

PREVENTATIVE MEDICINE AND HYGIENE IN ISLAM

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بعد البحث الجاري الموسع في مجال الدراسات الصحية، فإن فهم العوامل المسببة لأمراض مختلفة أصبحت قابلة للفهم بشكل كبير. إنه لاقتراح واضح أن تطور الإنسان في علوم الصحة قاده ليكون أكثر حضارة من سلفه أي ما يسمى «العصور المظلمة» من الصعب معرفة الوضع الاجتماعي للسلف دون الرجوع إلى الكتب المقدسة، التي يمكن أن تعتبر في بيئة الإنسان، الكتب التاريخية الموثقة من العصر القديم. وذلك لايجاد الفروق في المعايير من أجل المقارنة. من الممكن أن يتبع المسلمون القواعد والقوانين المذكورة في القرآن والحديث دون معرفة الحكمة منهم ومن الممكن أن تطرح قضايا محددة حول هذه الحكم لغير المسلمين الذين يتفاعلون معها. النظام الإسلامي الصحي المقترح بواسطة الوحي المقدس وبدون بحث علمي يبدو بأنه مثل شمولية النظام الصحي المعتمد على البحث العلمي أو ربما أفضل شمولية منه. هناك العديد من الحقائق العلمية المذكورة في القرآن والحديث يمكن أن تعتبر من قبل الباحثين كنقاط تحتاج إلى المزيد من البحث.

With the advancement of medical research, understanding of the causative factors of different diseases has become increasingly understandable. Man's progress in health sciences leads him to be more civilized than his predecessors from the so called "dark ages". Without reference to the Holy- books which can be considered within context as well-documented historical books from an older era, it would be difficult to know the status of the condition of our predecessors in order to find out differences in hygienic standards for comparison. Believers in Islam may follow seemingly abstract rules guided by the Qura'n and Hadith without knowing the wisdom behind them and raise certain issues about them to non-Muslims that they interact with. The health protocol offered by the Islamic religion by Divine Inspiration and without scientific research appears to be as comprehensive as or better than the well-known, scientific-based health protocols defined currently. Many scientific facts touched upon in the Qura'n and Hadith can be considered by researchers as subject for more research

Key Words: Preventive medicine, Hygiene, Islam

INTRODUCTION

Human beings are always looking for a secure and comfortable life in order to achieve happiness. Main focus of research in health sciences is directed toward protecting man from different diseases and solving many emerging health problems. Different health organizations, like the "Joint Commission of International Accreditation" follow certain protocols for physical hygiene, infection control and hazards prevention measures. These protocols are mainly concerned with the methodical improvement of the physical sanitary condition only, devoid of emotional and social aspects of life. The physical sanitary condition means that the body is free from filth or infectious harmful matter "externally". On the other hand, human morals and values may form personal attitudes that

affect the physical sanitary conditions "internally". Daily mental stresses and the consequent active depression of a stressful modern lifestyle may reflect the need for a comprehensive health protocol that includes social and spiritual preventive medicine.

Going back to history, "back to the so-called dark ages", it is quite a revelation to find out that a comprehensive health protocol was existing and practiced by Muslim society nearly 1500 years ago, and even more surprisingly, it is as current and applicable today as it was in the times of the predecessors. Unfortunately, many Muslims nowadays may misrepresent this as a cultural health protocol. Islam is a comprehensive religion that embraces most decisively all the aspects of human existence, spiritual and material, moral and physical, emotional and intellectual, personal and social. The Qura'n, being the actual Words of Allah, serves as a potential means to govern all sectors of life. It is the faith in a continuous purposeful evaluation of thinking that the glorious

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Qura'n and the Hadith have motivated researchers to analyze the treatment and prevention of diseases based on the following Quranic verse, "and make not your own hands contribute to (your) destruction" Sura 2, Verse 195. There are many detailed practical suggestions in the Qura'n and Sunna on the practicing of a safe and healthy life in general, and the way man should behave in many situations of his existence. However, it is important to understand the correlation between the statements in the Qura'n with the scientific theories of modern life for health precautions and in order to realize that Islamic rules and regulations guiding the man for a happy life. According to the Hadith "Everyone will be asked in the Hereafter about their youth and how they spent it, about their wealth and money as to how they earned it and spent it, and about his knowledge and how usefully they used it".

