MANAGEMENT OF HYPERTENSION BY WET CUPPING THERAPY (AL-HIJAMAH): A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT
Cupping Therapy refers to the therapeutic method of applying partial vacuum cups onto certain parts of the patient’s body. In Unani practice, this method is also used in the treatment of hypertension. Cupping therapy treats hypertension by regulating the whole body, rather than by simply lowering the blood pressure. Medical studies suggest that high blood pressure is a result of the feedback regulation which takes place when the blood supplies to some important organs, such as the heart, brain and kidney, are not in balance. This regulation is a compensatory reaction of the body, but it is imperfect and leaves a pathological state of hypertension. So the proper treatment for hypertension is to make blood supply of the heart, brain and kidneys return to normality. Simply lowering the elevated blood pressure may lead to a new imbalance of blood supply. Cupping therapy treats hypertension based on syndrome differentiation, this is just to regulate the functions of the whole body, promote its self-balance function. It has been proved that the holistic concept of cupping therapy is accorded with the principle of treatment of hypertension. Cupping therapy can not only lower high blood pressure, control it in a normal range, prevent and treat various complication of hypertension, but also make various imbalance states of the body return to normal.

Keywords: Hypertension, Wet Cupping Therapy.

INTRODUCTION
Cupping Therapy is the oldest & most globally practiced medical treatment in human history. It is a traditional, time-honored treatment that remains favored by millions of people all over the world. Cupping Therapy is a gentle therapy that uses negative pressure, instead of compression of the muscles, for incredible results. The negative pressure releases tight tissue helping to loosen adhesions & draining fluids & toxins from the muscles & body. It brings a flow of fresh blood & nutrients to the muscles & skin. It is a safe & comfortable therapy, yet is very powerful & at the same time very relaxing. Cupping is incredibly effective for many health problems.

Cupping has also been found to affect the body up to four inches into the tissues, causing tissues to release toxins, activate the lymphatic system, clear colon blockages, help activate and clear the veins, arteries and capillaries, activate the skin, clear stretch marks and improve varicose veins. Cupping is the best deep tissue massage available. Cupping, the technique, is very useful and very safe and can be easily learned and incorporated into family health practices [1].

Benefits of Cupping
This gentle therapy uses negative pressure, instead of compression of the muscles, to pull stagnation from the tissues & bring it to the skin level. Deep muscle 'knots', tightness & soreness are gently relieved as the tissue loosens & is stretched. The pores expand to discharge some of the wastes & toxins, the rest are flushed by the body's circulatory & lymphatic systems. Fresh revitalized blood, oxygen, & nutrients are brought to the area. Inflammation, joint pain, stiffness, & arthritis pain can relieve. Congestion in tissue, including the lungs, is
broken up & expelled. The immune system is strengthened. The nervous system is stimulated allowing a deep relaxation to move through the body.

Discoloration or marks may sometimes occur as a result from cupping therapy, especially after a Detoxification Treatment. One of the most common & unfortunate misconceptions is that the marks are bruising. "Bruising" is caused by impact trauma with breakage of capillaries & a rush of fluids to the damaged area. There is no impact trauma or compression in cupping therapy. These marks are stagnation, dead cellular debris, & most importantly, toxins, being drawn out of the body. This is the therapeutically desired effect, the more this is visible, the greater the level of stagnation & toxicity in the body. The discoloration will dissipate from a few hours to as long as 2 weeks, depending on the toxicity in the body & after treatment care. As additional treatments occur, usually by the 3rd or 4th treatment, no discoloration is likely to occur at all.

**History of cupping therapy [2]**

The specific origin of Cupping Therapy remains in obscurity - the consensus is that the action of suction has been part of therapeutic efforts throughout human history, migrating with human tribes along migratory routes. These ancient cultures used hollowed out animal horns, bones, bamboo, nuts, seashells and gourds to purge bites, pustules, infections and skin lesions from the body, and many are still in use today. Ancient healers also used Cupping devices to draw evil spirits out of the body and to balance the humors. Earthenware and metal were fashioned into Cupping vessels before the development of glass.

