



A BRIEF CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW OF *IRQUN-NASA (SCIATICA)* - A REVIEW

Abuzar Lari^{1*}, S. Mohammad Akram², Musarrat Ali³, Zaid Iqbal⁴ and Ansari Mushir⁵

¹Assistant Professor in Dept of Ilaj-bit-Tadbeer. Mohammadia Tibbia College, Malegaon

²Associate Professor in Dept of Ilaj-bit-Tadbeer. Mohammadia Tibbia College, Malegaon

³Assistant Professor in Dept of Ilmul-Saidla. Mohammadia Tibbia College, Malegaon

⁴Assistant Professor in Dept of Tashreeh-ul-badan. Mohammadia Tibbia College, Malegaon

⁵Assistant Professor in Dept of Ilmul-Advia.

Dr. MIJ Tibbia Unani Medical College, Versova, Mumbai

Review Paper

Received: 28.08.2024

Revised: 11.09.2024

Accepted: 21.09.2024

ABSTRACT

In Unani System of medicine *Irqun-Nasa* is a nervine pain which initiates from *Pusht* (Lower back) and descends to lower limb and ankle joint. Other synonyms of *Irqun-Nasa* are *Rengan bau* and *Langdi ka dard*. Eminent *unani* scholars explained *Irqun-Nasa* in details and its probable causes, pathophysiology, symptoms and management in ancient literature. This review paper, An attempt to explore a brief concept to understand *Irqun-Nasa* in light of *Unani* medicine. Various kind of crude drugs and therapies are practiced for the management of *Irqun-Nasa* are discussed in full length paper, also there is brief review on historical background of *Irqun-Nasa* has been discussed.

No. of Pages: 5

References: 40

Keywords: *Unani*, *Irqun-Nasa*, *Rengan bau*, *Langdi ka dard*, *Pusht*, Eminent, Ancient.

Introduction & Historical background of *Irqunnasa (Sciatica)*

Renowned Unani Physician *Hippocrates* (460-377 BC) was the first person who described about the treatment of *Irqunnasa* (Sciatica). He referred it as 'ischiatric' pain affecting men between 40 and 60 years. He advocated traction as a beneficial method to relieve pain and loss of function. He observed that young men described pain that lasted about 40 days before resolving spontaneously¹. In the *Tafseer* of *Quran*, it is mentioned that *Hazrat Yaqoob* suffered from *Irqunnasa*. *Abul Hsan Ali Ibne Raban Tabari* (770-780AD) described *Irqunnasa* and mentioned

Safra as its cause². *Zakaria Razi* (865- 925AD) described *Irqunnasa* (Sciatica) as joint pain similar to other arthralgias like *Nigras* and categorized it as a type of *Wajaul Mafasil*³. In *Baghdad*, he claimed to have successfully treated 1000 cases of sciatica, mostly by bleeding in one of the lower extremities^{1,4}. *Ibne Sina* (980-1037AD) defined *Irqunnasa* as one of the *Wajaul-mufasil* characterized by hip pain which radiates towards the groin up to the ankle⁵. *Abumarwan Abdul Malik Ibn Zuhr* (1092-1162 AD) opined sciatic pain originates from foot and radiates up to hip with muscular spasm and discomfort in leg⁶. In 1451AD, the first known

*Corresponding author: abuzarlari123@gmail.com

use of the word sciatica⁷. Akbar Arzani (1721 AD) described *Irqunnasa* with its cause as early descending of *Madda* as compare to other types of *Wajaul Mafasil*⁸. Hakim khwaja Rizwan mentioned about *Irqunnasa* as the nerve *Irqunnasa* is always full of black *Dam* to which *Tabiyat* diverts towards lower side like descending of blood in '*Dawali*' (Varicose veins)⁹. Hakim Alwi Khan (1669 AD- 1747AD) treated Sciatica through venesection of saphenous vein¹⁰. In mid of 19th century, Author of *Ikseerul Quloob* mentioned that *Hijama* over both ankles is beneficial in *Irqunnasa*¹¹. In the same era, Hakim Haider Ali khan mentioned that *Irqunnasa* occurs oftenly in woman after delivery and remains up to 40 to 60 years of age¹².

