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## Review Article

### PATHOPHYSIOLOGY OF *BUTHUR-I-LABANIYYA* (ACNE VULGARIS) IN THE UNANI SYSTEM OF MEDICINE

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#### ABSTRACT

One of the most prevalent dermatological conditions affecting adolescents is Acne vulgaris. In the Unani System of Medicine, acne vulgaris is termed *Buthur-i-labaniyya*. It has been defined by eminent Unani scholars as a skin condition characterized by small eruptions on the cheeks and nose that resemble condensed milk drops, hence the name is given *Buthur-i-labaniyya* (Milky eruptions). Acne vulgaris is a pilosebaceous unit disease characterized by the development of small eruptions that can be Papules, Pustules, Nodules, Comedones or Cysts. Although severe acne is not life-threatening, it can have an impact on social and mental health. There is a temporary treatment for acne in modern medicine, but it has several negative effects. Today, it is imperative to treat them with minimal or no negative effects. The Unani physicians have historically treated acne vulgaris. The Unani System of Medicine provides a therapeutic approach based on the consumption of oral blood purifiers by use of topical Unani drugs with Anti-inflammatory, Analgesic, Wound healing, and detergent qualities all of which are best tolerated by adults and adolescents. Numerous single and compound preparations that can be used topically and orally to treat acne vulgaris are available in the Unani medical system. These drugs work effectively and are safe, affordable, and well-tolerated. The focus of the current review is on the etiopathogenesis and treatment of acne using USM medications.

**Keywords:** Unani Medicine; *Buthur-i-labaniyya*; Acne vulgaris.

#### INTRODUCTION

The Unani System of Medicine is an age-old system of medicine which believes in the theory of *Akhlat* (humours) There are four types of Humours i.e *Dam* (Blood), *Balgham* (Phlegm), *Safra* (Yellow bile) and *Sauda* (Black bile). Any derangement in the quantity and quality of these four humours leads to the disease.<sup>1</sup> These humours make up the temperament of a human body, and therefore any derangement in the humours may lead up to the dystemperament of the body and ultimately causes disease. The disease described in USM is of two types either it is *Maddi* or *Ghayr Madd*.<sup>2</sup> In English it is called Pimples<sup>3</sup> while in Hindi – *Keel*, *Muhase*<sup>3</sup> in Arabic – *Buthur-i-Labaniyya*<sup>4</sup> and in Urdu – *Muhasa*<sup>5</sup> & *Kil*.<sup>6</sup> Under the name of the disease entity “*Buthur-i-labaniyya*” acne vulgaris is described, pathologically analysed, and treated in Unani literature. In Arabic, the words “*Buthur*” and “*labaan*” imply “Boil” and “Milk”, respectively. *Buthur-i-labaniyya* is the name given to the lesion (boils) because of how they resemble the drop of milk.<sup>1</sup> The term “Acne vulgaris” is thought to have originated from the Greek word “point” and the Latin word “vulgaris” which means “common.”<sup>7</sup> According to classical Unani literature, *Buthur* (Acne) is a type of *warm* (inflammation) which differs only in size. Acne is a small type of a *warm*.<sup>8</sup>

#### Epidemiology and site involved

Acne vulgaris is a chronic inflammatory disease of the pilosebaceous units and is characterized by seborrhoea, the formation of comedones, erythematous papules and pustules, less frequently by nodules, deep pustules, or pseudocysts and in some cases, It is accompanied by scarring.<sup>9,10</sup>

**Table 1: Age-group affected by Acne vulgaris<sup>11</sup>**

Onset	Adolescence
Peak incidence	14 to 19 years
Resolves	Mid-twenties.

**Table 2: The area involved in Acne Vulgaris<sup>12</sup>**

Sites involved	
Face	99%
Back	60%
Chest	15%

Although it is usually a condition of the adolescent, acne affects 8% of 25- 34-year-old and 3% of the 30-44-year-old age group.<sup>12</sup>

**Table 3. Unani scholars have described Buthur-i-labaniyya in their legendary treatise as mentioned below**

Author	Definition
Ibn Sina (AD 980–1037)	Defined it as whitish boils appear at the nose and cheeks, resembling “ <i>Nuqtae-labaan</i> ” (milk drop/point) <sup>1</sup>
Tabri (AD 985) and Azam Khan (AD 1917)	Defined the disease that mostly occurs at puberty, on the face and cheeks as whitish <i>buthur</i> (boil) that appears like a “ <i>Nuqtae sheer</i> ” (point or drop of milk) and upon squeezing, an oily secretion comes out like “ <i>Roghan-e-zard</i> ” ( <i>ghee</i> ). <sup>13,14</sup>
Zakariya Razi	Mentioned it as “ <i>Atiasoos</i> ” – small and dry <i>buthur</i> of face”. <sup>15</sup>
Qarshi	Defined it as a <i>Mutaaddi</i> (infectious) disease in which small white eruptions appear on the face, nose, and cheeks and on pressing a cheesy material expressed out from it. <sup>14</sup>

