

Research Article

**Prophetic Medication Al-hijamah (Hijamah) and Approach of Kashmiri People Towards Hijamah Cupping Therapy: An Empirical Study**

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**Abstract.** Worldwide cupping therapy is used and in Islam term Al-hijamah (Hijamah) also called as prophetic medicine is used in place of cupping therapy. Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him ) said, the best among your treatments is Al-hijamah (Hijamah) as it is a promising excretory treatment to clear blood of causative pathological substances. It is a three-step iron excretion technique (skin suction, scarification and suction) through pressure-dependent filtration then excretion via the skin dermal capillaries that significantly decreased serum iron overload and accompanying oxidative stress by exploitation of physiological excretory mechanism. In current study, 200 patients (100 male and 100 female) from various Unani Hospitals of Kashmir were selected at random for our study on their consent. The study revealed that majority of the respondents understudy were aware of the benefits of Hijamah and there was nonsignificant difference in general between male and female respondents ( $P > 0.05$ ). Hijama is used to treat diseases such as high blood pressure, lower back pain, shingles pain, facial paralysis, spinal disk wear and tear (cervical spondylosis), cardiovascular disease prevention, neck pain, musculoskeletal pain, fibromyalgia, carpal tunnel syndrome, headache, migraine, cellulitis, cough, cold, asthma, acne, urticaria, neurodermatitis, soft tissue injury, arthritis. Practitioners apply the cups to different parts of the body of an individual such as neck, back, between the shoulders, behind the ear, chin, thighs, middle and crown of the head, ankle joints, knee joints, breast, buttocks, wrist joints, hips. Finally, researchers gave the suggestions for the effective use of Hijamah.

**Keywords:** Hijamah, Islam, Kashmir, Approach, Medicine, Statistics

## INTRODUCTION

Cupping therapy (Hijama in Arabic) dry or wet is a traditional Chinese and Middle Eastern practice used to treat a variety of conditions. Infact, the origin of cupping therapy is unclear, its historical records date back to early Egyptian and Chinese medical practices [Qureshi et al., 2017]. However, wet cupping presently is widely practiced in many Middle Eastern and Asian countries [Abbas et al., 2016]. The first documented medical text on cupping was found in 1550 BC in Egypt and in China over 5,000 years ago. Cupping therapy was commonly practiced in the Roman Empire, Islamic Empire, Europe, Russia, Central Asia, South Asia and USA. It was very popular during the middle ages and 18th and 19th Centuries in Europe. Right now it is most popular in China, Finland and Russia and many Islamic countries. Cupping therapy (Hijamah) is the name of the actual procedure itself. A vacuum is created in a cup and placed on the body. This vacuum causes a negative pressure and pulls the muscles into the cup and therefore, draws the blood to the cupped area. This is known as "dry cupping". Then one may remove the cup in order to make small, shallow incisions in that same area, before putting the cup back on. This pulls out the toxic blood, acids and excess fluids from the body. This is best-known as "Wet Cupping or Blood Cupping." Hijamah, is the Islamic version of cupping therapy, practised by Muslims in accordance to the way of the holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

The patient as well as hijama practitioner is supposed to have done their ablutions (wudu) and should recite Quran during the hijama process. Literally, Al-hijamah in Arabic means "to suck" and to "return to a normal state" of internal balance that finally helps the body to create a balance, healthy alkaline environment by removing acidity. It is a holistic, super powerful detox which removes toxic and stagnant blood from body of a person. It expels negative, unhealthy elements from the body, and allows it to replenish itself. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said: "The best treatment is hijamah cupping; it removes blood, lightens the back and sharpens the eyesight." (At-Tirmidhi, 3053) The widely practiced therapeutic method and part of the Unani system of medicine involves placing cups at certain points on a person's skin [Almairan, 2018]. Wet cupping technique involves puncturing the skin before starting the suction and during the procedure it removes some of the person's blood. In many countries of the world like United States this type of cupping therapy is less common as it involves licensed well trained medical professionals. Cupping therapy typically leaves round bruises on a person's skin as blood vessels burst after exposure to the procedure's suction effects. Soliman, Hamed and K hachemoune (2018) in their review paper reported that cupping involves the combination of a negative pressure created by dry cupping and bloodletting from acu points on the skin, created using disposable sterile surgical blades or micro-lancets. It was found that in order to minimize the risk of blistering and other potential side effects, the cupping procedure is usually done within 10 minutes (Zhou, Ruan, Xing ; 2014).