DEFINITION

The *Irqunna'sa* is an Arabic term, which comprises "*Irq*" and "*Nasa*" (a name of a nerve) which starts from gluteal region and continues up to the ankle, and pain associated with this nerve is pronounced as *Irqunna'sa*^{13,14}. it is also used synonymously with several names such as: *Irqunna'sa*^{15,16} *Langdi ka dard*^{13,17} *Rengan bao*, *Rengni*¹⁸.

The concept of radiculopathy is described by Unani physicians as (Loss of sensation is sometimes due to involvement of associated lumbar or cervical nerve roots presenting symptoms in associated organ^{8,18,19}. *Irqunnasa* as a pain which affects the nerve namely "*Annasa*", and the association of pain depends on the intensity of the *Madda* and its duration of descends, greater the period of descends leads to increase in radiation of pain towards the bottom, and it also causes weakness of the organ²¹. According to Shaikh Ibne Sina "*Irqunna'sa* is a type of *Waja ul Mafasil* characterized by hip pain (buttock) radiating towards the groin up to the ankle"^{5,22} Mohammed Ismaeel Jurjani described that the pain which originates from ischial joint and radiates towards leg, called *Irqunna'sa*²⁰. According to Ibne Zakaria Razi, *Irqunna'sa* is the pain which starts from hip and radiates up to thigh, sometimes even up to calf muscles and

leg^{3,4,23}. Ibne Hubal Baghdadi defined *Irqunna'sa* as *Razi* with the addition as "a pain initiate from hip and radiates from the lateral of the thigh up to calf muscles"^{3,24} It is the pain which originates from hip and radiates towards lateral side of thigh, up to knee joint or ankle joint⁹. *Irqunna'sa* is defined as a hip pain, which is situated between *Azmul Warik* or *Sureen* and *Ran*²⁵. *Irqunna'sa* is a form of *Wajaul Mafasil*, in which pain originates from hip posteriorly and radiates towards knee, then upto ankle and it descends more lower by increasing chronicity and sometimes reaches up to fingers depending upon the amount of *Madda* on applying pressure over the fingers²⁶. *Irqunna'sa* is a hip pain which radiates towards the groin and even up to the knee, ankle and fingers. The intensity of pain and its radiation depends upon the amount of *Madda*^{27,28} Allama Sadeeduddin Al Karzooni in his book "*As Sadeedi*" described *Irqunna'sa* as a pain which originates from hip joint (*Mafsale Warik*), and radiates up to knee, ankle and sometimes up to fingers. The radiation of pain depends upon the duration of illness and the quantitative involvement of the *Madda*²⁹. According to Abu Marwan Abdul Malik Ibne Zuhr (1092-1163AD) the author of "*Kitabut Taisir fil Mudava wat Tadbeer*", the *Irqunna'sa* pain sometimes originates from foot and radiates up to the upper most part of the thigh that can be affected to any of the leg with mild discomfort⁶.

According to Hakim Akbar Arzani, there are four types of joints pain viz *Wajaul Mafasil*, *Niqris*, *Wajaul Warik*, *Irqunna'sa*,

Accordingly defined *Irqunna'sa* as a fourth type of joint pain, in which the pain originates from hip joint and radiates laterally, and medial side occasionally and sometimes up to fingers of foot⁸. Hakim Azam Khan, described in "*Ikseer Azam*" that *Irqunna'sa* synonymously used as "*Rengan bao*" and defined it as a pain which starts from hip joint and radiates laterally in the thigh, and even up to the finger of foot. It is also mentioned that this pain (*Irqunna'sa*) may likely to occur as a result of the long lasting sequel of hip joint pain

(*Wajaul Warik*)¹⁸. In *Irqunna'sa*, *Madda* descends from ischium towards fingers of foot. It is also said that it is not compulsory that *Madda* will spread throughout the course described³⁰.

