



Hijama practices and the perceived health benefits among the people of Al-Qassim Region, Saudi Arabia

Khawla Al-luhaidan *, Prarthana M S

Qassim University, KSA

Abstract

Statement of the Problem: Hijama the traditional Arabic name for wet cupping therapy means “to return to the normal size”, is a form of alternative medicine that has been in practice for thousands of years and was adopted by many different cultures. Hijama being a bloodletting technique involves cupping, puncturing and cupping (CPC) method. Cups are applied through vacuum, skin is lacerated, the cups are repositioned and the blood is drawn so that the morbid substances are evacuated. Arabic medical literature has reported Hijama being effective in treating many diseases differing in etiology and pathogenesis. The purpose of this study is to determine the knowledge, attitude, practices and effectiveness of Hijama among the population practicing Hijama, in Qassim, Saudi Arabia.

Methodology: 201 participants practicing Hijama were enrolled in the study. Data was collected using a self-administered online questionnaire in Arabic and analyzed using statistical software EpiInfo7.

Findings: Most of the study participants were female 70%. 33.8% were in the age group of 21 to 30 years. About 39% of them have a bachelor’s degree. Hijama as modality of treatment was used for: back or shoulder or neck pain 46.7% ($p=.014$), headache and migraine 29.3%, joint pain 22.9% ($p=.02$), hypersomnia 16.4%. Hijama was performed by traditional healers in 14% of the participants and at Hijama centers in 64% of the participants. About 72% of the participants notice effectiveness. The effectiveness increased with increase in frequency of Hijama ($p=.009$). 7% of them had suffered complications.

Conclusion and Significance: The study reveals Hijama as a simple, effective, economic alternative medicine to treat chronic aches and pains with minimal side effects and can be more beneficial when compared to the present use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs with relatively higher side-effects. Future research is needed to support its therapeutic benefits.

TABLE 1. Association between effectiveness and different types of diseases

	EFFECTIVENESS FREQUENCY (%)			TOTAL FREQUENCY (%) N= 201	P-VALUE
	Yes	No	Don't know		
Back or shoulder or neck pain	11 (51.91)	11 (51.70)	9 (43.30)	31 (100)	0.0147*
Joint pain	10 (44.78)	3 (14.55)	5 (23.46)	18 (100)	0.0278*
Headache and Migraine	43 (72.85)	7 (11.86)	9 (15.29)	59 (100)	0.0092 ($p < 0.05$)
Hypersomnia	24 (72.73)	8 (24.24)	1 (3.03)	33 (100)	0.0062
Hypertension	14 (57.50)	1 (3.25)	1 (3.25)	16 (100)	0.3489 ($p > 0.05$)
Hypertriolemia	4 (100)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	4 (100)	0.6547 ($p > 0.05$)
High blood sugar	3 (60)	2 (40.00)	0 (0.00)	5 (100)	0.3426 ($p > 0.05$)
Facial paralysis	3 (100)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	3 (100)	0.877 ($p > 0.05$)
Circul diseases	4 (100)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	4 (100)	0.6547 ($p > 0.05$)

* $P < 0.05$, Statistically significant

Biography

Miss Khawla Al-luhaidan is an aspirant student from college of Applied Medical Sciences. Her interest in Laboratory Medicine and also alternative medicine has been phenomenal. She has herself tried the alternative form of medicine Hijama to know its effectiveness and was instrumental in the accomplishment of this project. Dr Prarthana M S has her expertise in field of Medical Microbiology. Doctor by Profession and being a specialist Microbiologist, evaluation and passion in improving the health and wellbeing has been her utmost priority. One among the many threats the World is facing is drug resistance, therefore her interest also lies in finding herbal remedies to substitute the existing antibiotics. Not only she believes in allopathic medicine, but has a great interest in complementary and alternative form of medicine such as Yoga, Acupressure, Cupping therapy etc. Work on Hijama has been a result of one such interest.

Publications

1. Al-Tabakha, M. M., Sameer, F. T., Saeed, M. H., Batran, R. M., Abouhegazy, N. T., & Farajallah, A. A. (2018). Evaluation of bloodletting cupping therapy in the management of hypertension. *Journal of Pharmacy & Bioallied Sciences*, 10(1), 1.
2. El Sayed, S. M., Al-quliti, A. S., Mahmoud, H. S., Baghdadi, H., Maria, R. A., Nabo, M. M. H., & Hefny, A. (2014). Therapeutic benefits of Al-hijamah: in light of modern medicine and prophetic medicine. *American Journal of Medical and Biological Research*, 2(2), 46-71.
3. Al-Bedah, A. M., Elsubai, I. S., Qureshi, N. A., Aboushanab, T. S., Ali, G. I., El-Olemy, A. T., ... & Alqaed, M. S. (2019). The medical perspective of cupping therapy: Effects and mechanisms of action. *Journal of traditional and complementary medicine*, 9(2), 90-97.
4. Aboushanab, T. S., & AlSanad, S. (2018). Cupping therapy: an overview from a modern medicine perspective. *Journal of acupuncture and meridian studies*, 11(3), 83-87.
5. Nimrouzi, M., Mahbodi, A., Jaladat, A. M., Sadeghfard, A., & Zarshenas, M. M. (2014). Hijamat in traditional Persian medicine: risks and benefits. *Journal of evidence-based complementary & alternative medicine*, 19(2), 128-136