Cupping therapy was used in Egypt dating back some 3,500 years, where its use is represented in hieroglyphic writing. The earliest recorded use of Cupping is from the famous Taoist alchemist and herbalist, Ge Hong (281–341 A.D.). In ancient Greece, Hippocrates recommended the use of cups for a variety of ailments, while in the early 1900’s eminent British physician, Sir Arthur Keith, wrote how he witnessed Cupping performed with excellent success.

In China, extensive research has been carried out on Cupping, and the practice is a mainstay of government-sponsored hospitals of Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). The fundamental therapeutic value of Cupping has been documented through several thousand years of clinical and subjective experience and has advanced its application to many areas.

Women healers in communities throughout the world practiced the use of suction to purge, stimulate and heal, passing down their knowledge to apprentices and as family tradition. Cross cultural studies show that Women represented a major source and influence as healers in many cultures, with people traveling for days to reach a well known healer. Reliable sources hold that Cupping throughout Europe, Africa, and Asia was usually performed by the Women in the communities. By the thirteenth century, however, universities including Biomedical studies in their curriculums excluded Women. Despite the fact that non-official “folk” medicine has been poorly represented, Women would have continued to play a major role in health care delivery. Had they been allowed to participate in the higher education arena, their contributions in natural healing modalities, and especially the safe and effective use and continuity of Cupping practices, would have been more substantial than by their male counterparts.

By the mid 1800's, the Western Medical Establishment had imposed upon society, their scientific model of medicine, defining medicine by making the body transparent, focusing on and treating the inside, in preference to the outside. Because Cupping (along with many other Holistic Healing Arts) was a surface treatment, it was inconsistent with this new Biomedical paradigm, which moved away from hands on personal contact and manipulative therapies of generations past. Although the use of Cupping has remained popular throughout many cultures worldwide, the 20th century witnessed its widespread decrease in many Anglo-Saxon societies. Even the North American Indians used Buffalo Horn, seashells, gourds and bones for Cupping, but as their culture was decimated and its people herded into reservations, their traditions of health maintenance and healing were also lost.

**METHODS**

Broadly speaking there are two types of cupping: dry cupping and bleeding or wet cupping (controlled bleeding) with wet cupping being more common. The British Cupping Society (BCS), an organisation promoting the practice, teaches both. As a general rule, wet cupping provides a more "curative treatment approach" to patient management whereas dry cupping appeals more to a "therapeutic and relaxation approach".

**Dry cupping**

The cupping procedure commonly involves creating a small area of low air pressure next to the skin. However, there is variety in the tools used, the method of creating the low pressure, and the procedures followed during the treatment.

The cups can be various shapes including balls or bells, and may range in size from 1 to 3 inches (25 to 76 mm) across the opening. Plastic and glass are the most common materials used today, replacing the horn, pottery, bronze and bamboo cups used in earlier times. The low air pressure required may be created by heating the cup or the air inside it with an open flame or a bath in hot scented oils, then placing it against the skin. As the air inside the cup cools, it contracts and draws the skin slightly inside. More recently, vacuum can be created with mechanical
suction pump acting through a valve located at the top of the cup. Rubber cups are also available that squeeze the air out and adapt to uneven or bony surfaces [3].

In practice, cups are normally used only on softer tissue that can form a good seal with the edge of the cup. They may be used singly or with many to cover a larger area. They may be used by themselves or placed over an acupuncture needle. Skin may be lubricated, allowing the cup to move across the skin slowly.

