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RESEARCH ARTICLE

MASSAGE THERAPY- MASSAGE AND HEALTH

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Abstract

Ilaj bit tadbeer is one of the effective modes of treatment that has been described in Unani system of medicine, in classical text about sixty four different types of regimens like Hammam, Dalk, Riyazat, Fasd, etc. are described. Among them, massage is one of the famous regimens practiced all over the world since antiquity. Massage therapy is increasingly becoming an integral part of a growing number of people's holistic health regimens. More and more medical doctors are prescribing massage therapy to treat a broad range of medical conditions. Unani scholars have provided a detailed description of the massage under the category of Dalk. It has an effect on both body and mind and is a system of stroking. A manual literature survey obtained from classical Unani texts such as Kulliyat Nafisi, Kulliyat-e-Qanun, Kitabul-Kulliyat, Al Qanoon-Fit-tib, Kamilus Sana, Canon of Medicine and online databases including PubMed, Google Scholar, and Web of Science etc. The current review designed to give an overview on massage therapy that can provide several benefits to the body like improved blood flow, reduced muscle pressure, neurological excitability, and increased sense of well-being. Although scientific studies have successfully found many benefits of massage therapy, in recent years massage has gain international attention due to its wide range of effectiveness in management of different types of diseases.

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Introduction:-

Massage is one of the oldest, holistic and simplest forms of therapy in the Unani system of Medicine. It has effect on both body and mind and is a system of stroking. Pressing and kneading different areas of the body to relieve pain, relax, stimulate, and tone of the body.

"It is the type of exercise in which surface of the body rubbed with hands so as to increase the blood circulation and remove waste materials from the body".

Massage signifies a group of procedures which are usually done with hand on the external tissues of the body in a variety of ways either with a curative, palliative or hygienic point of view.¹

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History of Massage:

Massage may be the oldest and simplest form of medical care. **Egyptian tomb** paintings show people being massaged.² A Chinese book from 2,700 B.C, The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine, recommend's breathing exercises, massage of skin and flesh, and exercises of hands and feet" as the appropriate treatment for complete paralysis, chills, and fever."³

Physicians mostly of the Greek and Roman era prescribed it both for its restorative powers and for general preservation of the body and mind. In the 5th century BC, Buqrat (Hippocrates-the father of medicine), prescribed the use of rubbing and friction for joint and circulatory ailments. It is recognized that rubbing can bind a joint that is too loose and loosen a joint that is too rigid.⁴

The Greek physician **Asclepiades** (124-40 BCE) was the consummate master of massage; his top three preferred therapeutic modalities were all drugless forms of physiotherapy: hydrotherapy, exercise, and massage-in that order.

Aurelius Cornelius Celsus (25 B.CE 57 C.E.) a Roman physician put forwards certain guidelines for the application of massage which are as follows:

- NOT apply massage in the crisis stage of acute diseases
- Do NOT apply massage when there is a fever.
- Do NOT massage a pregnant woman on the abdomen.
- When giving a wholebody massage, you should gauge the amount Do of massage you give according to the patient's constitution.

Avicenna (980-1037), a chief physician spoke affirmately about benefits of friction.^{5,6}

Types of Massage:**Ancient Classification:****Dalk-e Istedad and Dalk-Istardad:**

1. **Dalk-e Istedad (Preparatory Massage);** it is a special type of massage usually done before the exercise. It starts gently and then vigorously as the time of exercise approaches.
2. **Dalk-e Istardad / Dalk-e Musakkin (Recuperative massage):** Massage is done after the end of exercise and is known as the soothing massage. It is done with some oil vigorously in the beginning and gently towards the end. Its purpose is to liquefy and eliminate the waste products which when remain stagnant in the tissues produces fatigue.^{1,7}

DALK-E ISTEDED or PREPARATORY MASSAGE is further classified into following sub types viz;

1. Dalk-e Qawee,
2. Dalk-e Zaiyf,
3. Dalk-e Taweel,
4. Dalk-e Kasheer

Dalk-e Qawee (Strong Massage):

Massage done with pressure for short period of time. It produces more heat (Taskheen) than resolution (Tahallul). It is suitable for those people who are young having firm and muscular body, intense strength, plenty of viscous matter, and in winter season.

Dalk-e Zaiyf (Weak Massage):

It is done with light hands for short period of time. It produces less heat and less resolution. It is suitable for those people having flabby body, weak strength, and thin matter and in autumn season.

Dalk-e Taweel (Prolonged Massage):

Massage done with soft hands for long duration. It produces more resolution than heat. It is suitable for people of any age having firm and strong body, excess of matter and in spring season.

Dalk-e Kasheer (Short Duration Massage):

Massage done with soft hands for short period of time but little prolonged in comparison with Dalk Zaiyf. It produces less heat and less resolution. Suitable for the people of weak strength, thin matter and in summer season.⁸

II. According to the miqdaar-wa-kaifiyat:

- (1) Dalk-e Sulab (Hard massage) which makes the body hard.
- (2) Dalk-e Layyan (Soft massage) which relaxes the body.
- (3) Dalk-e Moatdil (Moderate massage) which develops the body.
- (4) Dalk-e Kasheer (Prolonged massage) which reduce weight.
- (5) Dalk-e Qaleel (Short Massage) which increases the strength.^{9,10,11}

III. Dalk-e Murakkab/COMPOUND MASSAGE:

1. Dalk-e SulabKasheer (Hard & Prolonged)
2. Dalk-e SulabQaleel
3. Dalk-e SulabMuatdil
4. Dalk-e LayyanKasheer
5. Dalk-e LayyanQaleel
6. Dalk-e LayyanMuatdil
7. Dalk-e MuatdilKashcer
8. Dalk-e MuatdilQaleel
9. Dalk-e MuatdilMuatdil^{1,8,9,11}

IV. Special types of massage:**Dalk-e khushan (rough massage):**

Massage done with a piece of rough cloth. It draws blood briskly towards the skin.

