

# Understanding of life style disorders and their prevention in Unani medicine

## Abstract

Non communicable diseases (NCDs) are the group of diseases which remain restricted to the affected person only. Various diseases like Atherosclerosis, Myocardial infarction, COPDs, Diabetes, Obesity etc are included in NCDs. According to Unani system of medicine replenishment to the body is provided by *Quwwat Ghādhīya* (Nutritive faculty) and its four assisting *Quwā* i.e. *Quwwat Jādhība* (Absorptive faculty), *Quwwat Māsika* (Retentive faculty), *Quwwat Hādhīma* (Digestive faculty) and *Quwwat Dāfi'a* (Expulsive faculty). These *Quwā* are served by *Kayfiyāt Arba'a* (Four qualities) i.e. *Harārat*, *Burūdat*, *Ruṭūbat* and *Yubūsat*. So any deviation in these *Kayfiyāt Arba'a* may lead to NCDs. NCDs are endogenous in origin and their causes may primarily or secondarily be related to the diet. The diet is never absolute. During *Haḍm 'Uḍwī*, *Quwwat Ghādhīya* takes only required nutritive substances from it and remaining parts are excreted from the body in the form of *Fuzlat* (waste materials). The nature and duration of NCDs depends upon the nature of these *Fuzlat*. When *Fuzlat* accumulate in any organ, swelling may result e.g. *Waram al-Kabid* (Hepatic swelling). *Ṭabī'at* may divert the *fuzlat* to other organs of the body to decrease the *Imtilā* (Congestion) and protects the body from harmful effects. Various skin disorders like *Taqashshur al-Jild* (Psoriasis), Mental disorders like *Sahr* (Insomnia), *Mālanikhūliya* (Melancholia) etc are because of *Fuzlat* and are included in NCDs.

**Keywords:** *haḍm 'uḍwī*, *kayfiyāt arba'a*, Ncds, prevention, *quwā*

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## Introduction

Non communicable diseases (NCDs) are the group of diseases which remain restricted to the affected person only and does not transmit to other people either directly or indirectly.<sup>1</sup> All categories of diseases except infectious diseases come under the heading of NCDs e.g. Metabolic diseases, Endocrinal diseases, Neoplastic diseases and Nutritional diseases.<sup>2</sup> In terms of social medicine, the disease considered as NCD when the number of cases are significant and the cost of treatment is also considerable. Some of the important NCDs are Cardiovascular diseases- (Coronary artery disease), Hypertension, Obesity, Cancer, Diabetes mellitus, Blindness, Dyslipidaemia, COPD, Osteoporosis and Goitre.<sup>2,3</sup> Apart from these, there are number of diseases which are limited to the affected person but their incidence is quite low.

Now a days, increasing incidence of these diseases and their complications have greatly affected the world and tragedy is that there is no satisfactory treatment for these diseases and their complications. These patients impose a great economic burden on society and the country.<sup>4</sup> Because of this, the government of every country is focused on preventing these diseases and taking all the possible steps towards this. Experts of every medical system are also attracted to provide satisfactory solution for containment of these diseases. The unani medicine also has a role to play in this matter. First of all, it is very important to understand the pathological unani perspective of these diseases.

## Discussion

Disturbances in the *Asbāb Sitta Darūriyya Wa Ghair Darūriyya* (Six essential factors and modifiable factors), mentioned in the unani system of medicine, are the definite cause for NCDs.<sup>5,6</sup> Because these are the efficient causes and are responsible for maintaining the proper

temperament of the body.<sup>7,8</sup> Therefore, any disturbance in them causes altered temperament, if this is not corrected, the remaining *Umīr Ṭabī'iyya* (Factors of the existence) are also affected as well.<sup>9,10</sup> In fact, life style means how a person is practicing *Asbāb Sitta Darūriyya Wa Ghair Darūriyya* (Six essential factors and modifiable factors) in his or her daily life. Thus, all the life style disorders are associated with these causes.<sup>5</sup> Since *Asbāb Sitta Darūriyya* are efficient cause for the body and temperament, therefore they affect the body as well as *Mizāj* (Constitution or Temperament) and *Quwā* (Faculties).<sup>10</sup>

Any disturbance in these causes mainly affects the *Harārat Gharīziyya* (Innate heat), which is a common tool for the *Ṭabī'at* (Medicatrix naturae) and *Quwā* (Faculties).<sup>8,9</sup> When *Mizāj* (Constitution or Temperament) changes it directly affects the *Quwā*.<sup>11</sup> Thus, *Quwā* do not perform their functions properly. First of all, *Quwwat Ṭabī'iyya* (Natural faculty) is affected which secondarily affects the remaining two *Quwā* i.e. *Quwwat Haywāniyya* (Vital faculty) and *Quwwat Nafsāniyya* (Mental faculty).<sup>10</sup> Therefore, diseases produced due to disturbance in *Asbāb Sitta Darūriyya* are related with the alteration in *Af'āl Ṭabī'iyya* (Natural functions), *Af'āl Haywāniyya* (Vital functions) and *Af'āl Nafsāniyya* (Mental or Psychic functions). These altered functions depend on age, sex, *Mizāj*, susceptibility, strength of cause and duration of contact. All are not affected equally.

