


History of Cupping in Medical Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Cupping or Al-hijamah is the process of removing harmful blood/toxid-toxins (static) from the body, through the surface of the skin or the process of removing harmful blood/toxid-toxins (static) from the body, through the surface of the skin. The cupping method of treatment has actually been mentioned in the historical records of various great civilisations of the world, including Egypt, China, India, Europe and America. So that various cupping terms are known in the world in various languages including kop, cucurbit, cupping, fire-bottle, blood-letting, pa hou kuan (Mandarin). Through the study of some evidence of historical records, it was found that the beginning of cupping was known to world civilisations since the Sumerian kingdom was established around 4000 years BC, then developed and expanded towards Babylon, Egypt, Saba and the land drained by the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers.

Cupping, Al-hijamah, Medical Perspective

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INTRODUCTION

Cupping in Egyptian civilisation is thought to date back to the reign of the Pharaohs, around 2500 years BC. However, the use of cupping in Egypt was more extensive and did not only include royalty. The oldest evidence of the practice of cupping in Ancient Egyptian times is found in the Ebers Papyrus, dated 1550 BC. The Ebers Papyrus is written in Ancient Egyptian and contains medical practices in Ancient Egyptian times, including 700 treatment formulas and therapies in various aspects including contraception, pregnancy, body infections, skin and eye disorders, burn treatment, cancer and tumour treatment and surgical approaches. Other evidence of Ancient Egyptian cupping practice was found engraved on the walls of a temple in the Kom Ombo area, Aswan region. The temple was built during the Ptolemaic dynasty (180 - 47 BC).

History of Cupping in Medical Perspective

The Persians were a people with a common language with the Arians, Indians, Greeks, Romans, Isbanji, Germans, and other European Arians, who lived around 3000 years BC. In this era, cupping developed along with fashid treatment, which is a method of treatment to remove blood from the body. Cupping has been practised for a long time by the Chinese and some sources even state that China was the first nation to introduce cupping in the world. Cupping is thought to have developed in China since 2500 years BC, before the reign of the Yao emperor in China. It was at this time that cupping developed based on acupuncture points.[1,2]

The famous Chinese herbalist and chemist Xi Hung (281-341) is one of the physicians recorded as using cupping in his therapy. Xi Hung documented various techniques in cupping in his book entitled A Handbook of Prescriptions for Emergencies.[3]

Cupping and cauterization are among the two main therapies discussed in the Ayurvedic medical book, *Susruta Samhita*. This book discusses the technical use of scalpels in the phlebotomy procedure (York, 2012). Cupping is believed to be a therapy to normalise bodily disorders, stop bleeding and heal external ulcers.

The Greeks got their knowledge of cupping from the Ancient Egyptians. Cupping, both wet and dry, is a therapy that is often found as a way to cure diseases in the Greeks. They believed cupping could restore the body's hormonal balance and wet cupping could remove excess substances from the body.[4]

Ancient Greek physician and historian Herodotus wrote about cupping in 413 BC as wounding by cupping has the power to expel disturbing matter from the head and at the same time to relieve headache, lower inflammation, improve appetite and strengthen a weak stomach. Cupping can also relieve vertigo and fainting, draw disturbing substances from the depths to the surface skin, reduce bleeding, facilitate menstrual blood, stop temperature rise in fever, accelerate the healing process of diseases, eliminate drowsiness, strengthen the body's natural response, relieve heaviness. All bodily disorders can be relieved by the use of cucurbit (cupping) both dry and wet.[5]

The tradition, technique and benefits of cupping were known to the Arab Muslim community through the Greeks and Romans who were in contact with the Arab Muslim community through Alexandria (Egypt) and Byzantium (Syria). The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) stated that cupping is very beneficial and not just a therapy for physical and mental healing, but also as a form of carrying out religious rituals or traditions. Some famous Muslim doctors such as Al Razi (865 - 925) and Ibn Sina/Avicenna (980-1037) practised cupping as an important part of therapy for healing diseases.[5]

Cupping began to spread in Europe, America and the Soviet Union in the 18th century (Rozenfeld, 2016). Famous surgeons including Paracelsus (1493-1541), Ambroise Pare (1509-1590), Pierre Dionis (1733), Charles Kennedy (1826) are recorded in history as doctors who practised cupping for patient therapy and declared cupping as a therapy that has a good effect on human health.[6]

The beginning of cupping in Indonesia is strongly suspected to be in line with the entry of Gujarati and Arab traders who spread Islam to the archipelago since the 12th century. In several interviews with several informants who happened to come from or have a Middle Eastern background, it was obtained that they had known and experienced/received cupping since childhood.[5,6]