Hijama Cupping Therapy is a Sunnah of Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as during "Al-Isra Wal Miraj" or the "Night Journey & Ascension", our Beloved Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) experienced many profoundly significant events. On the occasion of Night Journey, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) flew on Al-Buraq accompanied by the Angel Jibree (A.S) from Makkah to Musjid Al-Aqsa (Jerusalem) where He (pbuh) prayed with all Messengers of Allah and ascended to the highest of the seven heavens. He (pbuh) was given the gift of five times daily prayer and tenets of creed by Almighty Allah (S.W.T). Holy Holy Quran says, "Glory to He Who took His servant for a journey by night from the most sacred mosque to the farthest mosque, whose precincts We blessed, in order that We might show him some of Our signs: for He is the One Who hears and sees [all things]". Quran 17:1. It is reported that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, "I did not pass by an Angel from the Angels on the Night Journey except that they all said to me, Hijama is the best medicines to cure ailment. Hijama cupping is the most helpful procedure for human beings to cure themselves. (Al Bukhari # 5357). It Boosts the circulatory and immune systems, Cleanses and detoxifies the body, Treats illness and relaxes the patient and improves fertility, increases the intellect and improves the memory. Hijamah therapy is also useful for treating many muscular, skeletal, neurological, immune, cardio-vascular, respiratory, digestive and urinary issues. Prophet Muhammad

(pbuh) said, Hijama cupping on an empty stomach is best and should be performed on "Sunnah Days" that is on 17th, 19th and 21st day (of the Islamic Lunar month) [Saheeh Sunan ibn Maajah (3861)]. The pictures below shows the procedure of Al-hijamah treatment.



Islamic way of curing any disease is holistic which works on mind, body and soul at various levels.. Hijamah is very relaxing and dispels anxiety and depression. This method of treatment is a minor, surgical process which has immediate physical effect on an individual. It is reported that there are traditional sunnah points for hijama therapy such as the upper back, neck, head etc. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) had Hijama performed upon his head to remove black magic which had been cast upon him [Zaad al Ma'aad (4/125-126)]. It was found that Hijama cupping on the back of the neck treat seventy-two illnesses (Collected by At-Tabarani). Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) used to have Hijama Cupping done on the veins on the side of the neck and the upper back. (At Tirmidhi). It is suggested that one should have a hijama detox, and then use hijama as a form of maintenance 2-4 times a year if one is in good health. Or perform perform hijamah frequently as per health status on the consultation of an expert. In the literature, we come across a number of studies which reported the benefits of cupping therapy such as hypertension [Aleyeidi et al., 2015], tension-type and migraine headache [Ahmadi, Schwebel & Rezaei, 2008], reducing the risk of atherosclerosis [Niasari, Kosari & Ahmadi; 2007], management of rheumatoid arthritis [Ahmed et al., 2005], nonspecific neck and upper shoulder pain [Arslan, Gökgöz and Dane; 2016] and Hashimoto's thyroiditis [Obeid et al., 2022]. It was found in a study conducted in Saudi Arabia [Al-Hashel et al., 2018] on Public Perceptions on Wet Cupping Therapy (Hijama) that patients before visiting hospital for Hijamah have sought various forms of traditional medicine. Furthermore, it was reported that wet cupping is connected with various adverse events, like muscle tension,, skin infections, scarring, burns, headache, dizziness,

tiredness, pruritus, anemia, nausea, bullae formation, small hematomas, abscesses, insomnia, hyperpigmentation, and vasovagal attacks [Al-Bedah et al., 2016].

