Letter to the Editor

How Can Persian Medicine (Traditional Iranian Medicine) Be Effective to Control COVID-19?

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Dear Editor,

In order to control epidemic situations, preventing ways are very important, especially when effective treatment neither has been discovered nor is available such as epidemic of COVID-19 in the whole world and Iran. So, in order to control this disease, using each potential which may be useful and has no known harm seems to be reasonable. Traditional medicine could be considered as a potential in these conditions. According to Chinese researches, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) gained acceptable results to control COVID-19 till 90% [1]. In TCM, enriching qi through acupuncture and herbal therapy leads to strengthen the body, which is essential to fight the disease [2]. Similarly, according to

Persian Medicine (PM), innate heat is introduced as an essential factor for all organs of the body to do their functions [3].

On one hand, the high risk individuals for COVID-19 disease including elders and people who have serious chronic medical conditions like "heart disease", "diabetes" and "lung diseases" [4] are those, according to PM, whose innate heat has been weakened [5]. So, weakness of innate heat could be a susceptibility factor for COVID-19 disease. On the other hand, manifestations of lung inflammation have been shown in radiographic findings even among asymptomatic, RT-PCR test positive individuals [6]. Accumulation of inflammatory cells, alveolar damage with

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cellular fibromyxoid exudates, hyaline membrane formation and pulmonary edema have been found in autopsy [7]. According to PM, a serious cause of cough and dyspnea is accumulation of some thick and viscous materials in lungs [8].

So, if a drug or therapy reinforces the innate heat and also alleviate lung inflammation and swelling, it will be helpful for prevention of disease progression.

Saffron (*Crocus sativus* L.) is a native plant in Iran which in PM is introduced as a heart, lung and innate heat tonic [9]. Honeywater (Ma ul Asal) according to PM is a lung cleansing agent in many respiratory diseases [10]. So, a simple combination of honey and Saffron may be an appropriate recommendation for this disease. To increase the efficacy of this drug, adding other drugs is possible. For example, Hyssop (*Hyssopus officinalis*) and Squill (*Drimiamaritima*) are two medicinal plants which are introduced as a lung cleansing agent and they are used to decrease lung inflammations in PM [8]. In all patients suffered from dyspnea, treatment of constipation is necessary, which could be done by using *Rosa damascena* or *Cassia fistula* [8]. Generally, to use PM in order to cure, there are at least three notifications:

1. Correction of lifestyle is very important. Reducing amount of food, avoiding eating too much and avoiding indigestible food such as pasta are some nutritional orders. Having enough sleep, avoiding sadness and fear and paying much attention to spirituality are other recommendations [5].

2. Paying attention to temperament (Mizaj) is important. For example, Honey-Saffron syrup has a warm temper [9] and for patients with cold temperament, in cold seasons or in cold regions may be more effective than for warm temperament people, in warm seasons and in warm regions [5].

3. The phase of disease is so important to prescribe drugs. According to PM, each disease has four phases including Initial phase, Increases phase, Reduction phase and Final phase. Each phase needs specific treatment [5].

This brief review presents some possibilities and potentials of PM to treatment of COVID-19. Certainly advantages and disadvantages of traditional treatments should be specified through other studies.

Conflict of Interest
None.

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