Basics of *Marḍ Musallam* (curable disease) and *Marḍ Ghai'r Musallam* (non curable disease): A review

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ABSTRACT

The nomenclature of any disease could be due to its causative agent, the physician who treated it first, the region where it is common, and scientist who discovered it etc. On the basis of curability there are mainly two categories: First one is *Marḍ Musallam* (curable disease) which can be cured and offers no resistance to treatment. The second one is *Marḍ Ghai'r Musallam* (non curable disease), one in which there is some barrier to complete cure. That is why no matter what the doctor applies; the desired effects are not achieved. It can be concluded from the text available regarding above two types of diseases that *Marḍ Musallam* is less dangerous in comparison to *Marḍ Ghai'r Musallam*. As former type can be cured easily with minimal treatment.

Keywords: *Unani, Marḍ Musallam, Marḍ Ghai'r Musallam, curable diseases, incurable diseases, COVID.*

Introduction

Disease is a condition in which function or structure in a human, animal, or plant is disturbed. It is a condition opposite to health.[1] In Unani system of Medicine there are three states known as *Halat-e-Salasa* in which a human being can be found. These are: Health, Disease and a state of neither being healthy nor diseased known as *Halat la sehat la marz*. Disease nomenclature followed today are on the same way as many of the decades or centuries old origins have already given them, such as:

- The roots of these words whether it be;
- On the basis of Latin or Greek words,
- On the basis of the causative agent,
- On the basis of the similarity/resemblance,
- On the basis of the specific character,
- On the basis of place names,
- On the basis of the clinician who discovered them, or

- On the basis of the first clinical patient's name.[1,2,3,11,12,13,14]

The most widely used classifications of disease are (1) topographic: by bodily region or system, (2) anatomic: by organ or tissue, (3) physiological: by function or effect, (4) pathological: by the nature of the disease process, (5) etiologic (causal), (6) juristic: by speed of advent of death, (7) epidemiological, and (8) statistical. Any single disease may fall within several of these classifications.

1) In the topographic classification, diseases are subdivided into categories such as gastrointestinal disease, vascular disease, abdominal disease, and chest disease. Various specializations within medicine follow such topographic or systemic divisions.

2) In the anatomic classification, disease is categorized by the specific organ or tissue affected; hence, heart disease, liver disease, and lung disease. Medical specialties such as cardiology are restricted to diseases of a single organ, in this case the heart. Such a classification has its greatest use in identifying the various kinds of disease that affect a particular organ.

3) The physiological classification of disease is based on the underlying functional derangement produced by a specific disorder. Included in this classification are such designations as respiratory and metabolic disease.

4) The pathological classification of disease considers the nature of the disease process. Neoplastic and inflammatory diseases are examples.

5) The etiologic classification of disease is based on the cause, when known. This classification is particularly important and useful in the consideration of biotic disease. On this basis disease might be classified as staphylococcal or rickettsial or fungal, to cite only a few instances.

6) The juristic basis of the classification of disease is concerned with the legal circumstances in which death occurs.

7) The epidemiological classification of disease deals with the incidence, distribution, and control of disorders in a population.

8) The statistical basis of classification of disease employs analysis of the incidence (the numbers of new cases of a specific disease that occur during a certain period) and the prevalence rate (number of cases of a disease in existence at a certain time) of diseases.[2,3]

The term disability is mistakenly counted as disease in modern system of medicine but in actual it is not a disease. It is a condition which does not fulfill the definition of disease but the definition of *la sehat la marz* of Unani system of medicine. The term "cure" means that, after medical treatment, the patient no longer has that particular condition anymore. Some of these conditions or diseases can be cured with proper treatment while some are difficult or may be impossible to cure. On this basis diseases are mainly categorized as **a) Curable diseases (*Marḍ Musallam*)** and **b) Non Curable diseases (*Marḍ Ghai'r Musallam*)**.[1,2,3,11,12,15] It is one the type to classify diseases as there are so many others. A curable disease is one which offers no resistance to treatment. While non curable disease is one in which there is some barrier to complete cure. Even after application of best treatment the desired effects are not reached. Zakariya Razi (Al Rhazes) made a distinction between curable and incurable diseases. Pertaining to the

latter, he commented that in the case of advanced cases of cancer and leprosy the physician should not be blamed when he could not cure them.[4]