Wet cupping is a cost-effective therapeutic technique without major adverse effects, if performed by a professional [Almaiman, 2018] and one must remember that it is contraindicated in those with organ failure, active infections, anemia, cancer, medical emergencies, varicose veins, blood donation or recent cupping sessions, as well as those on anticoagulant treatments and menstruating patients or pregnant [Aboushanab and Alsanad, 2018, 2021; Chirali 2014]. Many countries, worldwide have developed guidelines for wet cupping at national level [Aboushanab and Alsanad, 2018]. The present study on the basis of literature cited above and on research studies (e.g., Al-Balawi et al., 2016; Alarbash, Morait and Demyati, 2019; Rahman et al., 2020) focuses on Approach of Kashmiri People Towards Hijamah Cupping Therapy and safety that need improvement in view of our research results.

## METHODOLOGY

A survey was carried out among people visiting various Unani Hospitals of Kashmir during 2023-24. A total of 200 patients visiting Hospitals were selected at random on their consent for the present survey. A well developed validated questionnaire was used for the collection of data from the respondents. The sample size for present study was computed using (Cochran, 1977) on the basis of people visiting Unani Hospitals with interest in Hijama.

## Research Hypothesis

Hypothesis: There is non significant difference between male and female respondents in attitude and knowledge towards Hijama. In order to test the research hypothesis, we employ Chi-square test (with usual notations) given as

$$X^2 = \sum_{i=1}^2 \frac{(o_i - e_i)^2}{e_i}$$

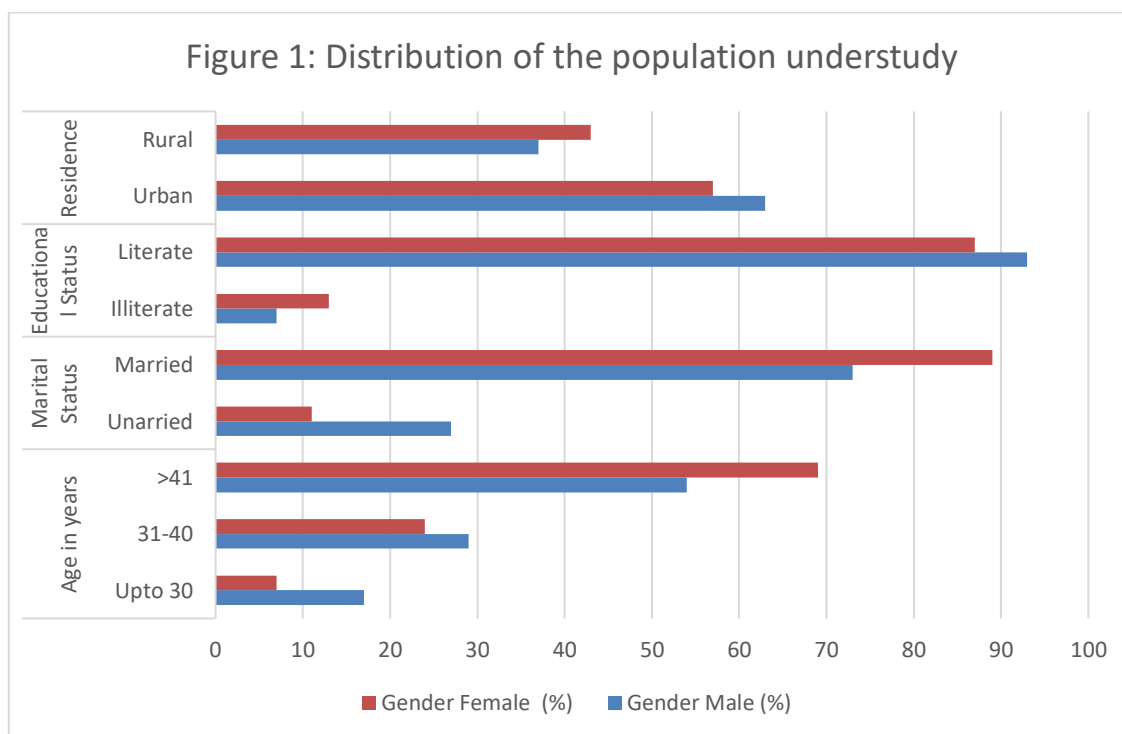
where  $X^2 \sim \chi_1^2$ ,  $o_i$  and  $e_i$  are observed and expected frequencies. We reject  $H_0$  if p-value is less than specified level of significance.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data presented in Table 1, revealed that majority of the respondents (male=54 %, female=68%) were in the age group of >40 years, married (male=73%, female=89%, literate (88.75 %) and urban (male=63%, female=57%). The respondents were in the age group of 28 to 71 years.

