

Contemporary Definition of Islamic Medicine

Ahmed Elkadi, MD
Institute of Islamic Medicine for Education and Research
Panama City, Florida

Abstract

Islamic Medicine is a medical science that is in full submission to the will of God. It is the most up-to-date healing art guided by and in full compliance with the Divine teachings. It must submit to Islamic teachings and ethics; must be logical in its practices and be comprehensive in its concerns, universal in its approach, and excellent and distinguished. Adherence to the above criteria in an experimental clinical program, Multimodality Immunotherapy Program (MIP), for the last 9 years has led to very promising and exciting results. The evaluation of the MIP is ongoing in Florida and in Dhubai, United Arab Emirates.

In addition to achieving real clinical improvement in conditions that were hitherto nonresponsive to modern medical therapies, this 9-year experience resulted in a better understanding of the following: the link between chronic diseases and immune abnormality and harbored negative emotions, the Qur'anic statements and Prophet's teachings, the basic features of the healing effect of a variety of modalities referred to in Islamic teachings (the oneness of the person, the mechanism of communication with one's own immune cells), the broad-spectrum effect of negative and positive emotions, the comprehensive meaning of the word "pollution" of electricity as the spark of life, some physical mechanisms of "Ruqyah" or the "laying on of hands," and the concept of reverse initiation. Based on the above experience, the definition and understanding of Islamic Medicine given in this paper appear to be appropriate.

Key words: Islamic Medicine, holistic medicine, alternative therapy, unconventional therapy

From the Institute of Islamic Medicine for
Education and Research
Panama City, Florida

Reprint Requests: Ahmed Elkadi, MD
Institute of Islamic Medicine for
Education and Research
340 West 23rd Street
Suite E
Panama City, Florida 23404

There are many views and opinions as to what Islamic Medicine is and is not. It is a medical science that is in full submission to the will of God. It is the healing art of Muslims at its best when Muslims are at their best. It is the most up-to-date medicine that is guided by, and in full compliance with the Divine teachings. Specific criteria, however, are needed for better standardization and unified understanding. Six basic criteria are suggested for Islamic Medicine: 1. It must submit to Islamic teachings and ethics; 2. It must be logical in its practices; 3. It must be comprehensive in its concerns giving equal attention to body, mind and spirit, and to the individual as

well as to society; 4. It must be universal in its approach, considering all resources and making its benefits available for all; 5. It must be scientific in its methodology, basing its logical conclusions on proper observation, accurate statistics, and honest experimentation; 6. It must be excellent and distinguished, achieving what other healing arts failed to achieve.

Fifteen years ago, it was a theoretical proposition that the sixth criterion will automatically take place if the first five criteria are complied with. Now, after 9 years of attempted adherence to the above criteria, this proposition seems to be a reality. The ideas presented at the first International Conference on Islamic Medicine in Kuwait in January 1981 were logical, although still to some extent theoretical and unproven.¹ An experimental program for the treatment of so-called "incurable diseases" has been undertaken since 1986. This program is currently being carried out in Panama City, Florida, and Dhuhai, United Arab Emirates. The incurable diseases that are being treated range from advanced metastatic cancer to all types of chronic degenerative diseases of the bones and joints; the cardiovascular system; the central nervous system; the liver, such as chronic active hepatitis and early hepatic cirrhosis; the respiratory system, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and pulmonary fibrosis; a variety of autoimmune diseases, such as rheumatoid arthritis, lupus erythematosus, scleroderma, and others; bronchial asthma and allergies; and recently, a most exciting group of children with mental retardation and other genetic abnormalities. All of these patients have one thing in common: their failure to respond to modern medical therapies. Some of them were thought not to have any curative therapy to start with.

The treatment program is called the Multimodality Immunotherapy Program (MIP),^{2,3} which is an experimental program comprising several alternative, mostly unconventional treatment modalities, including a nutritional program; several nutritional supplements, i.e., medicinal herbs, vitamins, minerals, and enzymes, either given orally or intravenously; fever therapy; ozone or hydrogen peroxide infusions; chelation therapy; ultraviolet blood treatments; acupuncture; physical therapy; exercise; and, above all, a comprehensive emotional restoration program with counseling to learn how to eliminate negative emotions through biofeedback training, guided imagery, and other visualization techniques. Cancer patients also receive tumor antigen therapy and some natural products with selective cytotoxic effect. The MIP is either given by itself or with other conventional treatment modalities as indicated for the patient's condition. The program requires a radical change in the patient's way of eating, thinking, and living. It also requires the elimination of any toxic deposits that may have resulted from long exposure to pollutants of the environment in which we live. In short, MIP is promoting a life that is more in tune with the revealed Divine guidance and is more conducive to health. Although the program is still in development and is far from

