

A conceptual literary exploration of *Sayalan al-rahim* (abnormal vaginal discharge) in Unani medicine

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Abstract

Unani literature is enriched with the concept of *Sayalan al-rahim* (abnormal vaginal discharge). It is the excessive abnormal vaginal discharge from the female genital tract and the commonest reason for which women seek medical attention. It adversely impacts reproductive health and contributes to significant morbidity. Therefore, a literary exploration in classical Unani literature for *Sayalan al-rahim* was searched to implement in the current era. Further, various search engines like PubMed, Medline, Google Scholar, Ovid, Science Direct, and Scopus were browsed for contemporary outlook of abnormal vaginal discharge with evidence-based medicine. According to various eminent Unani philosophers, *Sayalan al-rahim* is the disease that adversely affects the health of the women and should not be neglected; it can affect the fertility of a woman. The causes, clinical features, diagnosis, differential diagnosis and management of abnormal vaginal have been well-documented in the classical texts. Contemporary medicine discusses abnormal vaginal discharge as a symptom of female reproductive diseases. Few studies have been published related to *Sayalan al-rahim* caused due to various female reproductive tract infections. This literary research validates the Unani classical texts that are enriched with in-depth knowledge on abnormal vaginal discharge. Few evidence-based studies have proven that traditional Unani medicines are efficacious in abnormal vaginal discharge.

Keywords: Abnormal vaginal discharge, Evidence-based studies, *Sayalan al-rahim*, Unani Medicine

Introduction

Vaginal discharge is the commonest complaint in the reproductive age group¹⁻⁵ that can be normal physiologic variance or a pathological manifestation.^{1, 3, 5} Further, abnormal vaginal discharge is the second most common problem after abnormal uterine bleeding or menstrual disorder.⁶ Studies have shown that 11% to 38.4% Indian women avail care for vaginal discharge in the primary and secondary health care setting.⁵

“Global Burden of Disease Study estimates that 27.4% of Disability-Adjusted Life Year (DALY) lost in Indian women aged 15–44 years was attributed to reproductive ill-health”.⁷ In a year, approximately, 1 in 10 women presents with vaginal discharge.⁶ A pathological vaginal discharge may be of vaginal or cervical origin. Its prevalence is 11% to 38.4% in India.⁵ A study found that the peak age group for vaginal discharge was reproductive age.⁸ Another study showed that about 40% of women in India are estimated to have Reproductive tract infections (RTI)/Sexually transmitted infections (STI) at any given point of time, but only 1% completes the full treatment of both partners.⁹

Unani literature is enriched with the concept of *Sayalan al-rahim* (vaginal discharge). Unani scholars mentioned various etiological factors of *Sayalan al-rahim* such.¹⁰ Variety of organism as per conventional medicines causes bacterial vaginosis, vulvovaginal candidiasis, *trichomonas vaginalis*, cervicitis, pelvic inflammatory diseases, and sexually transmitted diseases.^{11, 12} **Rationale of the study:** Clinically, the first choice to treat reproductive tract infections (RTIs) according to different pathogens is antibiotics.

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