Dalk-e amlas (smooth massage):

Massage done with soft hands or a soft piece of cloth. It increases the flow of blood.¹

According to Modern System of Medicine:

1. **Stroking massage:** Stroking Massage is one of the principal movements of massage and may be performed on any area of the body. The tissues will warm up as you stroke the body, improving the circulation. It can be (1) Superficial (2) Deep
2. **Percussion massage:** Involves a series of light, brisk, striking actions. Applied with alternate hands in rapid succession. Two of the main percussion strokes are cupping and hacking; they may be performed on many areas of the body, although they are especially effective when used on fleshy and large muscular areas of the body. Percussion movements are valuable in inducing muscle tone as well as strengthening muscles since they stimulate the muscle to contract.
3. **Vibration massage:** Is a fine, gentle trembling movement of the tissues which is performed by your hand or fingers. Vibration along the course of a nerve is helpful for restoring and maintaining the functions of a nerve and the muscles supplied by them, thereby improving their nutrition. It is particularly useful in cases of paralysis or where there is loss of nerve power.
4. **Pétrissage massage:** It is an extremely powerful and vigorous movement. Which enables you to work deeply on the muscles. You may apply it to every area of the body, except for the face. It can be subdivided into picking up. Wringing, squeezing and rolling. By alternately squeezing and relaxing, the veins and lymphatic vessels are emptied and filled, bringing fresh nutrients to the muscles.
5. **Compression Massage:** Rhythmic compression into muscles used to create a deep hyperaemia and softening effect in the tissues. It is generally used as a warm-up for deeper, more specific massage work.¹²

Health Benefits of Massage:**Massage Reduces Muscle Tension:**

Massage affects the muscles and other soft tissues throughout the body. It loosens contracted, shortened, hardened muscles. Massage can stimulate weak, flaccid muscles. Chronic muscle tension reduces the circulation of the blood and movement of lymph in an area.¹³

Massage Improves Blood Circulation:

The oxygen capacity of the blood can increase 10-15% after massage. By indirectly or directly stimulating nerves that supply internal organs, blood vessels of these organs dilate and allow greater blood supply to them.

Massage Induces Better Lymph Movement:

Lymph is a milky white fluid that drains impurities and waste away from the tissue cells. A component of these wastes is toxins which are the by-products of metabolism. So, it is a vital to our health. Muscular contraction has a pumping effect that moves lymph. Massage and exercise help to move lymph.¹⁴

Massage Results In Increased Mobility and Range of Motion of Joints:

Massage provides a gentle stretching action to both the muscles and connective tissues that surround and support the muscles and many other parts of the body. Which helps keep these tissues elastic.¹⁵

Massage Stimulates or Soothes Nervous System:

Massage balances the nervous system by soothing or stimulating it, depending on which effect is needed by the individual at the time of the massage.¹⁶

Massage Enhances Skin Condition:

Massage enhances the skin condition by improving the function of the sebaceous and sweat glands, which keep the skin lubricated, clean, and cool.

Massage Results in Better Digestion and Intestinal Function:

Massage increases the body's secretions and excretions. It increases the production of gastric juices, saliva, and urine. There is also an increased excretion of nitrogen, inorganic phosphorus, and salt. As a result, the metabolic rate increases.¹⁷

Massage Relieves of Acute and Chronic pain:

Massage can promote recovery from the fatigue and from minor aches and pains.^{2,5,13,18}

Other Benefits:

1. Massage has beneficial effects on the internal organs and the immune system.
2. Massage reduces swelling.
3. Massage reduced stress and aids relaxation.
4. Massage is useful for general relaxation
5. Massage results in overall improvement in physical health and the quality of life.
6. Enhances athletic performance; Treats injuries caused during sport or work. Promotes deeper and easier breathing.
7. Helps relieve tension-related headaches and effects of eye-strain.
8. Rehabilitation post operative.
9. Rehabilitation after injury.^{2,13,15,19,20,21,22,23}

Therapeutic massage can help with a wide range of medical conditions, including:

1. Anxiety
2. Arthritis (both osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis)
3. Asthma and bronchitis
4. Carpal tunnel syndrome
5. Chronic and acute pain
6. Circulatory problems
7. Depression
8. Digestive disorders, including spastic colon, constipation, diarrhoea and headache, especially when due to muscle tension
9. Gastrointestinal disorders (including spastic colon, colic and constipation)
10. Headache
11. Immune function disorders
12. Insomnia
13. Myo fascial pain (a condition of the tissue connecting the muscles)
14. Premature infants
15. Reduced range of motion
16. Sports injuries (including pulled or strained muscles and sprained ligaments)
17. Stress

18. Temporomandibular joint (TMJ) dysfunction.^{2,15,21,22,25,26,27,28,29,30}

Contraindications of massage:

1. Skin disorders which would be irritated by increase in warmth of the part.
2. When superficial infections of skin are suppurating, as in case of ulcer.
3. In the presence of recent open wounds.
4. Adjacent to recent fracture sites.
5. Over joints or other tissue which are acutely inflamed
6. Osteoporosis.
7. Hyperpyrexia
8. Hypersensitivity
9. Malignancy
10. Ligament injury
11. Vein varicose.^{2,15,31}

Complications:

1. Nausea and Fainting.
2. Shifting of madda towards weak organs leading to warm or busoor (inflammation) and pain.^{32,33}

Conclusion:-

Now, commonly accepted throughout the medical world as an effective and true medical art, massage is successfully used in hospitals, pain clinics, rehabilitation facilities, and drug treatment clinics for people of all ages with a variety of medical conditions.

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