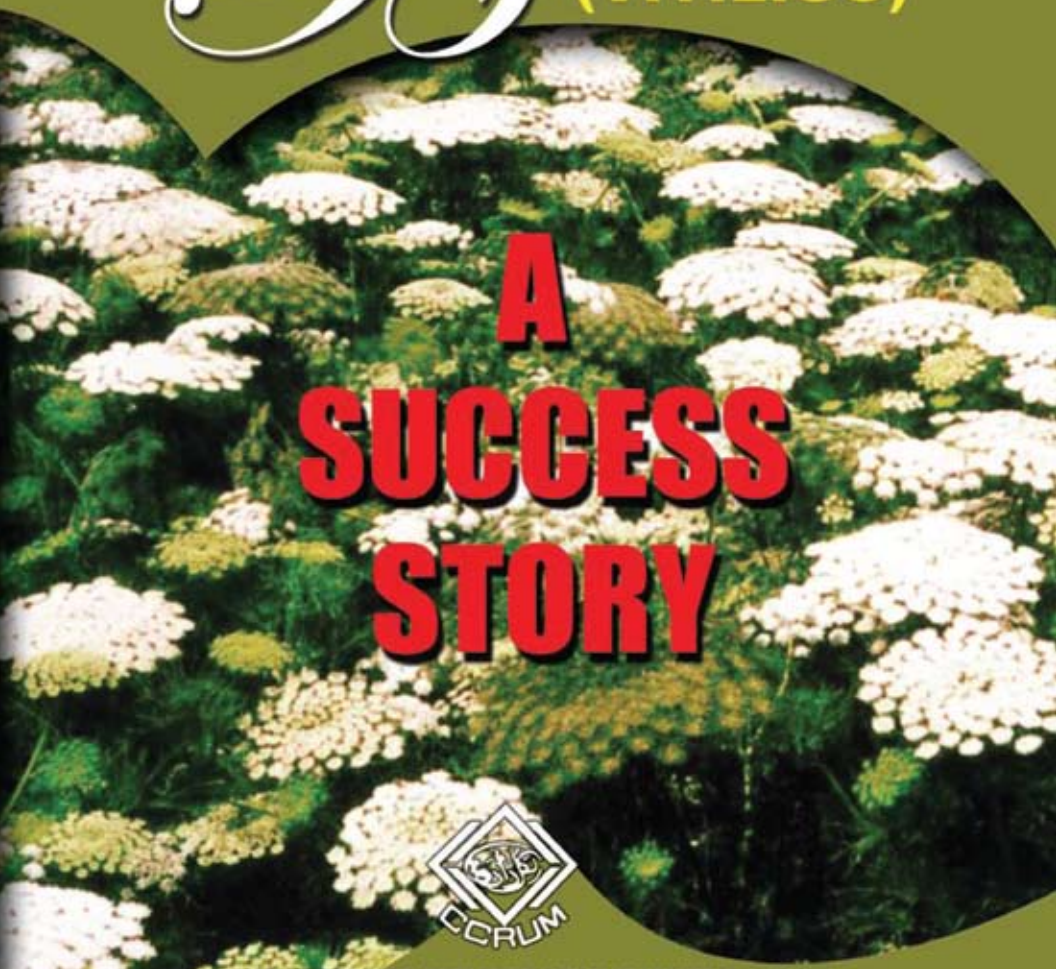
Unani Treatment for Bars (VITILIGO)



A SUCCESS STORY

CCRUM

CENTRAL COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH IN UNANI MEDICINE
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India
Department of Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani,
Siddha and Homoeopathy (AYUSH)
New Delhi

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BARS (Vitiligo)

Introduction

Bars (vitiligo) is a skin disease produced due to derangement of phlegmatic humour. It is also known with other common names such as Sufaid Daagh, Phuleri, Savitra etc. Bars is neither contagious nor infectious. It is more a social stigma rather than a disease. The aetiology of Bars is still ambiguous though it has been discussed in detail in Unani classics. According to Unani concept Bars is caused due to the weakness of Quwwat-e-Mughaiyirah wa Mushabbiha (transformative faculty) of the skin and liver. Fasad-ud-Dam (impairment of blood) and Burudat-ud-Dam (coldness of blood) are also aggravating causes of Bars. In modern medicine Bars is known as vitiligo or leucoderma. White spots are caused by destruction or weakening of pigment cells. There are various hypotheses about the causation of vitiligo such as the immune hypothesis, neural hypothesis, self-destruction hypothesis etc. Exposure to certain chemicals such as phenol and injury to skin predisposes vitiligo. There is also a genetic base to vitiligo to some extent.

Today, it is estimated that about 1-2 percent of world population suffers from vitiligo. There is no racial or gender bias. In India incidence of vitiligo is 2-3 percent as per data recorded from hospitals, and is higher in coastal areas like Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Kerala.