Aim of the study:

The aim of this study was to elucidate the values and validity of the Islamic health protocol for our own life at present. Also, to correlate current research evidences and the historically based health care protocol found in Islam.

Does the religion consider people's health?

Firm belief is the main motivation for people to practice religion, and the incentive being an eternal life of bliss in the Hereafter. When activities of worship come along with the added benefits to the individual, like a healthier and more comfortable way of life, then the wisdom behind the worship activity can be realized.

PURIFICATION

Purification may include physical and also the spiritual aspects of life. A good sense of purification causes high self-esteem and a peaceful heart. To get rid of dirt and for infection control, many researches have been conducted inductive to a healthier lifestyle. However, for a truly contented life, surely spiritual purification is needed, although research work does not really take this aspect into consideration as it is very clinical and methodical, often with no room for a mentally satisfied piece of mind, especially as modern scientific study has, within context, turned its back on religion thinking it as awkward and not quantifiable. Hadith "Purification is the half of belief and no God besides Allah fill the scale".

PHYSICAL PURIFICATION:

1. Wudu or "Ritual Ablution"
2. Garments cleanliness
3. Washings
4. Body cleanliness
5. Precautions during menstruation
6. Post natal care
7. Circumcision
8. Dental hygiene
9. Toilet activities

Physical Purification may be obtained from different activities in Islam like, Wudu and different types of washings as well as general precaution from situations resulting from bodily functions such as menstruation.

1. Wudu: It may have the following benefits.

- Ear wax accumulates in the ear canal that leads from the outer ear to the ear drum. Daily washing with water is enough to keep the outer ear clean. Also microorganisms may accumulate behind the ear which is also cleaned away.
- Dandruff is associated with some disturbance in the tiny glands of the skin. Soaking the hair daily with Ablution and brushing hair will improve circulation and minimize dandruff.
- Nose cleaning by snuffing water up into the nose and blowing it out will remove sticky mucus which may be a good medium for germs.
- Mouth rinse will remove carbohydrate materials and bacteria that cause teeth decay. Poor oral hygiene will result in bad tooth decay or gum disease.
- Mouth odour by rinsing or the recommended use of miswak or toothstick after making Wudua' and brushing the teeth, harmful lingering odours will be eliminated.

Hadith "Whoever eats onion, garlic or leek should not visit our mosques"

- Toes cleaning may remove dirt "dust & sweat" and massaging the skin to improve circulation and kill fungus such as "Tinea Pedis"

2. Garments Cleanliness

Quran says "And keep your garments free from dirt." Sura Muddathir, 74, Verse 4. It is recommended that when men go to the mosque, for example, that they wear nice and clean garments and apply perfume to prevent bodily odours affecting their prayers as well as other worshippers prayers.

3. Washings

Friday's washing

Hadith "It is highly recommended that every Muslim takes a bath at least once a week"

Washing after sexual intercourse

"If you are in a state of Janaba (i.e. after a sexual discharge), purify yourselves (bath your whole body). Surah 5, Verse 6

Washing from menstruation "keep away from women during menses and do not go unto them till they are purified (from menses and have taken a bath)," Surah Baqara 2, Verse 222

Washing hands

Hadith "Whoever slept after eating and did not wash his/her hands and gets a disease, should not blame except himself/herself"

Hadith "Prophet Muhammad PBUH used to eat with three fingers and lick food stuck to them before washing"

Hadith "When anyone wakes up, he/she should wash their hands, because he/she does not know where his/her hands were put".

Washing and scrubbing in between fingers and toes is recommended in Islam. The skin in between fingers and toes is a cultural media for fungus. Also, it becomes scaly, so washing and scrubbing such skin can prevent fungal infection.

4. Body Cleanliness

Hadith "Ten actions are from the "Fithra" (one's natural disposition to inherently believe in Allah), trimming the mustache, having a beard, using a miswak toothstick, snuffing water into the nose for cleansing, trimming the nails, washing skin in between the fingers and toes, shaving hair under armpits and around the pubic region, rinsing the mouth without wasting much water."