The two basic functions of *Quwwat Ṭabī'iyya* (Natural faculty) are nutrition and reproduction.<sup>11,12</sup> It is not necessary that both the functions are equally affected by the impairment of *Quwwat Ṭabī'iyya*. The disturbance in *Fi'l-i- taghdiya* (Function of Nourishment) appears first which later on affects the functions of *Quwwat Nafsāniyya* and *Haywāniyya*.<sup>10</sup> In terms of susceptibility, sometimes diseases of nervous system and vital organs appear first. Whereas the defect in the *Fi'l-i- taghdiya* (Function of Nourishment) does not appear or is not noticeable.

*Ghidha* (Diet) provide materials that are used by *Quwwat ghādhīya* (Nutritive faculty) to perform the *Fi'l-i-Taghdhiya-o-Tanmiya* (Function of Nourishment and growth).<sup>9,13,14</sup> *Ghidha* affects the body by two things i.e. by its *Kamiyat* (Quantity) and *Kaifiyat* (Quality).<sup>8,10,14</sup> The balance of *Akhilāt* (Humours) in body specially depends on the *Ghidha* (Diet). Because *Akhilāt* are produced from *Ghidha* during *Haḍm kabidī* (Hepatic digestion).<sup>11,15</sup> The *Harārat* (Heat) of liver acts on *ghidha*, different components of *ghidha* accept the act of heat differently.<sup>10,15</sup> The *Harārat Mu'tadila* (Moderate heat) of liver when acts on *Hārr Raṭb* (Hot and moist) components of *ghidha* then it forms *Khilṭ Dam* (Blood).<sup>9,10,11,15</sup> Similarly, *Hārr Yābis* (Hot and dry), *Bārid Raṭb* (Cold and moist), *Bārid Yābis* (Cold and dry) components form *Khilṭ Ṣafrā'* (Yellow bile), *Khilṭ Balgham* (Phlegm) and *Khilṭ Sawdā'* (black bile) respectively.<sup>9,11,13,15</sup> Increase in this *Harārat* causes the production of more *Khilṭ Ṣafrā'* while its decrease is responsible for the production of *Khilṭ Balgham*.<sup>15</sup> In this way the proportion of *Akhilāt* (Humours) deteriorates.<sup>10</sup>

During the process of *Haḍm* (Digestion) undigestible components accumulate in the body in the form of wastes. The quantity of these *Fuzlat* (Wastes) depends upon the *Kaifiyat* (Quality) and *Kamiyat* (Quantity) of *ghidha*.<sup>8</sup> Bad quality of food and excess intake of food increase the production of *Fuzlat*. If their volume exceeds the capacity limit of *Quwwat Dāfi'a* (Expulsive faculty), they begin to accumulate in the body.<sup>11</sup> The portion of food that is not digested is also in the same category. Anyhow part of diet beyond upper limit of *Quwwat Hāḍima* (Digestive faculty) and wastes over the capacity of *Quwwat Dāfi'a* (Expulsive faculty), suppress the *Harārat Gharīziyya* (Innate heat) and because of their quantity causes *Burūdat* (Cold).<sup>10,14</sup> After a duration, the *Mizāj* of the body becomes *Bārid* and gradually the symptoms of dominance of *Burūdat* (Cold) on the body begin to appear.<sup>9,12,16</sup> *Māddi Amrāḍ* (Materialistic diseases) also begin to appear due to the *Fuzlat* (Wastes) of the body.<sup>8</sup> If these materials get infected then *Ufooni Amrāḍ* (Infective diseases) appear.<sup>8</sup>

