herniated contents to its normal position.
- One specific advantage of non-invasive cupping is that it cause to prominent deep seated problems for eg.in case of internal piles, *Hijama-e-maq`ad* is very much effective to prominent it so that it should be treated properly.
- *Hijama-bila-shurt* shows dramatic effect when it is applied on such type of organs or areas which has lost its sensation and movements.
- It is beneficial in drainage of pus from any deep abcess.
- Non-invasive cupping plays important role for pain relief in different ailments.^[16]

Indication of non invasive cupping

The exclusive indication of *Hijama-bila-shurt* (non invasive cupping) are as follows:

- Excessive menstrual bleeding
- Inguinal hernia (enterocele)
- Sciatica(*Arq-ul-Nasa*)
- Gout and joints pain(*Waja-ul-mafasil*)
- Piles
- Shoulder dislocation and dislocated fractured rib.
- Abdominal pain
- Dysmenorrhoea etc.^[13]

Mechanism of action of non-invasive cupping (*Hijama-bila-shurt*)

In *Unani* system of medicine *Hijama* is used since thousands of years back but there was no specific mechanism of action, described by any eminent *Unani* scholars. John Brazier, principal of the college of the oriental body balance based in Lythem St. Annes has described its mechanism. He concluded that the

application of cupping is very simple but its effect are dramatic as our health and immune system are totally reliant on the movement of blood and body fluids (harmones, lymphatic fluid etc.) Oriental medicine teaches us that all pain is due to stagnation of these systems. This stagnation can be a result of injury, stress lack of blood supply or invasion of cold in the body and joints. Whatever the cause cupping application on the specific points provide warmth and helps to release the stagnation of blood and body fluids ultimately results in reduction of pain.^[14]

Complications of *Hijama*

There may be some complications after induction of cupping, the known complications are as follows:^[21,22]

1. Dehydration
2. Shock
3. Palpitation
4. Weakness of stomach
5. Excitement of brain or anxiety.^[21]
6. Forgetfulness(*nisyman*) etc.^[22]

Does *Hijama* works scientifically???

The human body is absolutely amazing. Think about the eyes- the human camera. It is able to capture light, transfer information about shapes and colors and vectors to the brain where it is interpreted, measured against past experiences, names are applied to objects and sense is made of a scene- and all of this happens in real time! Allah (swt) as Al-Bari and created our being in the best of designs, and is the most merciful Lord for all of the gifts he has given us. There is a wonderful dua' taught to us by Rasul Allah (صل عليه و سلم) to reflect this fact: "*Allahuma hasanta khalqi fa hassan khuluqi.*"

(Oh Allah you have created my outside in beauty, so beautify my inside i.e. My manners). *Hijama* works on many different layers of the human body. If you were to take a cross section of the body you would find the following layers:

- ✓ Epidermis(Skin)
- ✓ subcutaneous fat
- ✓ Fascia
- ✓ Muscle
- ✓ Tendons and Ligaments
- ✓ Organs
- ✓ Nerves
- ✓ Veins and Arteries
- ✓ Lymph Pathways
- ✓ Endocrine Pathways
- ✓ Bones
- ✓ Bone Marrow.

Amazingly, *Hijama* and cupping is the deepest penetrating therapy that exists. Think about when you are sitting in a car and someone closes the window-sometimes your ear pops. You feel the differences in pressure. Why then would a pressurized cup not affect all the way into the bone marrow of a person? So what is the scientific proof? There are studies. If you have access to

ebscost, or know a friend in the medical community who does, there are studies available. But it's not important that some university or organization decided to grant money for a study with a control group etc. We all know about the limitations of such studies. What is important is that *Hijama* is from the sunnah and that *Hijama* works.

CONCLUSION

The literature does show a promising future for cupping, however the lack of funding for further investigations is a problem, and for this reason there have not been many studies. In my opinion cupping is effective for a broad range of diseases as it is said by the holy prophet (PBUH) "*The best medicine with which you treat yourselves is cupping*". Currently wet cupping or *al-Hijamah* is performed in private clinics and many people have seen its benefits even when conventional medicine has failed to satisfy their health care needs. As it has a religious link people accept it more readily without question than conventional medicine but it does not mean that it does not work. At the moment it is not under the conditions that conventional medicine needs it to work for it to be accepted perhaps with more research more people will accept it. However one can argue that as it has a religious link then it is more likely to have a placebo effect. Many CAM therapies have either tribal or religious origins. The development and domination of conventional medicine led to the suppression and dismissal of these CAM type therapies. In my opinion, Cupping should be used for areas in which conventional medicine fails to treat; there should be an integrated approach. Efforts should be made to promote research collaboration between developing countries and Western countries; particularly countries where wet cupping is still used as a traditional treatment.

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