Hadith "Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) set a time limit for the trimming of the mustache, trimming of the nails, shaving hair under the armpits and around the pubic region, that it may not exceed more than forty days."

Perfuming is also recommended. Hadith "The things that I love in this life are musk perfumes and women"

5. Precautions during Menstruation

They ask you concerning menstruation. Say: that is

an Adha (a harmful thing for the husband to have a sexual intercourse with his wife while she is having her menses), therefore keep away from women during menses and do not (have sexual intercourse with them) until they are purified (from menses and have taken a bath). And when they have purified themselves, then go in unto them as Allah has ordained for you (have sexual relations with them in any manner as long as it is in their vagina and never in their anus). Truly, Allah loves those who turn unto Him in repentance and loves those who purify themselves (by taking a bath and cleaning and washing thoroughly their private parts, bodies, for their prayers). Surah Baqara, 2, Verse 222

With menstruation, the womb's layers disintegrate in order to re-start the next months cycle unless pregnancy ensues. Blood during the menstruation period may be a good cultural media for bacteria and other micro-organism. So, sexual intercourse during the menstrual period may make both spouses liable for infection. Psychologically, most women feel disturbed at this time, suffering from cramps, headaches and hot-flushes and don't feel clean and so naturally avoid sex during such time, as such, having sexual intercourse during menses is considered a harmful thing for both the husband and his wife.

6. Post Natal Care

"The mothers shall breast-feed their children for two whole years, for those parents who desire to complete the term of breast-feeding, but the father of the child shall bear the cost of the mother's food and clothing on a reasonable basis." Surah Baqara, 2, Verse 233

7. Circumcision

All Muslim men must be circumcised, normally this is done soon after birth as is a routine operation even for non-Muslims nowadays. But it can be performed later on in life, as it is mentioned that Prophet Abraham did circumcision when he was eighty years old. The removal of the foreskin makes it much easier to maintain a healthy and clean penis, whereas retaining it causes the build up of odourous dead skin as a potentially bacterial media called smegma. Being circumcised is also considered healthier during the act of sexual intercourse with one's wife, for obvious reasons.

8. Dental Hygiene

Miswak/ Sewak or toothstick

Hadith "Use a miswak toothstick. It acts as an

antiseptic for your mouth, Allah likes it. Whenever the Angel Gabriel visits, he advises me to use it”

Hadith “If it was not to prevent my people from difficulty, I would have ordered them to use miswak before every prayer”

- Miswak comes from the roots of the Arak tree and contains useful chemicals that fight tooth decay and gum disease. It is scientifically proven that miswak has a percentage of fluoride which is beneficial for dental hygiene. Also, it has natural antibiotics, vitamin C, and some organic oils. Miswak also contains Silicon which removes un-natural teeth colors. It also contains Tanin materials beneficial for gum tissue turgidity. Tarek Al-Khori, 1983. *Clinical Dental Prophylactic Journal*, 1983
- Rodat “Germany”: I have to report the great benefits of Sewak. Actually, there is wisdom behind its usage, we did not know it.
- James Traner, DDS “Tennessee University”: Arak Sewak may contain the antiseptic materials that can kill microbes. Sulphur, citocetrol and sodium are of these materials. “Dental Tropical Medicine”.
- Swiss Medical team: “Sewak may contain materials for good odors, anticeptic and strong antibodies”
- Also, it is scientifically proven that Sewak may contain some material which is good for gum bleeding, such as, iron organic salts, phosphate and sodium”
- On 1406 H., a dental researcher group from King Saud University conducted a research about the components of the Arak roots. They concluded that these roots contain some materials to prevent dental decay and fight some microbes and microorganisms. Also, they conclude that these materials have an ability to protect teeth enamel from acidic solution in the mouth.

9. Toilet Activities

It is recommended in Islam to wash, with water, the private parts after urination and defecation until they are clean. In case there is no water, the use of tissues or stones is recommended. Muslims are ordered to use their left hand for cleaning of their private parts, just as they are ordered to eat food and drink with their right hands and maintain cleanliness.

