



## Self-Care in Stomach Diseases: From Past to Now

Bahram Mehrtash<sup>1</sup>, Marzieh-Beygom Siahpoosh<sup>2</sup>, Fatemeh Nejatbakhsh<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Internal Medicine, School of Medicine, Qazvin University of Medical Sciences, Qazvin, Iran

<sup>2</sup> Iranian Traditional Medicine Association, Tehran AND Clinic of Traditional Medicine, Qazvin University of Medical Sciences, Qazvin, Iran

<sup>3</sup> Department of Iranian Traditional Medicine, School of Traditional Medicine, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran

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### DEAR EDITOR,

Nowadays, instruction of self-care to patients to increase quality of life, decrease patients' discomforts and also to decline the costs is introduced as a very important subject in medicine. It could prevent unnecessary physician visits, too [1]. Interestingly, in Persian medicine these aims were being considered by physicians; so that, a physician, was obligated to teach the patient and even his/her family the self-care orders proportional to patient's illness. These orders sometimes were issued in healthy state for prevention and sometimes after occurring disease.

In fact, according to Persian medicine, correction of life style is the first step for both being healthy and treating the disease [2]. For example, Rhazes believed that till using food is possible for treatment, you should not use any drug [3]. In addition, these orders sometimes are issued particularly for one organ such as stomach, eye, uterus and ..., and sometimes they are recommended for body as a whole [2], [4].

Stomach is an important organ in human's body in both classic and Persian medicine. According to Persian medicine, there are some important points to keep stomach

healthy and should be performed during stomach diseases, too. This study discussed self-care in stomach diseases according to Persian medicine with a comparison with classic medicine.

Reviewing two valid references of Persian medicine, "The Canon of Medicine" and "Exir-e Azam" which includes not only the author's idea, but also ideas of many other physicians, was the method of study.

Self-care educations in stomach diseases according to Persian medicine include:

1. Avoiding harmful nutritive things (Table 1)
2. Avoiding bad weather
3. Avoiding erroneous habits such as using alcohol, starving and constriction of intestinal gas
4. Avoiding restlessness
5. Using useful nutritive things (Table 1)
6. Observing rules of eating (Table 1)
7. Doing mild to moderate exercises
8. Decreasing sexual function
9. Instruction of harmful drugs such as mucilage drugs except quince seed and licorice
10. Instruction of how prescribed drugs should be used (only for patients)
11. Vomiting twice a month if there is no contraindication (for healthy people and some patients)

Corresponding Author: Marzieh-Beygom Siahpoosh  
Email: mar.siahpoosh@yahoo.com

**Table 1.** Stomach self-care educations in Persian medicine

Some rules of eating	Some harmful nutritive things	Some useful nutritive things
Avoiding overeating	Beet	Raisin
Avoiding eating muddled	Raw turnip	Lettuce
Avoiding eating indigestible nutritive things	Sesame	Celery
Avoiding drinking hot things	Fenugreek	Mint
Observing regular meal	Milk	Hen's gizzard (internal shell)
Observing arrangement of meals during eating	Honey	Rose oil
	Melon	Olive oil
	Animals' brain	Pistachio oil
	Raw fruits	Adding up freshener spices to food
	Oils	
	Long-term using of meat, verjuice, hot water, and pistachio oil	

12. Using coralline or opal or amber necklace [4]

In classic medicine, there are some self-care instructions for some specific diseases such as peptic ulcer disease (PUD) which is very common in general population [5], [6]. However, despite Persian medicine, authors could not find any teaching to keep stomach health in healthy people in classic medicine. Self-care educations in PUD include:

1- Avoiding stimulant nutritive things such as pepper, milk, decaffeinated coffee, tea, beverage, fatty food, cream, raw food, meaty products, fruit juice, spicy food and caffeinated drinking

2- Avoiding erroneous habits such as using alcohol and cigarette

3- Avoiding restlessness and emotional stress through yoga and meditation

4- Instruction of how prescribed drugs should be used

5- Instruction of harmful drugs

6- Observing regular meal [5].

This study showed that self-care educations in stomach disorders are not new discussions and it had been begun since ancient time. There are six recommendations about self-cares for PUD according to classic medicine, which are similar to six Persian educations for stomach in both health and illness state; however, there are six another recommendations in Persian educations which have no equal in classic medicine. For example, there is no study about the relationship between sexual function or physical activity and stomach diseases. According to ancient medicine, there are some rules for eating, which are very important to keep not only stomach, but also whole body health; besides, there are some diets which may be useful or harmful. Anyway, it is no doubt that these orders should be approved via convincing studies to be ordered for patients; however, they include new ideas and are valuable for future studies.

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