

Exploring *Nutool* (Irrigation) as A Treatment Method in *Ilaj Bit Tad-Beer* (Regimenal Therapy)

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Abstract

The Unani system of medicine employs four primary modes of treatment—Ilaj bil ghiza (dietotherapy), Ilaj bil Dawa (pharmacotherapy), Ilaj bit tadbeer (regimenal therapy), and Ilaj bil yad (surgery). Ilaj bit Tadbeer encompasses a range of regimenal interventions, including Hijamah (cupping), Irsal alaql (leeching), Fasd (venesection), Dalak (massage), Nutool (irrigation), Qay (Emesis), Idrar-i-Bawl (Diuresis), Tariq (Diaphoresis), Munzij and Mu'shil therapy (concoction and purgation), Bukhoor (medicated steam), kayy (cauterization), Huqna (enema), and more. Nutool is a unique method within the Unani system where water, oil, or medicated decoctions are poured from a certain height onto specific body parts to treat particular diseases. The procedure is referred to as Tanteel, involving irrigation. Based on the specific liquids employed to achieve desired outcomes, Nutool can be broadly classified into two categories—Nutool Haar and Nutool Barid. The primary purposes of Nutool therapy are to accelerate the process of evacuating morbid material from the body (Ikhrāj e-mawad), normalize morbid temperament (Ta'dil-i Mizaj-e-Aza), and strengthen the body's defense mechanism (Quwat-e-Mudafiat). Nutool is popularly used in Unani medicine and involves pouring or dripping medicinal preparations, such as decoctions and medicated oils, on specific body parts. The benefits of Nutool therapy result from the combined neurological, psychological, and pharmacological effects of the drugs used. Nutool is particularly valuable in treating diseases where there is a need to alter the temperament of an organ, disperse toxic humors, or strengthen organ function. The therapy is typically administered daily for two weeks to achieve sustained results. It serves as an effective adjuvant treatment for various central nervous system disorders, such as headache, insomnia, migraine, amnesia, melancholia, vertigo, epilepsy, etc., and other conditions such as cystitis, mastitis, and arthralgia. Unani texts prescribe specific drug formulations to be used in Nutool therapy for these purposes.

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INTRODUCTION

Treatment methods in *Unani* system of medicine encompass four approaches—*Ilaj bil ghiza* (dietotherapy), *Ilaj bil dawa* (pharmacotherapy), *Ilaj bil yad* (surgery), and *Ilaj bit tadbeer* (regimenal therapy). *Ilaj bit tadbeer*, which translates to "treatment through regimen," involves developing a systematic plan based on the nature and pathogenesis of the disease. When a patient experiences *Sue mizaj* (derangement of temperament), lifestyle modifications such as dietary changes, proper sleep, physical exercise, and adjustments to the climate are recommended.

Additionally, interventions such as *Dalak* (massage), *Hamam* (Turkish bath), and *Inkibab* (inhalation) may be employed. In the case of patients dealing with structural disorders (*Sue Tarkeeb*), a range of techniques is employed, such as *Fasd* (venesection), *Taleeq* (leeching), *Hijammah* (cupping), *Kayy* (cauterization), *Qay* (emesis), *Tariq* (diaphoresis), *Takmeed* (fomentation), and *Mushil* therapy (purgative), and *Mudir* (diuretic). *Illaj bit tadbeer* is a method that draws from the knowledge of esteemed *Unani* physicians such as *Buqrat* (Hippocrates), *Jalinoos* (Galen), *Zakaria Razi* (Rhazes), and *Ibn Sina* (Avicenna). These methods can be utilized either individually or in combination with other treatments such as dietotherapy, pharmacotherapy, and surgery. The primary goal is to attain holistic well-being, including physical, mental, and spiritual aspects, through natural means. It aims to improve the body's constitution by eliminating (*Tanqiya*) or diverting (*Imala*) morbid humors and enhancing the body's defense mechanism. In essence, *Illaj bit tadbeer* represents the best-known methods of "detoxification", assisting in the complete healing of the individual and promoting a balanced and healthy state [1]. *Nutool* is an innovative method in *Unani* medicine, involving the pouring of decoctions of specific drugs or medicated oils onto certain body areas from a certain height to treat particular diseases. Sheikh Bu-Ali Sina has also referred to *Nutoolat* as "*sakoobat*." *Nutoolat* or *tareda* refers to the application of decoctions of medicines or hot water to targeted organs [2–4].