**Table 1:** Sociodemographic details of the respondents under study

Variable	Category	Gender	
		Male (%)	Female (%)
Age in years	Upto 30 years	17	7
	31-40 years	54	69
	>41 years	29	24
Marital Status	Unarried	27	11
	Married	73	89
Educational Status	Illiterate	7	13
	Literate	93	87
Residence	Urban	63	57
	Rural	37	43



The data presented in Table 2, revealed that in response to statement 1, i.e., Do you think that wet cupping (Hijama) therapy is a beneficial/ useful practice, majority of respondents (male=69%, female= 61%) responded yes. The respondents in majority were knowing its health benefits and it was mentioned in religious books. In response to statement 2 , i.e., Do you think that wet cupping (Hijama) therapy can lead to side effects? majority of respondents (male= 58%, female=49%) responded no. The reason may be that respondents understudy were not having

scientific knowledge so they were only interested in treatment. In response to statement 3, i.e., Do you think that wet cupping (Hijama) therapy is suitable for every disease? majority of respondents (male= 45%, female=51% ) responded no idea. The respondents understudy reported that holy Prophet (pbuh) guided muslims to perform Hijama so they treat it as Sunnah without having much details on treatment. In response to statement 4, i.e., Do you think that wet cupping (Hijama) therapy is a well-known form of alternative medicine? majority of respondents (male=55%, female=49%) responded yes. The respondents were aware about the benefits of this treatment so performed it instead of modern treatment. In response to statement 5, i.e., Do you think that wet cupping (Hijama) therapy should be done in specialized centers only? majority of respondents (male=92%, female=94% ) responded yes. The respondents were health conscious so they believed only trained person can perform it. In response to statement 6, i.e., Do you think that checking the practitioner's qualifications and experience is important before undergoing wet cupping (Hijama) therapy? majority of respondents (male=95%, female= 94%) responded yes. In response to statement 7, i.e., Do you think it is important to confirm that all instruments used are valid and sterile? majority of respondents (male=87%, female=90%) responded yes. Respondents understudy in majority reported that before visiting hospital they confirmed from people who had this treatment about the reputation of medical staff and their experience. In response to statement 8, i.e., Do you think that wet cupping (Hijama) therapy is a short-duration treatment alternative? The respondents understudy (male=46%, female=33%) responded yes. The respondents were aware that this treatment needs to be repeated in life depending on health condition of a person. One must go for this treatment atleast once in a year after proper medical test. In response to statement 9, i.e., Would you recommend wet cupping (Hijama) therapy to anyone? majority of respondents (male=87%, female=91%) responded yes. The respondents understudy wish all Muslims after medical check adopt this treatment as its very beneficial and easy way to cure many diseases. The results of our study are in agreement with the results of studies conducted on this topic in Muslim world. Statistically, in all statements there was nonsignificant difference in the opinion of male and female respondents towards Hijamah ( $P>0.05$ ).