being perfected, some early results appear to be impossible according to modern medical standards. These patients who were not expected to get any better all of a sudden start showing signs of partial or total improvement. Early improvement rates reach up to 80% in benign diseases, and 25-50% in malignant conditions that were previously thought to be terminal. We cannot talk of healing or cure rates until patients have been followed up for at least 5-10 years. Between the starting point of having a chronic condition thought to be incurable, and the end point of having achieved the recovery thought to be impossible, there is a long road of discovery, a road of exciting and refreshing discoveries of new meanings of old facts and new ways of understanding health and life. It is like walking through a road lined with flower beds, watching the young rose buds blossoming as one passes by. It is a new understanding of certain familiar parts of the Qur'an and the Prophet's teachings and of various pathophysiologic responses and healing mechanisms.

Understanding the link between chronic diseases and immune abnormality

All of the patients with chronic illnesses, whether benign or malignant, who were seen in Panama City or Dhuhai and who had their immune functions evaluated, had some degree of immune deficiency or dysfunction. The details of the immune abnormality may vary from one patient to another. However, there appears to be some pattern for certain immune abnormalities to be more prevalent in certain diseases or group of diseases.^{3,5}

Understanding the link between chronic diseases and harbored negative emotions

All of the patients with chronic illnesses, whether benign or malignant, had excessive amounts of harbored negative emotions before their illness was diagnosed or became manifested. Once the illness took place, the level of their harbored negative emotions usually increased.

New understanding of some of the Qur'anic statements

Allāh says:

"We send down in the Qur'an that which is a healing..."⁶

We know now from our earlier studies that listening to the Qur'an has a direct stress reducing effect^{7,9} and an indirect and possibly also a direct immune enhancing effect, which definitely contribute to the healing process. This Qur'anic effect was achieved by listening to the words of the Qur'an, even without understanding their meaning, although the effect was more pronounced if the meaning was added. Our later studies showed that certain Qur'anic concepts are very effective in helping the patients with the elimination of harbored negative emotions, a major immune suppressive factor always present in patients with chronic illnesses.¹⁰ This aspect of the healing effect of the Qur'an has

a profound immune enhancing effect, and is routinely used as part of the MTP in all our patients, Muslim and non-Muslim alike.

Allāh says about honey:

"... In it there is a healing for people..."¹¹

Our studies as well as studies by others showed that honey has an immune enhancing effect in addition to other healing promoting effects.

New understanding of some of the Prophet's teachings

Prophet Muhammad said:

"...In the black seed there is healing for every illness except death."¹²

This statement has two areas that could not be explained initially. One was the healing effect for every illness. How can it help with all types of illnesses that may have different nature and different etiology? The second mystery was the meaning of "... except death." If a person is already dead, there is no need for black seed, or for that matter, anything else. The first mystery was explained when our studies in 1986 and 1987 confirmed the immune enhancing effect of the black seed.¹³⁻¹⁵ Therefore, it can contribute to the healing of all illnesses. Even the healing of a surgical condition can be enhanced by improving the postoperative wound's healing and repair and by reducing surgical complications. The second mystery finally became clear after years of observation that as long as there is some residual function (or life) in the affected tissue or organ, there is usually a chance of partial or total improvement and recovery. If, on the other hand, the affected tissue or organ is completely dead with a total loss of function, there is usually no more chance of therapeutic response. Such an observation has a very important prognostic value and is very helpful in the planning for any treatment approach.

Basic features of the healing effect of various modalities referred to in Islamic teachings

Various Islamic practices such as fasting, prayers, mancrisms, or emotional attitudes; and specific items that were mentioned as having a healing effect such as the Qur'ān, honey, black seed and others, all have two things in common. One is that the effect deals with the underlying disease mechanism, such as an immune deficiency or dysfunction rather than dealing with the superficial symptoms. Consequently, the effect is truly curative and not just symptomatically palliative in nature. The second feature is that the therapeutic effect is restorative in nature, regardless of direction of the abnormality. This means, for example, if the number of certain cells was lower than normal, the treatment will result in an increase of number of the affected cells. If the number of the same cells was higher than normal, the same treatment will result in a decrease in the number of the affected cells. Besides, the corrective change, whether up or down, will go only to the normal or near-normal level and not beyond. This is usually a common feature of natural

herbs and other natural therapeutic modalities, unlike synthetic pharmacological preparations where their effect is usually in one direction and progressive with increasing doses beyond the desirable normal range.