Modern medicine views most diseases as incurable, which ranges from challenging diseases like Mitral Stenosis (MS), HIV and polio, to the common cold and influenza, as well as damage and disability like macular degeneration and type I diabetes, and trivial physical problems like plantar fasciitis.[2] There are many ways for a disease to be called incurable. Some are given below:

i.   **Direct claims of diseases to be called incurable:** like MS, HIV and polio are designated as incurable because there is "*no known medical cure*". A cure might be found in the future, which would convert them to curable diseases. Today, they are viewed as incurable. There are some diseases, like the common cold, measles, and influenza even though they are usually cured in reality, but they are incurable in medical theory. They are cured by health. But, because there is no medicine that can cure them, they are considered as incurable. These diseases are called 'self limited' on the theory that they resolve themselves naturally. They are not actually "*self-limited*", Tabiyat/health cures them, in most cases, in a fairly short time, faster than any medicine. Healthier people get fewer colds, and get cured faster.[5,6,7,8]

Medicine also makes the mistake of naming some disabilities, like Type I Diabetes, and the damage due to macular degeneration as incurable diseases. Although no one would claim that an amputated limb is an incurable disease, when islet cells are all gone-it's designated as an incurable disease. These are disabilities, not illnesses and although they might someday be repaired and healed, they cannot be cured.[2,3.6]

ii. **Diseases to be called incurable indirectly:** If someone has a parasitic infection, there is a test for cured, an ability to prove that a cure has been accomplished. But, there is no test for cured for any disease not caused by a parasite. When there is no test for 'cured', modern medicine does not use the word 'cure'. If someone has scurvy, obesity, arthritis, hypertension, cancer, or many other diseases not caused by a parasite-there are no cures, because there is no test for 'cured'. It might surprise to learn that the three major medical reference texts: MERCK, Lange's, and Harrison's do not use the word 'cure' for scurvy. Not only that, as a result of this cure ignorance, two of the three recommend a 'treatment' that cannot possibly 'cure' scurvy.[1,2,3,5,6]

Finally, some diseases are seen to be incurable simply because the disease name covers a broad area, impossible to cure every case. Cancer and arthritis are diseases with many variations with many types and many different causes. It is not possible to cure cancer, even if it is possible to cure a specific case of a cancer. As a result, when a case of cancer is cured, it is generally ignored.[2,5,6]

The word disease is a gray area covering many different types of medical conditions, most of which simply cannot be cured by definition. No disease can be cured, only a specific case, an illness, can be cured.[2,3] In health, 'illness' is defined as 'that which can be cured', and injury, disability and handicap as 'that which might be healed'.[1,2,3]

The first step in separating an illness, which can be cured, from a disability, which might be healed, is to look for an active cause. If an illness is progressing steadily, there is probably an active cause. If there is an active cause, it can be addressed and the illness can be cured.

If a medical condition is to be judged an illness with an active cause, then it is said curable. We can then proceed with attempts to cure it. If it is decided, later, that it is incurable it is re-classified as a handicap, a disability or a deficit.[9,10]

If a medical condition is to be judged as disability, then it is said that it is incurable. If something is incurable, it is not an illness then it is a disability, a handicap, or a deficit. However, if we learn to cure it, or succeed in curing it, we have recognized that our initial classification was wrong, it was actually an illness.[2,9,10]

Note: we do not cure the patient; any single patient might have many illnesses at once. Only an illness can be cured at a time.

To cure any illness, and prove that a cure has been accomplished, 'cured' must be defined in a testable fashion. If cured is not defined, it does not mean that a cure is not possible, only that cured is not yet defined. Is it possible to define cured for every illness? Yes. But today, unless someone has an infection, cured is not defined for his illness. The fact that cured is not defined does not mean illness cannot be cured, only that someone cannot prove it has been cured, and that illness cannot be cured with medicine.[2,6,9,10] As the case of corona infection, the treatment is given to patients but no proper guidelines are there to be followed universally. The trials are going on to set universal guidelines, until this is countable in the list of non-curable diseases. Once the specific treatment will be available either in the form of vaccine or in other form then it will be considered as curable.

Cured is when the cause has been addressed. When the cause has been successfully addressed, the illness has been cured. This is how all cures work; there are no exceptions.[1,2]

Conclusion: At the beginning almost all diseases first comes under the category of *Marḍ Ghai'r Musallam* (incurable) and after the complete knowledge about the aetiology, incidence, occurrence, effective treatment etc., they then become *Marḍ Musallam* (curable disease). It can be concluded that *Marḍ Musallam* in comparison to *Marḍ Ghai'r Musallam* is less dangerous. Because minimal treatment is enough for curable one while there is delayed or sometimes no cure is seen in some diseases even after applying best of the treatment. Treatment availability (in terms of time taken) and complete cure is also a reason to categorize diseases into curable and incurable.

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