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Cancer therapeutics in the Unani system of medicine

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Cancer is a leading cause of death worldwide. It strikes more than one third of the world's population and it's the cause of more than 20% of all deaths.

The knowledge of cancer in the Unani systems of medicine can be traced back to ancient times (131-200 A.D.). According to the Unani system of medicine, cancer is essentially a disease of black bile i.e. excessive production and collection of black bile. Cancer mostly occurs in soft tissues like breast, uterus, stomach, intestine, pancreas, prostate, oral cavity & lungs etc.

The Unani philosophy is that cancer is the end stage of the degeneration of the metabolic efficiency of the body--the extinguishing of the innate heat--brought on primarily by incorrect diet and other imbalances in various aspects of the patient's life, usually occurring over a long period of time.

Unani physicians recognized the natural healing process as critical in achieving best possible health. Diseases were themselves natural and it was the physician's job to help nature to heal. They recommended following Principle of treatment in given successive steps: 1. Venesection 2. Evacuation of morbid humor from the body with the help of herbs like *Cuscuta reflexa*, *Curcuma longa*, *Withania somnifera*, *Vicia rosea*, *Arthrospira maxima*, *Nigella sativa*, *Trigonella foenum*, *Terminallia bellerica*, *Terminalia chebula*, *Embellica officinalis*, *Aloe vera* etc., 3. Diet should be easily digestible & reduce the excess production & accumulation of black bile and also help to cool and refresh the body 4. Pain associated with cancer to be controlled with medicines and also 5. Local medication for cancer.

Nature is a rich source of active principles against cancer cells. Natural products produced by plants and their synthetic derivatives are expected to play an important role in the development of innovative agents to inhibit the onset of cancer. There is a need to explore other hidden beneficial potential of plants mentioned in Unani System of Medicine.

Biography

Zaki Anwar Ansari is currently working as a Principal at Hakim Syed Ziaul Hasan Govt. Unani Medical College, AYUSH Campus, Bhopal, India. His area of interest is AYUSH Systems of Medicine- Cancer Basics & Therapeutics.

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