Understanding of the oneness of the person

The oneness of the patient becomes very clear when dealing with chronic therapy resistant illnesses. The physical component of the person cannot be separated from his or her emotional and spiritual components. The treatment of these challenging conditions will not be fully effective unless the restoration is achieved at the physical, emotional, and spiritual levels. Failing to correct irregularity at any of these three levels may greatly reduce the effectiveness of the treatment.^{2,3}

Understanding the mechanism of communication with one's own immune cells

The immune cells can read the mind of their owner with their built-in receptors registering and responding to the electromagnetic energy waves and impulses going through the mind, i.e., ideas and emotions.^{2,3} One can, therefore, very much control the functions of his or her immune cells by controlling his or her ideas and emotions. One can also have an idea of the level of performance of the immune cells under the influence of certain emotions by observing the level of performance of the patient while under the influence of the same emotions.

The broad spectrum effect of negative and positive emotions

Cleansing the heart of any hate or hateful feelings is not only the road to paradise but also to better physical health and better immunity. The same applies to many other negative emotions and their opposite positive ones that can have a profound effect, negative or positive, on the physical health as well as the general performance of the person in this world and the hereafter.

Understanding the comprehensive meaning of the word "Pollution"

Emotional and intellectual pollution intoxicating the heart and the mind is equally harmful as the chemical and physical pollution intoxicating the body. Both can have a disastrous effect on the health and performance of the person.

Electricity and the spark of life – the physical explanation of the "Ruqyah" or the healing touch and the laying on of hands

We do not know the nature of the spirit and how it affects life. We do know, however, some of the manifestations of life and having the spirit in the body. One of these manifestations is electricity. As long as the electrical charges are in the body, the person is alive. When electricity leaves the body, the person is dead. The same thing applies to plants.

Live plants, i.e., raw, uncooked, and unprocessed plants have measurable electrical charges, while dead, i.e., cooked or processed plants do not. This is why live food has such a healing effect, most likely, at least partially, due to its electrical charges that somehow positively affect the electrical charges of the human body.^{2,3} Dead food may have a nutritive effect but not a healing effect, since it has no electricity.

The body, as an electrical machine, is surrounded by an electromagnetic energy field, an invisible light field called the aura. This light field can now be photographed with electrophotography (Kirlian photography) and can be assessed this way. We know now that food as well as the emotional condition of the person can affect, positively or negatively, the aura of the person. In return, the state of the aura can affect the condition of the body, again positively or negatively. Moreover, the aura of one person can affect the aura of another person through physical contact or just proximity. This, again, can be documented with electrophotography.¹⁶ Once we understand this mechanism, we can achieve the healing effect of positive emotional attitude in infants by counseling their parents.

Achieving improvement or correction of genetic disorders with chromosomal defects without genetic engineering, but by changing environmental and nutritional factors

The most exciting and puzzling observation we were able to make during the past year was the improvement of several children with a variety of genetic problems after using some modalities of the MIP. An example is a 5-year-old boy with mental retardation and a documented diagnosis of dysmorphic syndrome and abnormality of chromosome 10Q plus, who was totally unmanageable, did not speak, and would not respond to any commands. Within less than 6 months, he was responding to commands, saying a few words, and continues to gradually improve. Another case is a 6-year-old girl with thalassemia major who required a monthly blood transfusion but has been on the program for a year and has not required a blood transfusion for the past 4 months. Several other children with other genetic problems, are showing various degrees of improvement. Initially, we could not explain these unexpected changes, then we thought, if negative environmental factors can negatively affect the genetic make up of the cell like in mutation, maybe positive environmental factors can have a corrective effect. We plan to start a long-term genetic study in an attempt to explain this situation and to see how natural therapeutic factors can affect the transcription and whatever other factors may be involved in this process.

Conclusion

The above-mentioned observations are a few glimpses of light along the long road of discovery. There are many more areas of the dark unknown. However, the direction seems to be correct and very promising. Adhering to the

Divine guidance is paying off.

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