Similarly, *A'itadal* (Moderation) in other *Asbāb Sitta Darūriyya* (Six essential factors) like *Harakat-o-Sukūn Badnī* (Bodily movement and Rest), *Harakat-o-Sukūn Nafsānī* (Psychic movement and Rest), *Nawm-o-Yaqza* (Sleep and Wakefulness) are also responsible for maintenance of *Harārat Gharīziyya* (Innate heat).<sup>5,7,8,11</sup> These *Harkāt* (Movements) cause *Harārat* (Heat) to rise which not only causes dissolution of *Mawād* (Matter) but also, are responsible for excellent performance of *Quwā*.<sup>5,7,8,9,17,18</sup> Excess of *Harakat Nafsānī* & *Yaqza* or increase in *Nawm* and decrease in *Harakat Badnī* increase *Burūdat* in *Mizāj* and decrease in dissolution which lead to the accumulation of *Mawād*, which becomes an additional factor to reduce the *Harārat* (Heat).<sup>7,15</sup> Reduced dissolution and elimination cause retention of *Mawād* (Matter) and consequently *Harārat* declines.<sup>8,9,17</sup> In this way, *Burūdat* (Cold) becomes dominant due to imbalance in *Asbāb Sitta Darūriyya*.<sup>9,12,16</sup> If this *Burūdat* persists for a long, its effects begin to appear.<sup>8</sup> These effects depend on the body's *Mizāji* (Temperamental), *Saakhti* (Structural), *Jinsi* (Gender), *Nizāmi* (Systemic) susceptibilities.<sup>10</sup> Their prediction is not easy but overview of effects is possible.

*Burūdat* is *Kaifiyat Fā'ila* (Active property) therefore, it acts upon the *Fuzlat* (waste) and *Ruṭūbat*.<sup>10</sup> If *Harārat* (Heat) acts on *Ruṭūbat Ṣālih* (Healthy moisture) then it converts them into *Lahmiyāt* (Proteins) but if *Burūdat* (Cold) acts then they are converted into *Shahmiyāt* (Fat). The fat accumulates in the body when *Ruṭūbat* (Moisture) and *Burūdat* exist together.<sup>9,12,16</sup> *Shahm* (fat) itself is a cause of *Burūdat* and its maintenance. In this way the amount of fat increases. Initially *Ṭabī'at* (Medicatrix naturae) starts to deposit this fat on *Bārid A'dā'*

(Cold organs) and then as the others organs get affected by *Burūdat*, the fat accumulates on them.<sup>9,12,16</sup> *Ṭabī'at* (Medicatrix naturae) send the excess amount of fat to skin. This causes the accumulation of fat to begin below the skin, and it grows continuously which is the beginning of becoming fatty.

Excessive amount of fat makes lumen of the vessels narrow. At the same time, the effects of *Burūdat* cause them to constrict which in turn reduces the supply of *Rūh* (Pneuma) to certain organs.<sup>14</sup> Because of this *Burūdat*, *Rūh* (Pneuma) also becomes *Ghaliz* (Viscous), so the *Rūh* (Pneuma) does not pass easily through narrow paths. Organs like brain and heart are affected most by decreased supply of *Rūh* (Pneuma). The functions of heart are related with *Harārat*.<sup>14</sup> When *Burūdat* affects the heart, it can cause death immediately. If brain is involved then diseases like *Falij* (Paralysis), *Laqwa* (Facial palsy), *Khidar* (Numbness) may occur.

Because blood is the carrier of both *Rūh* (Pneuma) and *Harārat* (Heat) and supplies *Harārat* (Heat) and *Rūh Ḥaywānī* (Vital pneuma) to the whole body.<sup>14,19</sup> So, when the *Burūdat* and *Ruṭūbat* in the body becomes predominant, then vessels get constricted and if there is too much fat in the body, the vessels become narrower/ compressed due to excess fat.<sup>10</sup> This process not only affects the blood vessels but also nerves, which makes the supply of *Rūh Nafsānī* (Psychic pneuma) difficult or block it. So, the heart pumps blood into the vessels with a greater force to maintain the supply of *Rūh* (Pneuma) and blood. The *Quwwat Ḥaywāniyya Fā'ila* (Active vital faculty) of heart increases, which in turn increases the process of contraction and relaxation of arteries and this condition is known as *Ḍaghṭ al-Dam Qawi* (Hypertension).<sup>9</sup>

*Quwwat Ṭabī'iyya* (Natural faculty) is affected more by *Burūdat* (Cold) which weakens the process of digestion and assimilation. Since the *Haḍm 'Uḍwī* (Organic Digestion) also declines.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, the *A'dā'* (organs) are unable to use the *ghidha* and this *ghidha* is accumulated in the spaces and vessels of the organs.<sup>20</sup> Now this diet is also included in the *Fuzlat* (Wastes) because *Ṭabī'at* (Medicatrix naturae) is not acting upon it. So, the *Quwwat Dāfi'a* (Expulsive faculty) tries to expel it.<sup>12,15</sup> Because of *Burūdat* (Cold) of liver the *Kaymūs* (Chyme) does not go through further processing therefore, *Akhilāt Khām* (Immature humours) increases in the body.<sup>10,15</sup>