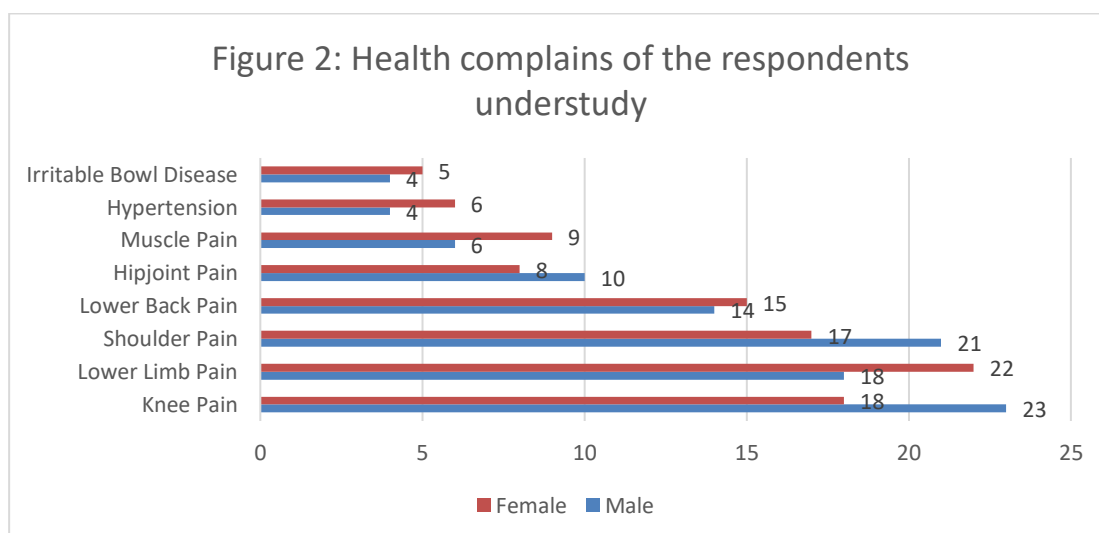
**Table 2:** Approach of respondents understudy Towards wet cupping (Hijama) in Kashmir valley

S.No.	Statement	Response	Gender		Chisquare	P-value
			Male (n1=100)	Female (n2=100)		
1.	Do you think that wet cupping (Hijama) therapy is a beneficial/ useful practice?	Yes	69	61	1.4209	>0.05
		No	6	8		
		No Idea	25	31		
2.	Do you think that wet cupping (Hijama) therapy can lead to side effects?	Yes	58	49	1.8364	>0.05
		No	9	13		
		No Idea	33	38		
3.	Do you think that wet cupping (Hijama) therapy is suitable for every disease?	Yes	13	11	0.74167	>0.05
		No	42	38		
		No Idea	45	51		
4.	Do you think that wet cupping (Hijama) therapy is a well-known form of alternative medicine?	Yes	21	17	2.4913	>0.05
		No	55	49		
		No Idea	24	34		
5.	Do you think that wet cupping (Hijama) therapy should be done in specialized centers only?	Yes	92	94	0.30722 (>0.05)	>0.05
		No	0	0		
		No Idea	8	6		
6.	Do you think that checking the practitioner's qualifications and experience is important before undergoing wet cupping (Hijama) therapy?	Yes	95	94	0.0962	>0.05
		No	0	0		
		No Idea	5	6		
7.	Do you think it is important to confirm that all instruments used are valid and sterile?	Yes	87	90	0.44215	>0.05
		No	0	0		
		No Idea	13	10		
8.	Do you think that wet cupping (Hijama) therapy is a short-duration treatment alternative?	Yes	23	28	3.5437	>0.05



		No	31	39		
		No Idea	46	33		
9.	Would you recommend wet cupping (Hijama) therapy to anyone?	Yes	87	91	0.81716	>0.05
		No	0	0		
		No Idea	13	09		

