

Investigating the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of Smallpox in the Persian medicine books

S. Arabian, Kh. Akbari Mashak, SS. Esmaeili Saber*

Abstract

Background and Purpose: Smallpox is one of the most prevalent infectious diseases that has spread to many societies since ancient times, and has resulted in many deaths. Smallpox viruses were transmitted to vulnerable children through travelers or immigrants who walked into clean areas and. It has been the childhood disease and the largest percentage of child mortality in history is due to smallpox. The need to fight smallpox and treat it has long been felt by physicians. Assigning some of the ancient medical texts to the description and interpretation of the disease and the mortality rate of it among different communities indicates the importance of the issue. However, no comprehensive guidelines have been provided so far for its diagnosis, treatment and prevention. Therefore, the aim of this study is to evaluate the sources of Persian medicine in Iran regarding the course of disease, the causes, symptoms and complications, treatment, and prevention of smallpox.

Methods and Materials: This research is a library study and is based on valid texts of Persian medicine from the 2nd to the 14th centuries AH. Materials related to smallpox and how to diagnose, treat and prevent it have been extracted.

Results: The disease is called "Jodari" in the texts of the traditional medicine of Iran and was first introduced in the 3th century AH by Sabet ibn Qurreh. However, the first systematic, scientific, clinical and precise description of smallpox was presented by Razi in the book of "*Al-Jodari val Hasbah*" in the 3rd and 4th centuries of Hijri. It is one of the most important medical books of the Islamic period. Most of the physicians after him expressed this disease based on his description regarding its clinical manifestations, pathology and treatment in three stages of the incubation, demonstration and recovery. As for the prevention, the experts of traditional medicine in Iran have introduced two oral and inoculation methods for vaccination.

Conclusion: There seems to be a clear diagnostic-therapeutic approach to infectious diseases including smallpox in traditional Persian medicine sources so that by eliminating its causes, Iranian physicians were able to significantly prevent it and reduce its severity if it happened. Moreover, in the course of the disease, the principle of their treatment is to strengthen the host (human) to fight the disease. Despite the eradication of smallpox at present, due to its similarity to some other infectious diseases, including chicken pox, the familiarity with traditional sources of medicine in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of smallpox can propose new research ideas for confronting current and future infectious epidemics.

Keywords: Contagious Disease, Smallpox, Medical History, Persian Medicine.

Corresponding Author: dr.esmaeili@chmail.ir