VARIOUS CATEGORIES OF NUTOOL ON THE BASIS OF TYPE OF LIQUID EMPLOYED

1. ***Nutool barid (Cold Irrigation)***: In this type, cold water or cold medicated decoctions or oils with a cold temperament are utilized. For example, in conditions such as *Sarsam* (meningitis), this cold irrigation is poured on the head.
2. ***Nutool haar (Hot Irrigation)***: Here, hot water, hot medicated decoctions, lukewarm oils, or oils with hot temperament are employed. This type is mainly used in inflammatory conditions, serving as an anti-inflammatory (*Muhalil-e-warm*) therapy.
3. ***Nutool-e-muqawi (Tonic Irrigation)***: This type is primarily used to nourish weak organs. It involves applying *Haar Nutool* first and then *Barid Nutool* to enhance blood circulation in the organ, acting as a nerve tonic [5, 6].

Nutool offers a unique approach to treating specific ailments in *Unani* medicine, providing therapeutic benefits through the application of appropriate liquids to targeted body areas.

MECHANISM OF ACTION

The mechanism of action behind *Nutool* is quite fascinating. When *Nutool* is performed, it leads to an elevation in the temperature of the affected area. This increase in temperature results in improved blood circulation, promoting the dissolution (*Tahleel*) of morbid material present in the area. Additionally, this enhanced circulation allows more nutrients to reach the organ, leading to a change in its *Mizaj* (temperament). Specifically, *Barid Nutool* is employed to induce vasoconstriction in the affected area. This helps prevent the morbid material from entering the main circulation and spreading throughout the body. Conversely, when there is an absence of congestion (*Imtilah*), *Haar Nutool* is administered [5].

In summary, the process of *Nutool* helps in altering the body's internal environment by raising the local temperature, facilitating better blood flow, and dissolving harmful substances. The use of *Barid Nutool* and *Haar Nutool* is carefully considered based on the specific condition, ensuring the most effective treatment outcome.

DURATION OF THERAPY

The duration of *Nutool* therapy varies depending on the chronicity of the disease and is adjusted based on the improvement of signs and symptoms. Typically, the treatment starts with seven sittings over the course of the first 14 days. Afterward, the frequency is altered, with four sittings administered twice weekly for the following two weeks. As the patient's condition improves, the therapy is further tapered off, with one sitting given once weekly. The treatment regimen is flexibly adjusted according to the progress observed in the patient's health [7].

In summary, the duration of *Nutool* therapy is personalized to each patient's specific condition, ensuring a gradual reduction in sessions as their signs and symptoms improve. This method permits a customized and efficient treatment strategy, providing the optimal opportunity for a successful recuperation.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF NUTOOL

The aims and objectives of performing *Nutool* can be summarized as follows: [1, 5, 6]

1. *Haar Nutool* is employed to disperse morbid matter from the affected area (*Tahleel-e-mawad*).
2. Both *Haar* and *Barid Nutool* are alternately employed to modify the organ's temperamental condition and deliver tonic benefits.
3. *Barid Nutool* is used to provide relief from pain, soften organs, and prevent congestion (*Imtalah*) in conditions such as trauma (*Zarba wa Sakta*).
4. *Haar Nutool* is applied to alleviate fatigue.
5. *Haar Nutool* is employed to improve blood circulation, address a cold temperamental state, or rectify the temperament of a particular organ.
6. Both *Haar* and *Barid Nutool* are employed to alleviate chronic diseases such as meningitis (*Sarsaam*), paralysis (*Falij*), arthritis (*Waja-ul-mafasil*), headache (*Sudda*), insomnia (*Sahar*), and certain mental disorders.
7. Both *Haar* and *Barid Nutool* are alternated as a nerve tonic (*Muqawi Asaab*) for individuals experiencing sexual disorders (*Zoofa-e-bah*).
8. *Barid Nutool* is used to achieve antispasmodic and detoxifying effects.
9. *Haar Nutool* is applied to facilitate the elimination of waste products through the skin.