If there is *Lazoojat* (Adhesiveness) they become attached to the walls of cavities and vessels. Narrowing them it decreases the supply of blood and *Rūh Ḥaywānī* (Vital pneuma), causing a variety of complications/ disorders.<sup>10</sup> This is the beginning of cardiovascular and neurovascular diseases. Circulating and delivered unprocessed *Kaymūs* (Chyme) cannot be digested, which leads to compositional deterioration of humours and the proportion of undigested and unprocessed components in blood increases.<sup>10</sup> Now a days same is called as dyslipidaemia, hyperglycaemia, hypercholesterolaemia and hypertriglyceridemia.<sup>21</sup>

## Conclusion

From the above discussion it is clear that when *Sū'i-Mizāj Bārid* (Impaired Cold Temperament or Constitution) occurs.<sup>8</sup> It affects various organs of the body and body becomes full of *Mawād* (Matters). *Ṭabī'at* (Medicatrix naturae) tries to expel these substances. When joints accept these *Mawād* (Matter), joint pain occurs. When they accumulate in a particular organ, different type of *Awram* (Swellings) occur.<sup>5,10</sup> Becoming infected these *Mawād* (Matters) form abscesses.<sup>10</sup> When they turn to the uterus, they cause menstrual disorders. The uterus is unable to nurture the zygote consequently zygote doesn't retain and infertility result.<sup>5,14</sup>

In this way the *Burūdat* affects the whole body. All the organs are more or less affected. The *Quwā* become weak and *Ḥarārat Gharīziyya* (Innate heat) drops.<sup>10</sup> The supply of *Rūh* (Pneuma) becomes difficult. Affected one cannot reach expected age and premature death occurs.<sup>12,14,18</sup>

After understanding the pathogenesis, the prevention of these diseases can be discussed. Prevention from NCDs especially metabolic diseases depends on the following:<sup>5,10</sup>

- Keeping the *Ḥarārat Gharīziyya* (Innate heat) at optimum level and trying to increase it.
- Keep the body free from *Fuzlat* (Waste materials).
- Moderate practice of *Tadabeer Muhallilah* (Dissolving measures) in moderation.
- Monitoring of humours and wastes production.

Body movements are important to keep innate heat aroused and help to increase it.<sup>10</sup> Moderate mental activity and sleep also play an important role.<sup>10</sup> Apart from these, if other causes such as *Riyādat* (Exercise), *Ḥammām* (Turkish Bath), *Dalak* (Massage), Sun bath etc.<sup>14,22</sup> taken in moderation the body does not lose *Ḥarārat* (Heat) and remains protected from the effects and complications of *Burūdat* (Cold).<sup>9,12,16</sup> These measures also facilitate the process of dissolution. Due to this dissolution, substances are released from the body in the form of vapours and sweat.<sup>8,16</sup> The heat makes the substances *Lateef* (Light weight),<sup>12</sup> which makes the action of *Ṭabī'at* (Medicatrix naturae) easy on them and repulsive faculty, expel them through the easiest way.<sup>5,9,12</sup>

*Quwwat Ṭabī'iyya* (Natural faculty) becomes strong due to preserved heat and dissolution of wastes and it acts well on food which reduces the production of wastes and food is well digested and assimilated, the rest of the faculties remain strong.<sup>8</sup> By which *Ṭabī'at* (Medicatrix naturae) performs all its functions well and health is maintained.

Since wastes are produced from food hence maintenance of health and treatment of disease depend on modulation in diet. In terms of *Kamiyat* (Quantity) the diet should be proportional to the dissolution.<sup>10,14,23</sup> If there are *Fuzlat* (Wastes) in the body, then food that produce these *Fuzlat* should be avoided.<sup>10,20</sup> Unani physicians have suggested dieting to protect health and prevent the production of wastes which is very effective method. In short, in case of predominance of certain humour, avoiding the humour producing food and intake of quality moderating food restores the healthy proportions of humours and thereby health.<sup>10</sup>

Measures to protect against NCDs such as *Tadabir Muhallila* (Dissolving measures), *taqleel tadabir* (Dieting), heat inducing measures are to be taken in moderation. Moderation in practice of *Asbāb Sitta Ḍarūriyya Wa Ghair Ḍarūriyya Ghair madhada* (Six essential factors and modifiable factors) is a guarantee of protection from NCDs and also from their progress.<sup>5,6,9,22</sup>

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## Conflicts of interest

None.

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