Radicular pain

Irqunna'sa is also pronounced as “*Langdi ka dard*” because the pain makes the patient unable to walk properly or behaves like lame. Similarly it is also being in use with other names such as “*Rengan bao*” or “*Rengni*” because the prolong effect of the pain makes the patients to creep or to plod¹⁸.

CLASSIFICATION OF *IRQUNNA'SA*

I. On the basis of *Khilt* involved²⁵:

1) *Damvi* (2) *Balghami* (3) *Safravi* (4) *Saudavi*

II. On the basis of *Kaifiyat*:

1) *Har* (2) *Barid*

Asbab (Causes)

Madda

1. *Balghame kham*^{4,18}
2. *Balghame Ghair Tabai* mixed with *Dam*, *Sauda* and *Safra*^{18,4}
3. *Dam* with *Raddi Akhlat*²⁴
4. Abnormal *Safra*²
5. *Khilte Dam Ghaleez*³¹
6. *Khilte Balgham Ghaleez*³¹
7. Accumulation of *Fuzlat*, *Lesdar rutubat*, *Chemoos* (chyme) over joints, *Rutubat e Mukhatia*^{24,4}
8. Descending of *Har* and *Barid Fuzlat*, *Muzi Madda* and *Nazli rutubat*³²
9. *Ghalbae Akhlat*, *Ghalbae Rutubate Balgham* mixed with *Safra*, *Ghalbae Dam*, *Qillate Sauda*, *Sue Mizaj Sauda* and *Riyah*²⁴
10. *Buroodat* of the *barid khilt* leading to acute pain, Lysis of *Buroodat* causes evaporation which proceeds to *Tamaddud* (stretching)³³
11. *Mizaj Har Yabis*¹²
12. *Ghiza e Ghaleez*²⁴
13. Excessive sexual intercourse (after full stomach)²⁴
14. Sitting on hard objects^{4,5}

Clinical features of *Irqunna'sa* (Sciatica)

1. Pain
2. Radiating pain from lower back to Buttock^{31,32} Ankle^{5,21,13}
3. The intensity of pain depends upon the *Madda* descending, as soon as the *Madda* descends, the pain also going to radiate towards lower part and up to fingers lastly²⁷.

USOOLE ILAJ AND ILAJ

Basically the treatment for any ailment is to restore the normalcy of the individual sufferer, irrespective of the cause of disease. In *Unani* system of medicine a well organised line of treatment is described for most of the ailments including *Amraze Mafasil*, out of which specifically for *Irqunna'sa*.

The usual method of treatment adopted by most of the ancient *Unani* physicians for the management of *Irqunna'sa*, is mentioned below:

1. ***Izlae sabab*** (Treat the cause) by adopting appropriate regimen
2. **Correction of *Sue Mizaj Maddi***
 - a. *Ilaj bid Dawa*
 - I. Single drugs
 - ii. Compound drugs
 - b. *Ilaj bit Tadbeer*
3. ***Istefragh of Ghalib Khilt***³
 - a. *Fasd*^{14,25,34}
 - b. *Hijamat Bil Shurt*³
 - c. *Irsale Alaq*³
4. ***Amale Kai***^{1,6,35}
5. ***Imalae Mavad* through *Hijamat Bila Shurt***
6. ***Taskeene Alam***

***Ilaj bid Dawa* (Pharmacotherapy):** The treatment can be provided either by administering single or compound drugs. In this context *Unani* physicians have listed some important single drugs and their usage form,

such as:

