

Short Article

# Hammam-e-Bukhari (Vapour Bath or Steam Bath): An Overview in Unani System of Medicine

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## A B S T R A C T

*Hammam-e-Bukhari* is one of the oldest therapy in the *Unani* system of medicine. *Hammam* is one of the famous regimen used all over the world and one of the most effective mode of treatment in *Tibb-e-Unani*. Basically, moist and dry heat is used in classical Hammam. This therapy at removing morbid matter in the body and opening the pores. The term Hammam is derived from Arabic word Hamm. which means "spreader of warmth" or "producing heat". This paper aims to describe beneficial effects of steam bath and its mechanism.

**Keywords:** Steam Bath, Hammam, Unani

## Introduction

In Unani system of medicine, Hammam refers to hot bath. According to Ibne Sina the word Hammam is obtained from Alhamim which means the "vehemence of summer heat." Hammam such as Riyazat and Dalak is the part of Asbab-e-ghair Zarooriyah. Hammam decreases repletion and to enhance power of nutrients then it promotes our health.<sup>1</sup> This Hamma-e-Bukhari (Steam bath) had been famous throughout history and were used to improve health and to further well being.<sup>2</sup> Hamma-e-Bukhari is used to expel out Mada-e-Balghamia (Shahmi Maada) through sweating in the body that is responsible for obesity. In Tibb-e-Unani, Hammam-e-Bukhari is also used for the correction of Sue Mizaj Barid.<sup>3</sup>

## Indications of Hammam-e-Bukhari

1. Gastrointestinal System:

- Diarrhoea
- Abdominal pain
- Distention

- Cholecystitis
2. Urinary/ Genital System:
- Impotence
  - Retention of ejaculate
  - Painful urination
3. Gynaecological/ Obstetric
- Postpartum healing
  - Menstrual irregularities
  - Reversal of infertility
4. Musculoskeletal System
- Rheumatism
  - Corporal/ musculoskeletal pains
5. Bites and accidents
- Wounds
  - Bone fractures
  - Sprains
  - Snake bites

6. Oedemas
  - Swelling of limbs due to intrusive cold
7. Weakness and wasting
  - Chronic lethargy
  - Aggressive madness
8. Obesity
9. Hot air baths
  - Chronic maladies
10. To maintain physiological homeostasis in the body<sup>4</sup>

#### Mechanism of Action of Hammam-e-Bukhari

- *Tahleel*
- *Taqtee*
- *Talteef*

**Tahleel:** Tahleel means diminishing waste product in the body. This happens owing to the hot water and heat which is used in hammam.

**Taqtee:** To release morbid matter in interstitial spaces in the body organs.

**Talteef:** Warm water is used in this steam bath. In this procedure, Quwawat Tabiya (Natural faculty) is used to split in small parts.<sup>5</sup>

#### Benefits of Hammam

- To reduce weight.
- To relax musculoskeletal pain.
- To strengthen the nerves.
- To perform the function of sweating, then to remove morbid material in the body and also toxins which are present in the body.<sup>6</sup>

#### Conclusion

The Hammam-e-Bukhari (Steam Bath) is a preventive and curative therapy. It has many beneficial effects in many diseases such as skin diseases, gastrointestinal diseases, musculoskeletal disorder, some gynaecological conditions, urogenital diseases, chronic lethargy etc. Its popularity is still increasing in daily life owing to its beneficial effects. It reduces the toxicity of the body and through sweating opens pores of the skin.

It is a curative therapy in Unani system of medicine. It is the oldest therapy yet popular in the modern world.

**Conflict of Interest:** None

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