Fire cupping
Fire cupping involves soaking a cotton ball in 95% alcohol. The cotton is then clamped by a pair of forceps and lit via match or lighter. The flaming cotton ball is then, in one fluid motion, placed into the cup, quickly removed, and placed on the skin. By adding fire to the inside of the cup, oxygen is removed and a small amount of suction is created. Massage oil may be applied to create a better seal as well as allow the cups to glide over muscle groups (e.g. trapezius, erectors, latisimusdorsi, etc.) in an act called "moving cupping".

Wet cupping (Al-Hijamah or medicinal bleeding)
While the history of wet cupping may date back thousands of years, the first documented uses are found in the teachings of the Islamic prophet Muhammad [4]. According to Muhammad al-Bukhari, Muslim ibn al-HajjajNishapuri and Ahmad ibnHanbal, Muhammad approved of the Hijama (cupping) treatment [5].

A number of hadith support its recommendation and use by Muhammad. As a result, the practice of cupping therapy has survived in Muslim countries. Today, wet cupping is a popular remedy practiced in many parts of the Muslim world [6].

Alternatively, mild suction is created using a cup and a pump (or heat suction) on the selected area and left for about three minutes. The cup is then removed and small superficial skin incisions are made using a cupping scalpel. A second suction is used to carefully draw out a small quantity of blood. The procedure was piloted and developed by Ullah et al 2005 and has been endorsed by the British Cupping Society which aims to promote, protect and develop professional standards in cupping therapy [7].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
This patient Rohit, Age 46, Sex M, H/o Smoking, Alcoholic, past history of Treatment of mental depression for 3 years, Physical examination: Height 180 cm and Weight 99 Kg, Heart rate 76, chest clear to P & A, Heart Regular rhythm, No organomegaly, was suffering from Grade 2 hypertension (>160/100 mm Hg) since 5 years, because his BP measurements was in the abnormal hypertension range. Diagnosis was made confirmed from multiple BP measurements. The patient was advised for cupping therapy twice weekly for 2 months. On Every visit BP was measured through electronic automatic digital blood pressure monitor before and after the therapy to compare the result. And advice the patient of as follows:

- Weight reduction
- Restriction of sodium intake
- Reduction in dietary fat and cholesterol
- Avoidance of tobacco
- Restriction of alcohol consumption
- Regular physical exercise

The disturbance of the cardiac system may be caused by ischemia or oxyachrestia. Also myocardial infarction is due to ischemia resulting from arterial stenosis (arteriosclerosis) and the thrombi themselves when they are in these coronary arteries. The angina pectoris is generated when there is a decrease in supplying the heart tissue with the necessary Oxygen. Because the fat precipitations have partly blocked up the coronary artery. Then the high level of arterial hypertension may lead to complications such as: cardiac insufficiency, angina pectoris and encephala vascular incident. The long arterial hypertension may cause heart enlargement, and atherosclerosis.
Justification

Justification based on severity of the disease, patient was suffering 2nd grade HTN from a long time, just in 1st visit only cervical spine centre and bilateral two cups were used and result was compare before and after, we can’t put 7 or 8 cups in 1st visit because may be high fall in BP suddenly or may be cerebral ischemia may lead to death, in 3rd visit its found patient BP was set as normal by applying 7 cups and patient also feel well being and so same pattern was applied till 2 months.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Al-hijamah is a minor surgical excretory procedure that has medical and scientific bases in clearing blood and interstitial spaces from harmful substances, noxious substances and CPS. Both modern medicine and Unani medicine proved the beneficial value of WCT in treatment of diseases that are different in etiology and pathogeneses. WHO is invited to shed more light upon health benefits of Al-hijamah and to encourage its practice in hospitals.

Applying cupping is the best solution to prevent and treat such cases, as cupping decreases the level of fat (triglyceride, cholesterol) in blood to normal one, gets rid of hypertension and increases the blood flow through heart tissue after cleaning the arteries and preventing them from atherosclerosis. Researchers worldwide are invited to pay more attention to develop more research in investigating remedies practiced in Unani medicine to cure and relieve human suffering in many incurable diseases with dismal prognosis.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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