- *Asale bladur* (Semicarpus anacardium) applied locally as *Tila*, mentioned by *Mohammed bin Zakaria Razi*, as it is an alternative of *Amale Kai*³
- *Khardal* 3 gm along with *Sharab* to be given regularly for 3 days³¹
- Local application of paste of *Pudina* and *Qust*³⁵
- *Bozidaan*, *Suranjan*, *Gogul*, *Haleela Zard*, *Haleela Siyah*, *Rae*, *Sonth*, *Anesoon*, *Ajwaeen*, *Elva*, *Shaheme Hanzal*, *Kali zeeri*, *Farfiun*, *Majaith*, *Zoofae Khushk*, *Long*, *Pudina*,³⁶ *Ushq*, *Jaosheer*²³, *Parsiyooshan*, *Tukhme Karafs*, *Sakbeenaj*, *Turbud safaid*, *Anzaroot*, *Hulba*, *Beekhe Kibr*³⁰.

Compound drugs

- *Habbe Mushil*, *Habb Suranjan*⁴², *Habb Zehab*³⁴, *Majoon Suranjan*, *Roghane Sana*⁴²
- *Roghane Dafli*, *Roghane Surkh*⁴², *Roghane Seer*, *Roghane Qurtum*, *Roghane Gule Aak*, *Roghane Malkangani*⁴⁰.
- According to *Ali Ibne Abbas Majoosi* following powder is found beneficial in cases of Sciatica; *Sanae Makki*-30gm, *Suranjan*-15gm, *Sheetraj Hindi*-11gm, *Zafran Khalis*-1.75gm, all the ingredients are pound to made powder and served along with sugar in equal quantity³⁵.

Ilaj Bit Tadbeer

- *Dalk*^{3,25}, *Takmeed*¹, *Nutool*³⁰, *Hijamat Bish Shurt* and *Hijamat Bila Shurt*^{1,37,38,39} *Mahjama Nariya* (Fire cupping)^{3,40,31,41} *Irsale Alaq* (leeching)³, *Fasd* (Venesection), *Dalk* (Massage), *Amale Kai*^{1,33,35}.

Conclusion

The main purpose of this article is to make aware and update about the knowledge of ancient literature regarding *Irqun-Nasa* mentioned in classical Unani text, beginning from history, then

their causes and pathophysiology from different classical books and lastly their management.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We authors acknowledged to the library staff of MTC.

Conflict of Interest: There is no conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

1. **Ioannis Karampelas** et al. Sciatica: A Historical Perspective on Early Views of a Distinct Medical Syndrome. *Neurosurg Focus* 2004 Jan ;16(1): 1-4.
2. **Tabri A.** Firdausul Hikmat. (Urdu translation by Hakeem MA Shah). Deoband: Faisal publication; 2002:291.
3. **Razi A.** Al Havi Fit Tib. Vol.11. New Delhi: CCRUM; 2004: 75, 84, 129, 76, 77, 129, 114,174, 88, 99, 96.
4. **Razi A.** Bar us Sa'ah. Hardoe: Hakim M B Siddiqui; YNM: PNM.
5. **Sina I.** Al Qanoon Fit Tib. (Urdu translated by Kantoori GH). Vol. 3. New Delhi: Idara Kitab u Shifa; 2007: 1120-1121.
6. **Zuher I.** Kitabut taisir. New Delhi: CCRUM; 1986: 221.
7. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sciatica> Dec 2012.
8. **Arzani A.** Tibbe Akbar. (Urdu Translation by Hakim M. Hussain). Deoband: Faisal Publication; YNM: 627.
9. **Rizwan K.** Tarjuma Sharah Asbab. Vol 3. New Delhi: CCRUM; 2010: 408.
10. **Khan A.**, Matab Hakim Alwi khan. (Urdu Translation by Hakim Abdul Bari Falahi). New Delhi: Jamia Hamdard; 2009: 529.
11. **Noor M.** Akseerul Quloob. (Urdu translation of Mufarreahul Quloob). Lucknow: Matba Munshi Naval Kishor; YNM: PNM.
12. **Khan HA.** Majmaul Bahrain. Lucknow: Matba Munshi Naval Kishor; 1294 Hijri: 523.