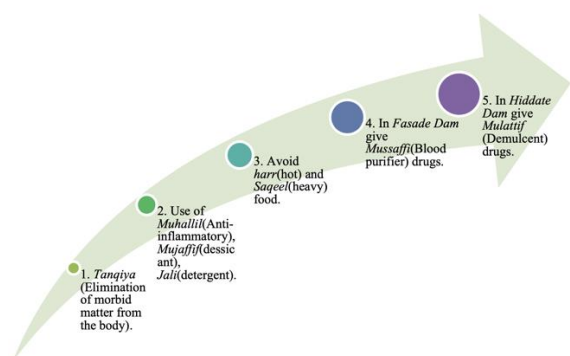
### Etiopathogenesis

*Buthur* is a type of *Warm* (inflammation). The anomalies that occur in *Buthur* are *Su-i-mizaj*, *Su-i-tarkeeb* and *Tafarruq-i-ittehal* and they are caused by *Fasid Madda*, (waste material) irregular diet and environmental factors.<sup>16</sup> If any organ is unable to excrete *Fuzlat* (waste material) from it then those *fuzlat* are directed to the weaker organ if it doesn't result in the tear of mucous membrane or skin then it is known as warm and if it tears the skin then it is called as *buthur*.<sup>8</sup> *Tabiyat* tries to eliminate the morbid material through the skin in the form of swellings or *buthur*. Under favourable conditions, *Lateef bukharat* (vapours) of the body move towards the surface of the skin where they condensed and transformed into pus forming material called *Madda-i-Sadidiya*.<sup>1</sup> In other words the yellow pus *Madda-i-Sadidiya* originates due to the *Bukharat-i-badan* and later moves towards the skin and clogs the pores.<sup>13</sup> According to Hippocrates, variation in heat and moisture and climatic changes cause the imbalance of humors. Balance is stored using the opposite treatment of heat and moisture in the diet and hygiene. The nature of eruption depends on the type of humor involved. When the eruption is limited to the face and is white it is called *Buthur-i-labaniyya*. If the humor involved is *balgham* (phlegm) then it results in the pus-filled *Buthur*.<sup>14</sup> If there is a recurrence of pus forming *Buthur* and the quantity of pus is more, then after healing, they, leave a permanent scar.<sup>17</sup>

### Asbab-i-Mard (Causes of Disease)

- Blockage of the sebaceous gland which produces fat<sup>18,19</sup>
- Young age<sup>18</sup>
- Increased secretion of male sex hormone after puberty (Testosterone)<sup>20</sup>
- Propioni Bacterium Acne<sup>5</sup>
- *Qillat-i Dam* (Anaemia)<sup>20</sup>
- *Fasad-i Dam* (Impurities of blood)<sup>21</sup>
- *Qabḍ* (Constipation)<sup>5</sup>
- *Shiddat-i Hararat* (Extreme hotness)<sup>20</sup>

### Principle of treatment of *Buthur-i-labaniyya* in USM<sup>5,22,20,1</sup>



**Figure 1: Image depicting the principle of treatment of**

### *Buthur-i-labaniyya* in USM

#### Treatment

The greatest components of the Unani medicine include its comprehensive philosophy and temperament-based diagnosis and treatment of illnesses. Additionally, the distinctive features of the Unani System include the *Asbab-i-Sittah Zarooriyah* (Six Essential Factors of Life) principles, which are crucial for tenacity and maintaining health.<sup>17</sup> The principles of the holistic approach to healing, which takes into account the patient's psycho-physical wellbeing, are the foundation for the use of Unani drugs (often derived from plants), various therapeutic interventions, and regimens for the prevention and treatment of diseases and health promotion. Some of the single as well as compound drugs have been found equally effective in the treatment of acne vulgaris.

**Table 4: Single Unani drugs used for the treatment of *Buthur-i-labaniyya***

Unani drug	Botanical name	Parts used
Amba Haldi	<i>Curcuma Amada</i>	Rhizome <sup>23</sup>
Barge Neem	<i>Azadirachta indica</i>	Leaves <sup>23</sup>
Shahtara	<i>Fumaria officinalis</i>	Leaves <sup>1</sup>
Injeer	<i>Ficus carica</i>	Fruit <sup>1</sup>
Shooneez/Kalonji	<i>Black cumin</i>	Seeds <sup>1</sup>

**Table 5: Compound Unani formulations effective in *Buthur-i-labaniyya*<sup>24</sup>**

Compound drug	Juze khas
Itrifal Shahatra,	Shahatra
Majoon Ushba	Ushba
Habb-e- Musaffi khoon	Barg e neem, Barg e Bakayin
Habbe e limu	Limu

#### Preventive Measures

Patients might benefit most from preventive steps if they want to lessen the intensity, swelling, and redness of their face. These suggestions can help with acne-related issues.<sup>9</sup>

- Refrain from repeatedly rubbing and scratching the afflicted areas.
- Wash your hands frequently and use antibacterial lotion to keep them clean.
- Steer clear of makeup. Use only gel-based products if necessary because they won't clog pores.
- Keep out of the sun as it may cause sebaceous glands that cause acne to produce more. Always wear sunscreen outside.
- A balanced, comprehensive diet that includes more fresh fruit and vegetables should be advised.
- Water should be consumed in sufficient quantities (10–12 glasses daily) to aid in the body's detoxification process.

## DISCUSSION

At present no specific regimen has sufficient evidence to be recommended for acne patients. However, an integrative approach would benefit from educating the patient about diet and lifestyle together with the conventional or Unani treatment outlined above. Especially considering that the face is the body part that receives the most care and spends the most time in contact with the outside world, it is crucial to give it extra attention to keep it clean and radiant. Patients with acne vulgaris may experience psychological burdens such as depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem.

## CONCLUSION

The Allopathy system of medicine offers numerous treatment options for acne vulgaris. Long-term use of antibiotics for acne vulgaris contributes to antibiotic resistance, and kidney and gastrointestinal problems. None of these regimens is free of adverse effects. In the Unani system of medicine, acne vulgaris is effectively managed with natural medicines as well as therapeutic regimens with minimal side effects even after long-term usage. Acne vulgaris is usually treated with systemic blood purifiers along with topical Unani drugs. The Unani system of medicine contains successful and safe treatment of acne vulgaris so there is a dire need to explore the effective safe and economical treatment for patients suffering from acne vulgaris.

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