The cupping treatment trend has been growing rapidly in Indonesia since the 90s, especially brought by Indonesian students/workers who had studied in Malaysia, India and the Middle East. During the 20th century, glass cups began to appear, which were used for the special development of cupping operations. The glass has the speciality of being thick glass and shatterproof.[7]

The latest data from the Indonesian Cupping Therapy Association (ITBI) in 2014, there are 3342 members who have registered as cupping therapists or cuppers and are increasing every year in Indonesia. Healthy Clinic data (2014), there are 38 Healthy Clinic branches and Healthy Therapy Houses throughout Indonesia that practice cupping therapy.[5,8]

Stages of Development of Cupping Practice in Indonesia

Cupping treatment is a period of traditional cupping treatment performed with simple tools and is traditional in our society. The cupping tools used include buffalo horns, bamboo, rubber ball slices, and the tool used to cut is usually just an ordinary razor blade. This is usually done in a tradition passed down from generation to generation by families of Arab descent from the Middle East region.[5,9]

The second stage started from around 1990 with the development of the Multi Level Marketing (MLM) system into Indonesia, namely HPA (a company that implemented the Sharia MLM system). The third stage of cupping history in Indonesia was pioneered by Ustadz Khatir Suhardi who was unique in his efforts to medicalise cupping treatment through anatomical and physiological analysis of the body. The fourth stage, the period called Bekam Synergy. Some people who joined the Yarobbi.com Team, namely Dr. Ali Achmad Ridho, Anjrah Ari Susanto, and Pak Saefurrohman saw that the perspective of cupping treatment if only seen from the side of the Prophet's treatment.[5,9]

Cupping According to Islam

The word *ḥijāmah* comes from the Arabic, *Al-Ḥajjam* meaning cupping expert. *Al-Hijmu* means sucking or suctioning. *Al-Ḥajjam* is the same as *al-Maṣṣu*, i.e. a person who sucks or siphons. While *al-Miḥjam* or *al-Miḥjamah* is an instrument for cupping in the form of a glass tube to hold the blood removed from the skin.

Ḥijāmah is derived from Arabic which also means the release of dirty blood. This therapy is a method of cleansing blood and wind, by removing residual toxids in the body through the surface of the skin by suction. So *ḥijāmah* according to the language is an expression about sucking blood and removing it from the surface of the skin, which is then collected in a *miḥjamah* glass, which causes the concentration and withdrawal of blood there, and then cuts the surface of the skin with a scalpel, in order to remove blood. *Hijamah* is different from *qaṭ'ul-irqī* (cutting the veins). *Qaṭ'ul-irqī* is inserting a needle to draw blood from the vein like the act of donating blood, which is called *al-faṣḍu*. Basically, the practice of cupping is simple, which is the removal of blood from the skin through suction and then lightly cutting the outer part of the skin, then suctioning once again, so that the blood comes out. [3,10]

In Islamic medical science, cupping should not be done just anywhere. Cupping should only be done on clots or blockages in blood vessels, because the real function of cupping is to remove dirty blood from the body. As Muhammad Musa Alu Nashr said in his book that there are several things that must always be considered in every process of blood removal, namely: (1) Excessive blood loss; if a person lacks blood, it is not permissible to do cupping; (2) Strong, if the person is weak, then it is forbidden to do cupping; (3) Normal temperament, if a person is in a state of high heat or cold it is not allowed to do it; (4) Some clear indications, such as people who have diarrhoea and stomach wounds are not allowed; (5) Adult age, not allowed for the elderly or toddlers.[3,10]

Cupping is also recommended not to be done at the beginning of the month because the blood has not yet fluctuated. Neither should it be done at the end of the month because by that time the blood has decreased and is getting less. Cupping is best done in the middle of the month when the blood is already churning and increasing. Cupping is a classic therapeutic method that is now making a comeback. Cupping training and practice can be found easily. It also attracted the interest of many doctors after scientific studies in various countries in the world proved the effectiveness of this classical therapeutic method in treating and alleviating various disease complaints. In particular, cupping has such a special place in the tradition of *at-Ṭibbu an-Nabawi* that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) gave it special status in many traditions. The essence of *at-Ṭibbu an-Nabawi* is *tawakal* and attributing all cures to Allah swt. Any treatment that takes people away from trusting in Allah swt. is out of the principle of *at-ṬṬibbu an-Nabawi*. Thus, this treatment will be kept away from *shirk*.

CONCLUSION

Through the study of some evidence of historical records, it was found that the beginning of cupping was known to world civilisations since the Sumerian kingdom was established around 4000 years BC, then developed and expanded towards Babylon, Egypt, Saba and the land drained by the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers.

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