13. **Qarshi MH.** Jameul Hikmat. New Delhi: Idarae kitabushifa; 2011:1028.
14. **Sina I,** Kulliyate Qanoon (Urdu translation by Allama Kabeeruddin). New Delhi: Ejaz publishing house; 2006: 335-336, 344-350.
15. **Lakhnawi A.** Kitabe Ajeeb almaaroor Amliae Jalinoos. Haidrabad: Matba Haidri; YNM: 31.
16. **Khan HA.** Hazique. Krachi :Madina Publishing company; 1983: 538.
17. **Khan A.** Al Ikseer. (Urdu translation by Hakim Kabeeruddin). Vol.2. New Delhi: Ejaz publishing house; 2003:1451, 1453.
18. **Zuhrawi Q.** Jarahiyate Zuhrawi. (Urdu translation by Hakim Nisar Ahmed Alwi kakori). New Delhi: CCRUM; 2012: 26.
19. **Kirmani II,** Moalajate Nafeesi. Lucknow: Matba Nami Almunshi Navalkishor; 1906: 427.
20. **L Yan, AC L.** Treatment of sciatica with electro accupncture and tuina. Internal Journal of Clinical Acupuncture. 1993; 2: 137-140.
21. **Razi A.** Kitab ul Mansoori. (Urdu Translation). New Delhi: CCRUM; 1991: 393.
22. **Bughdadi I.** Kiatabul Mukhtar fit Tib. Vol.4. New Delhi: CCRUM; 2007: 79, 80.
23. **Ali S.** Zakheera Sabit Ibn Qurra. UP: Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed Memorial Committee; 1987: 313.
24. **Iqserai J.** Tarjumamae Iqserai Sharah Mojiz. Lucknow: Matba Munshi Naval Kishor; YNM: 414.
25. **Ahmed F.** Bemojaz. Lucknow: Matba Munshi Naval Kishor; 1304 Hijri: 182-183.
26. **Iqserae J,** Iqserae. Lucknow: Matba Nami Almunshi Navalkishor; YNM: 417.
27. **Alkarzooni S.** Sadeedi. Lucknow: Matba Nami Almunshi Navalkishor; 1311:PNM
28. **Antaki D.** Tazkira Oolil Albab. New Delhi: CCRUM; YNM: 32.
29. **Majusi A.** Kamilussana'a. New Delhi: Idarae kitabushifa; 2010: 574, 543.
30. **Alquamari A.** Ghina Muna (Urdu translation). New Delhi: CCRUM; 2008: 339.
31. **Weber H.** The Sciatica trial, Introduction and outline of thesis, www. open acess. leidenuniv. Nl (Date accessed:13 June 2012).
32. **Chagmini Sh.** Qanuncha. Deoband: Faisal Publications; 2004:151.
33. **Jaleel H.,** Tazkeræ Jaleel. New Delhi: CCRUM; 2008: 367.
34. **Khan HS.** Byaze Khas Almaaroor Ilajul Amraaz. New Delhi: Ejaz publishing house, 2006: 382, 739, 741, 742.
35. **Golwalla A.** Medicine for Students. 21st Edition. Dr.A.F. Golwalla. Express Court; March 2005: 589
36. **Campbell W.** Dejong's Neurologic Examination. New Delhi: Wolters Kluwer (India); 2009: 333.
37. **Kumari A, Ram R, Dave A, Shukla V.D.** Effect of compound drug and Matra Basti in Gridhrasi. AYU Journal. Oct-Dec 2009; 30(4): 495.
38. **Jurjani MI.** Zakheerae Khuwarizm Shahi. (Urdu translation of Hakim Hadi Hussain) New Delhi: Idare kitabushifa; 2010: 637, 649, 650.
39. **Maseehi AAFIQ.** Kitabul Umda Fil Jarahat. (Urdu translation). Vol 1. New Delhi: CCRUM; YNM: 200.
40. **Khan A.** Qarabadeene Azam (Urdu Translation by Hakim Kabeeruddin). New Delhi: Idarae Kitabushifa; 2011: 54.