SPIRITUAL PURIFICATION

“And We imposed a duty upon Ibrahim and Ismail (saying) Purify My house for those who go around and those who bend down and prostrate themselves (in worship).” Sura Baqara 2, Verse 125

“Allah wishes only to remove Ar-Rijs (evil deeds and sins) from you, O members of the family (of the Prophet PBUH) and to purify you with a thorough purification.” Sura 33, Al-Ahzab Verse 33

Spiritual purification is meant in this verse, which can be achieved by keeping away from evil deeds and sins. This will lead to a safe and pacified heart. Belief gives a target of eternal life in Paradise as a physical reality following the rejoining of the soul with the resurrected body in the Hereafter to the Believer (and eternal punishment is the physical reality of Hell for the disbeliever). The intimate relationship between the heart and emotions, and the body may reflect the possibility of different stress related and cardiovascular diseases and mental psychosomatic disorders the body may suffer from. That is why there is high statistics of people who commit suicide in the modern societies in comparison with other so-called third world “developing” countries.

Precautions for Bed Ridden

There is a story mentioned in the Qura’n that Allah the Exalted preserved the bodies of some people in cave for 309 years then caused them to awake at a later era, in order to teach various lessons to their fellow men. Such bodies were exposed to continuous turning on their right and left side. Also, they were exposed to sun’s light and heat daily to keep them alive.

Physical Rejuvenation

Hadith “The Devil ties three knots in the upper vicinity of the head of a sleeping person. If the person wakes up and remembers Allah, one knot would be untied, and if he/she makes wudua’ another knot would be untied, and if he/she performs the morning Fajr prayer, the third knot would be untied and the person will become fresh and has a peaceful moral, otherwise he/she will remain sluggish and lazy.”

Prayer Activities and Spine Care

Physical prayer activities are very helpful for the locomotor system. The stretching profile during bowing or “Prostration” may mobilize the spine from head to tail, stretch the neck and back muscles, and open

the intervertebral foraminae. Extremity joints may be flexed fully for the lower extremities and semiflexed for those in upper extremities. Prayer in the early morning called the "Fajr prayer" is very beneficial for body joints and muscles after long sleep.

Health Quarantine in Islam

For current epidemic diseases in the news like Cholera, SARS or AIDS, stringent health quarantine precautions are used to prevent the spread of disease and infection to others. In Islam, health quarantine is recommended by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It is documented that Omar Bin Al-Khatab the second Caliph or leader after Muhammad (PBUH) followed these rules to prevent an epidemic of the disease called "Plague" from migrating beyond its origins in Syria.

Hadith "If you hear of the Plague disease affecting any country don't travel to it if you are outside of it, and don't leave the country if the disease is affecting that country".

Qua'nic Recitation

Extended vowels during Qura'nic recitation may be considered as a good training for lungs and heart by respiratory therapy. Controlling such vowels for long time may help to train respiratory muscles, relaxing them and improve exchange of gases through open alveoli.

DISABILITY

Disability is the restriction of a person in relation to his/her immediate environment as a result of impairment; and includes communication, personal care activities, posture, locomotion, and manipulation level at which an individual impairment is reflected in goal-directed behaviors incorporating environmental interaction.

Physical Disability

This category of disability is highly variable depending on the cultural and social environment of an individual.

"No blame or sin is imputed upon the blind, nor is there a sin upon the lame, nor is there blame or sin upon the sick." Surah 48, Verse 17

Mental Disability

Hadith "No duties and responsibilities are imputed for who was sleeping and one who is insane"

Aging Process

"And among you there is he who dies (young), and among you there is he who is brought back to the miserable old age, so that he knows nothing after having known much." Surah 22, Verse 5

"Allah is He Who created you in a state of weakness, then gave you strength after weakness, then after strength gave you weakness and grey hair." Surah 30, Verse 54

Hadith "He is not one of us who does not show dignity to the elderly."

Respect for elders is one of the morals acted upon in Islam. This is extremely important for the parents. When elders find such care, they feel that they have a part in life and are not neglected but elevated in dignity.