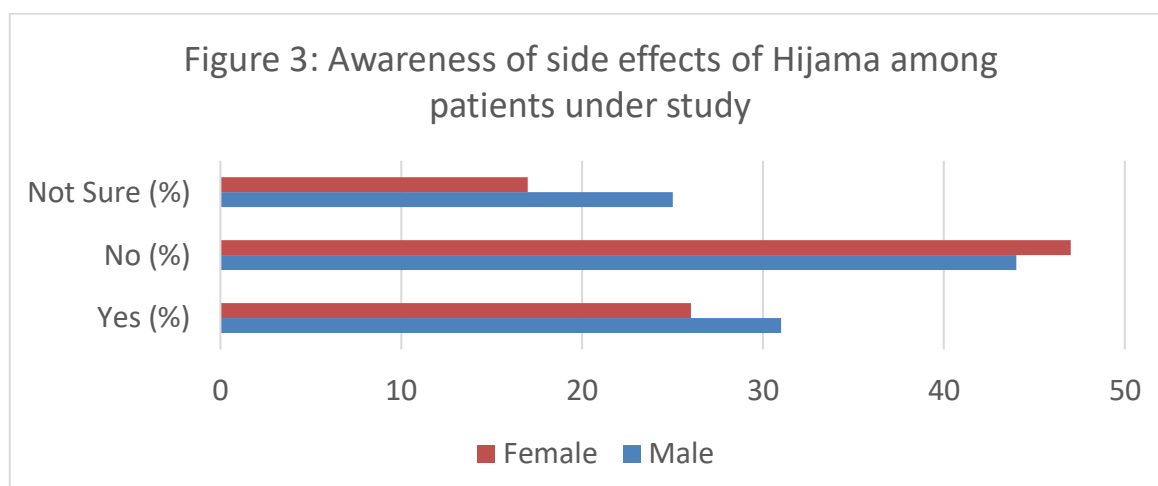
The data shown in Figure 2, revealed that male patients under study were suffering from Knee pain (23 %), Lower back pain (14 %), Shoulder pain (21 %), Hipjoint pain (10%), Muscle pain (6 %), Lower limb pain (18 %), Hypertension (4%) and Irritable Bowl Disease (4%) whereas female patients under study were suffering from Knee pain (18 %), Lower back pain (15 %), Shoulder pain (17 %), Hipjoint pain (8 %), Muscle pain (9%), Lower limb pain (22%), Hypertension (6%) and Irritable Bowl Disease (5 %). Discussion with participants revealed that they preferred this treatment because religion guidelines, less cost on treatment and less side effects. The believe it's a simple way of living a healthy life.



The study revealed that the repondents were treated with 2 cups (male=23%, Female = 27%), 3 cups (male=14%, Female = 19%) and more than 3 cups (male=63%, Female =54%). The cups used were linked with type of disease, health status and number of therapies done by a patient.



The data presented in Figure 3, revealed that majority of respondents understudy (male=44 and female=61) were not fully aware about the side effects of Hijama therapy. Hijama can be performed by Acupuncturists, chiropractors, medical doctors, or physical therapists. It is very important that practioner before performing Hijama examine patients thoroughly, explain patients benefits as well as side effects of Hijama therapy and aware them about the precautions to be taken after therapy.



## CONCLUSION

The ancient practices in the realm of holistic health and well-being that transcends time often hold an important wisdom.. Hijama or cupping therapy is one such medical practice that has gained renewed curiosity in recent years among the people worldwide especially among Muslims rooted in the teachings of holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). It is believed that Hijama not only heals body but it also heals the soul of an individual. On the basis of available literature it was found that the main benefits of cupping include: pain reduction, muscle relaxation, improved blood circulation, activation of the immune system, release of toxins, removal of wastes and heavy metals. The majority of respondents understudy

(male=44% and female=61%) were not fully aware about the side effects of Hijama therapy. This paper examined the approach of Kashmiri people towards Hijama besides on the basis Prophetic Hadith, exploring its physical and spiritual benefits of Hijama. The results of our study indicate that Medical practitioner in Kashmir support the use of wet cupping as an alternative medicine for select diseases and that individuals have adequate awareness of the practice's safety standards to avoid potential risks. The respondents who took part in this study were in the age group of 28 to 70 years and all considered this treatment as Sunnah so happily accepted this treatment. Statistically, it was found in all statements there was nonsignificant difference in the opinion of male and female respondents towards Hijamah ( $P > 0.05$ ). Finally, researchers suggested that cupping therapy if performed by an expert can help a person with certain health issues as it holds a divine source of healing, providing insights into its spiritual importance. The Prophetic Hadith emphasizes the concept of balance within the body, aligning with the principles of traditional medicine. Hijama is believed to aid in balancing the bodily humors, promoting optimal health and well-being. The cupping therapy or Hijama acts as a natural detoxification process, drawing out from the body of an individual impurities and stagnant blood. Infact, Hijama aids in cleansing the circulatory system and enhancing overall blood circulation of an individual. The goal of every doctor is prevention of disease and in future it is expected that Doctor will avoid medicine as much as possible and focus mainly on diet, life style modifications of an individual and physical exercise to prevent a disease.

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