In summary, *Nutool* serves a multifaceted therapeutic purpose, custom-tailored to target individual health concerns and foster holistic well-being. The selection of *Haar* or *Barid Nutool* depends on the desired therapeutic effects and the patient's individual needs.

METHOD

The method of *Nutool* involves continuous pouring of medicated liquids, such as herbal decoctions (*Joshanda*), infusions (*Khaisanda*), milk, plain water, lukewarm water, or cold water, in a rhythmic flow onto the forehead or other targeted organs. The liquid is poured from a height of approximately 65 cm and is maintained for a specific duration, typically lasting between 20–30 min. This therapeutic procedure is meticulously performed to achieve the desired therapeutic effects and promote overall health and well-being [7–9].

PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF NUTOOL

Nutool therapy, as described in ancient *Unani* texts, revolves around its ability to facilitate the dissolution of waste materials from affected areas, modify local temperament, and disperse toxic substances. The clinical applications of *nutool* in *Unani* medicine typically encompass several indications [10–16]:

1. **Dispersion of Toxic Matter:** Drugs used for *nutool* in this context are applied at a warm temperature to effectively disperse toxic substances from the affected area [10].
2. **Analgesia and Tissue Relaxation:** *Nutool* drugs with warm temperament are employed to induce analgesia and relaxation of tissues [11].
3. **Vasoconstriction:** In some cases, *nutool* with cold water may be applied to prevent inflammation, akin to modern cold compresses used for acute inflammations or after surgeries [12].
4. **Tissue Strengthening:** *Nutool* therapy with drugs at a lower temperature is utilized to strengthen tissues [13].

Despite its ancient origins, recent advancements in medical science have provided a deeper understanding of the physiological changes induced by *nutool*. Pouring drugs from a distance stimulates various nerve plexus, glands, and brain cells. This action leads to relaxation similar to that experienced

during meditation, resulting in reduced heart rate, bradycardia, lowered sympathetic tone, and altered brain wave patterns. *Nutool* on the forehead is particularly known to have psychoneuroimmunological effects, which induce an altered state of consciousness and anxiolysis. This outcome is credited to the activation of the trigeminal nerve and alterations in neurotransmitter levels. Regular *nutool* sessions over the course of a fortnight may lead to long-lasting stimulation of the central nervous system. While scientific studies on the therapeutic benefits of *nutool* on other body parts are lacking, anecdotal evidence suggests that it induces a feeling of relaxation. Furthermore, the decoctions or oils used in *nutool* therapy are absorbed through the skin, providing additional curative benefits. In specific instances, the choice of *nutool* drugs can enhance its efficacy. For instance, lavender oil has been found to have more potent anxiolytic effects when applied to the forehead as compared to plain sesame oil. In controlled studies, the use of oils such as *roghan-e-banafsha* and *roghan-e-gul* in *nutool* therapy significantly improved the outcomes for patients with primary insomnia [14–16].