"And he whom We grant long life- We reverse him in a creation (weakness after strength). Will they not then understand?" Sura 36 Ya-Sin, 68

"And your Lord has decreed that you worship non but him. And that you are dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, do not say to them (a word of disrespect,) such as "Uff," nor shout at them but address them in terms of honour. And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say "My Lord! Bestow on them Your mercy as they did bring me up when I was young." Surah 17 Al-Isra', 23-24

Behavioral Attitudes

1. Feeding behavior
2. Drinking behavior
3. Sexual behavior
4. Sleep behavior
5. Toilet activities

Feeding Behavior

Hadith "We are a people who don't eat unless we feel hungry, and when we eat we don't get overfull."

Hadith "Prophet Muhammad PBUH ordered us not to eat when we lie down on the stomach"

Hadith "I don't eat whilst leaning on one side"

Hadith "Nothing filled up with a source of disease more than the stomach. It is enough for the son of Adam to have a small amount of food to get along with the requirements of daily life. If he/she has to eat more, then let it be; one third of stomach for food, another third for drink and the last third keep it for breathing."

Nutritional diseases are common in our modern society. Over feeding is the cause of different diseases like obesity. Also, certain types of food may cause different diseases such as arteriosclerosis and diabetes.

Hadith "O you youth, mention Allah's Name and eat with the right hand and eat which is closest to you."

"O you who believe (in the oneness of Allah) eat of the lawful things that We have provided you with, and be grateful to Allah. He has forbidden you only the dead animals, and the blood, and the flesh of swine, and that which is slaughtered as a sacrifice for other than Allah (or has been slaughtered for idols, on which Allah's Name has not been mentioned while slaughtering). But if one is forced by necessity without willful disobedience nor transgressing due limits, then there is no sin on him." Surah 2, Verse 172-173

Islamic Protocol for Eating

- Mention Allah's Name
- Eat with the right hand
- Eat what is closest to you on your plate
- Don't eat whilst lying on your belly
- Don't eat when you are full
- Thank Allah after eating/drinking
- Wash your hands after a meal

Mad Cow Disease "A New Disease"

"Then let man look at his food" Surah 81, Verse 24

Natural wholesome food, for humans and animals, is the healthiest food. Natural food is convenient for natural growth that will benefit all. Let alone the side effects of hormone and anti-biotic supplements force fed to dairy animals, when farmers start to mix blood and grind bones with some materials to make food for cows so that their product turnover increases rapidly, they are effectively turning herbivorous cows into meat eaters, it brings forward a new disease, which in turn affects both the animals as well as humans.

Favorable Foods "Milk, Dates & Honey"

"And shake the trunk of the date-palm towards you, it will let fall fresh ripe-dates upon you." "So, eat and drink and be glad." Surah 19 Maryam 25-26

"And verily! In the cattle, there is a lesson for you. We give you to drink of that which is in their bellies, from between their excretions and their blood, pure milk; palpable to the drinkers." Surah 16 An-Nahl-66

"And your Lord inspired the bees, saying "Take your

habitations in the mountains and in the trees and in what they erect." "Then, eat of all fruits, and follow the ways your Lord made easy (for you). There comes forth from their bellies, a drink of varying colour wherein is healing for men. Verily, in this is indeed a sign for people who think." Surah 16 An-Nahl 68-69

Honey "A Healing Medicine"

"Wherein is healing for men" Surah 16, Verse 69

Hadith "One of the Companions came to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) asking for advice (his brother had stomach ache). The Prophet advised him saying, "give him honey," the man came back and said, "I did but saw no immediate change" (twice or thrice), the Prophet said "Allah is the Truthful " (the Companions brother did heal).

Honey can be considered as a treatment for wounds. Honey is not a convenient culture for microbes and microorganisms.

Fasting

Hadith "Fast for your well being"

Hadith "Dieting is the head of medicine, and the stomach is the house of diseases, so let everybody to get used to the habit of regularly fasting."

Most of GI diseases can be treated with fasting. It is recommended in Western medicine to treat some GI diseases with fasting. The person's mouth who practices fasting gives off an odour which comes from the fact that the body may get energy during the fasting period from the reserved energy.

