



Letter to Editor

Dear Sir

I read with pleasure and satisfaction the quarterly journal, *Annals*, Vol.8, Issue 3 of July-September 2002, which is a quality research magazine being published by King Edward Medical College, Lahore

On the page 202, a research essay under the caption of *Tile Dermatitis, Clinical Profile in 90 Cases* by G. Mujtaba, M. Khalid and I. Hussain is of especial interest.

There are a few important points in this article which deserve your special attention, in order to avoid possible misunderstanding. At the start of articles, the meaning of *Tila* is written as *Gold*. Actually, this is an Arabic word having two meaning. Firstly, it means gold and secondly it means an oil or ointment used extremely for massage. Similarly, the Urdu word *sona* means sleep as well as the metal gold. If the first sense of the word is used in place of the other, imagine how radically the meaning and sense of the description would change! So, in the above-mentioned essay, the meaning of *Tila* should have been externally used ointment or oily preparation.

Secondly, it is a great tragedy that in Pakistan the law-enforcing institutions and agencies are very weak and ineffective, as a consequence of which a crop of quacks is really flourishing in every system of therapeutics. There are numerous rural areas and urban slums where allopathic quackery is going on end, as a result of greed, injections and drips are prescribed which are often unnecessary and sometimes undoubtedly a source of harmful side-effects to the patients. In such circumstances, if data are collected about the side effects and harm being inflicted by these quacks practicing supposed allopathy, and these data attributed to the process of therapeutics which uses injections and drips, and it is then declared that allopathy and the practice of the allopathic profession is responsible for such acts, it would be a wrong conclusion and grossly unfair. Equally incorrect is the stance adopted in the aforementioned study regarding *Unani* medicine.

Today, the developed worked – even WHO – have admitted the value and importance of alternative methods and systems of treatment. China and India have excelled in these systems and are not only earning billions of dollars in foreign exchange through them, but also introducing alternative systems of Medicine to the world. In Pakistan, the alternative systems of treatment of choice, namely *Unani*/Eastern medicine in available, but, to our dismay, we are not getting credit at national or international level.

You will be pleased to know, that Hamdard University Pakistan, has started a graduate level programme in the field or *Unani*/Eastern Medicine. In it, we meet all the requisite standards of medical education and training, as in other medical colleges of Pakistan. In the month of January 2003, an MOU for the propagation and promotion of Eastern Medicine was signed between Hamdard University and the University of Western Cape, South Africa. A similar agreement has been reached in November 2002 between the Nelson Mandela School of Medicine, South Africa and Shandong Academic of Medical Sciences, China. A sizeable number of allopathic doctors of Egypt and Lebanon, after completing short courses in the *Ayurvedic* system of Medicine, are not only practicing that system, but are a source of promotion of it in the Middle East. Is it not, therefore, incumbent on the Pakistani medical set-up to incorporate on scientific lines, our historic assets of *Unani* medical knowledge?

In this regard, ruptured institution like King Edward Medical College should play a positive role. Surly this is the imperative duty of the Muslim *ummah* as a whole, not only of *Tabibs* and *Hakims*.

Please excuse my having written at length, but I have done so in the hope that elaboration would have the opportunity in appearing in print in your next edition of *Annals* of King Edward Medical College, so that our esteemed readers can see the other side of the picture.

Sincerely yours

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