USES OF NUTOOL IN DIFFERENT DISEASES

Nutool finds its applications in various diseases in *Unani* medicine. Some of the conditions and the corresponding *Nutool* treatments are:

1. **Phlegmatic headache (*Sudda-e-barid*) and vertigo (*Duwar wa subat*):** *Nutool* with a combination of medicinal herbs such as *Baboona*, *Akleelul Mulk*, *Barge garshabt*, *Baranjasif*, *Ustukhudus*, *Darrmuna turki*, *Marzan josh*, *Badranj boya*, *Laung*, *Pudina dushti*, *Satar farsi*, and *Shah Armani* is recommended.
2. **Choleric headache and insomnia (*Sudda-e-har, sehar*):** *Nutool* using Rose (*Rogan gulab*) oil, vinegar (*Sirka*), and *Gul surakh* is employed [17].
3. **Alcoholic headache (*Sudah khumari*):** *Nutool* with a mixture of *Gulab* and *Sirka angoori* (vinegar derived from *Vitis vinefera*) is used [4].
4. **Shock (*Sakta*):** *Nutool* with herbs such as *Marzangosh*, *Soya*, *Barg-e-utraj*, *Satar*, *Baboona*, *Akleelul mulk*, *Pudina*, *Sudaab*, and *Hasha* in equal quantities is used.
5. **Mastitis (*Warm-e-suddi*):** *Nutool* with vinegar (*Sirka*) and hot water is done. Additionally, a mixture of *Baboona*, *Tukhm Soya*, *Hulbah*, and *Jund be daster* boiled together can also be used.
6. **Endometritis (*Warm-e-raham*):** *Nutool* using *Soya*, *Kirme Kula*, *Khatmi*, *Banafsha*, *Baboona*, and *Marzanjosh* in equal quantities is recommended.
7. **For arthritis** (known as *Waja ul mafasil*), the regimen involves the consumption of *Nutool* alongside *Cuscuta reflexa* (*Akash bael*) and *Solanum nigrum* (*Makooh khushk*). This is followed by a massage using a blend of *Roghan gul* or *Roghan hina* combined with powdered *Abhal khushk* (*Juniperus communis*).
8. **Meningitis (*Sarsam*) and Insomnia (*Sehar*):** *Nutool* with *Gul-e Banafsha*, *Tukhm-e-kahu*, *Gul Surkh*, *Gul-e-baboona*, and *post-e-khashkhash* in equal quantities can be used [4].
9. **Renal disorders (*Amraz kuliya wa Masana*) such as retention of urine (*Ahtibas-e-bowl*):** *Nutool* with *Gokhuru*, *Baboona*, *Khatmi*, *Soya*, *Tukhm e karafs*, *Meethi*, *Tukhm-e-kad*, *Beekh Kibr*, *Banafsha*, *Khurfah*, and *Kirm-e-kula* is recommended.
10. **Reproductive diseases (*Amraz-e-tanasul*) such as Orchitis (*Warm-e-Khusya*):** *Nutool* with *Naena*, *Marzangosh*, and *Makoh* in equal quantities can be applied [4].

These specific *Nutool* treatments, utilizing various herbal decoctions, oils, and other medicinal substances, are tailored to address different ailments and promote healing according to *Unani* medical principles.

CONCLUSION

The literature review highlights that *Nutool* is an incredibly effective regimen in *Unani* medicine for treating various chronic ailments and lifestyle disorders. This particular therapeutic approach distinguishes itself by effectively treating these conditions, all without the necessity of oral medications. *Nutool's* effectiveness is evident in its positive outcomes for patients, providing a cost-effective and

safe alternative with minimal risk of side effects as compared to oral treatments. This patient-friendly approach of *Nutool* offers significant advantages, emphasizing its potential as a preferred therapeutic option. *Nutool* in *Unani* medicine offers a comprehensive approach to healing, combining traditional knowledge with modern insights into its physiological effects and therapeutic potential. Nonetheless, it is essential to recognize the importance of conducting additional research and studies that center on scientific criteria. By conducting more rigorous research in the future, we can gain deeper insights into *Nutool's* mechanisms, validate its therapeutic benefits, and ensure evidence-based practice in the field of *Unani* medicine. This will not only enhance its acceptance but also pave the way for wider integration and utilization of this effective regimen in various healthcare settings.

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Conflict of Interest

None declared

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