Vomiting as a Traditional Prophylactic Medicine

Vomiting is one of five natural routes of excretion. The other four are urination, defecation, sweating and odors and bleeding like the "Hujama". It is considered as a bodily self-prophylactic treatment for relieving stomach ache.

It is of two types. One involuntary by a reflex action and the other is voluntary which you do it when you feel stomach ache.

Sexual Behavior

Fornication, adultery, homosexuality, bestiality, pedophilia and other types of deviant sexual gratifications are forbidden in Islam. Sexually related diseases and unlawful pregnancies are at critical levels in many developed countries and preventative measures are failing to curb them. As mentioned previously, even

within marriage, it is unlawful for the husband to have sex with his wife whilst she is on her menses or to have sex with her from her anus. Psychological preparations for legal sex found within the sanctity of marriage are recommended by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), genuine caring for each others feelings and kind words and foreplay are recommended for healthy marital relations.

Prevention of illegal sex

“And come not near to unlawful sex. Verily, it is a Fahishah (i.e. anything that transgresses its limits: a great sin), and an evil way (that leads one to Hell unless Allah forgives him) Surah 17, Al-Isa’ 32

Sleep Behavior

It is not recommended to lie down on the belly during sleep. It is preferred to sleep on one’s right side.

The lumbo-sacral angle is normally 35-40° at which the shearing force is considered to be 50%. By increasing such an angle the shearing force on the lower vertebral discs (L5-S1) is increased by 20%. That is why the person who sleeps on the abdomen usually feels low back pain when he/she gets up.

Lying on left-side, increases the pressure on the heart by other viscera like the liver and stomach.

Toilet activities

- Preferable to urinate sitting/crouched.
- Preferable not to hold back if you start to urinate
- Wash the privates thoroughly after urination or defecation. Clean hands after use.

Psychological and Emotional Stability

“The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a fear in their hearts and when His Verses (this Qura’n) are recited unto them, they (i.e the Verses) increase their Faith; and they put their trust in their Lord (Alone)” Surah 8, Al-Anfal, Verse 2

“And whoever is saved from his own covetousness, such are they who will be the successful” Surah Al-Hashr, Verse 9

“In order that you may not grieve at the things that you fail to get, nor rejoice over that which has been given to you, And Allah likes not prideful boasters” Surah 57, Verse 23

To get the feeling of sympathy

To get a feeling of sympathy and to achieve your needs: Hadith “Would you like to have sympathy for the orphaned, touch his/her head nicely, feed him/her you will get the feeling of sympathy and achieve your needs.”

Management of Depression, Sadness and Anger

There are special supplications in Islam to get rid of depression and sadness as recommended by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), such as; “O Allah, I seek refuge with you from depression, sadness, disability, laziness, parsimony, and the tyranny of men”

Conclusion

It is obvious that Islam, with reference to the Qura’n and Hadith, provides a highly standardized health protocol to be followed by Muslims “Believers”. This health protocol is comprehensive, that includes physical, spiritual and social aspects of human existence. Socially, the low statistics of crimes and people who committed suicide, in Muslim countries, in comparison with those in Western countries, may practically reflect the positive impact of this health protocol on humans. New diseases that appear in Europe, the USA and other non-Muslim countries, (like AIDS, SARS and Mad Cow Disease) may be a truthful indicator for the validity of such Islamic health protocols.

To get rid of different epidemic diseases, to have a safe and happy life, and to have healthy generations, the Islamic Health Protocol is highly recommended to be followed among all the people.

Scientifically, no research evidence contradicted with any item of the Islamic protocol.

Comparison Between Islamic and Modern perspectives for Health Care

It is interesting to know that this health protocol was issued in Arab Peninsula, 1400 years ago, where there was a scarcity of water. Ancient Arabs during such era of time had no much experience other than a simple natural environment made up of the sky, sand dunes and herds of cattle. They had no communication with any other civilization to copy or imitate their culture. When such Islamic health protocol supercedes the Modern Health protocol, which is based on research evidence, it is clear to say that this is a miracle. Was it man made?