People with vitiligo experience emotional stress particularly if it develops at visible areas of the body. Being chronic and long standing disorder it always takes time to show response of the drug. Larger and older spots take longer time and thus exact duration of treatment cannot be predicted at the initial stage of therapy. There is no radical treatment available and the disease has many stages and is of different clinical types having different causes. It is therefore necessary for the physician

to choose the right drug combinations according to the patient's temperament.

Clinical Studies under the CCRUM

Unani physicians have used single as well as compound preparations for the treatment of Bars. The Central Council for Research in Unani Medicine (CCRUM) for the first time undertook clinical studies on scientific parameters to clinically revalidate the efficacy of Unani drugs in cases of Bars.

Studies on Bars (vitiligo) started at the Central Research Institute of Unani Medicine (CRIUM), Hyderabad in the year 1972. Besides clinical validation, pharmacological and toxicological studies were also carried out on standardized ingredients and compounds. The CRIUM, Hyderabad, which is now the leading centre under the CCRUM, has over the years gained great repute for the successful treatment of Bars not only in India but also abroad. This centre alone has the privilege of registering over 70,000 patients since its inception.

Multidimensional studies covering clinical, pathological, biochemical, physiological and herido-familial aspects in Bars patients have been coducted and are still continuing at this centre. Keeping in view the demand for treatment of Bars research studies were also initiated at other centres of the Council, located at New Delhi, Aligarh, Srinagar, Kolkata, Mumbai and Bhadrak. At these centres extensive studies covering other aspects including climatic and dietary variations have also been conducted. The Council have so far screened 20 formulations and treated over 90,000 patients of Bars at different centres. A clinical profile of the four treatment groups that have shown significant therapeutic response is given in the following pages. The first two formulations viz. (UNIM-001+UNIM-003) and (UNIM-004+UNIM-005) were tried at Central Research Institute of Unani Medicine, Hyderabad whereas UNIM-007 and UNIM-008 were tried at Regional Research Institute of Unani Medicine, Aligarh. These

combinations were tested on a large number of patients and showed considerable therapeutic response. The details are as follows.

Treatment Group 1

UNIM-001 + UNIM-003

Therapeutic trial of this combination was conducted on 8000 patients at CRIUM, Hyderabad. UNIM-001 is an oral herbal drug and UNIM-003 is a combination of herbo-mineral drugs in powder form for local application on the affected parts.

Drug dose and mode of administration

Two tablets (500 mg each) of the drug UNIM-001 were given orally twice a day after half an hour of meals. The patients were advised to make a fine paste by mixing one part of the drug UNIM-003 with five parts of water and apply it on the affected parts early in the morning and then expose them to sun rays for few minutes. The time of exposure to sun rays was extended gradually from two to ten minutes. The paste was washed off the affected parts after half an hour of application. The time of retaining the paste on the affected parts was gradually increased from half an hour to one hour.

Treatment Group 2

UNIM-004+UNIM-005

Therapeutic trial of this combination was conducted on 14000 patients at CRIUM, Hyderabad. The drug UNIM-004 is an oral herbal drug and UNIM-005 is a combination of herbo-mineral drugs in powder form for local application on the affected patches.

Drug dose and mode of administration

Two tablets (500 mg each) of the drug UNIM-004 were given orally twice a day after half an hour of meals. The patients

were advised to make a fine paste by mixing one part of the drug UNIM-005 with five parts of water and apply it on the affected parts early in the morning and then expose it to sun rays for few minutes. The time of exposure to sun rays was extended gradually from two to 10 minutes. The paste was washed off the affected parts after half an hour of application. The time of retaining the paste on the affected parts was gradually increased from half an hour to one hour.

Treatment Group 3

UNIM-007 (for oral use and local application)

Therapeutic trial of this drug was conducted on 257 patients at Regional Research Institute of Unani Medicine, Aligarh. The drug UNIM-007 is a herbal plant of Egyptian origin which has been domesticated and cultivated for the first time in India by the Council and used in the trial for the treatment of Bars.

Drug dose and mode of administration

Powder of 1.5 gm of the drug UNIM-007 was given orally twice a day after half an hour of meals. The patients were advised to make a fine paste by mixing one part of the drug UNIM-007 with five parts of vinegar and apply it on the affected parts early in the morning and then expose it to sun rays for few minutes. The time of exposure to sun rays was extended gradually from two to 10 minutes. The paste was washed off the affected parts after half an hour of application. The time of retaining the paste on the affected parts was gradually increased from half an hour to one hour.

Treatment Group 4

UNIM-008 (for oral use and local application)

Therapeutic trial of this drug was conducted on 272 patients at Regional Research Institute of Unani Medicine, Aligarh. The drug UNIM-008 is a single Unani plant.

Drug dose and mode of administration

Powder of 1.5 gm of the drug was given orally twice a day after half an hour of meals. Patients were advised to make a fine paste by mixing one part of the drug UNIM-008 with five parts of vinegar and apply it on the affected parts early in the morning and then expose it to sun rays for few minutes. The time of exposure to sun rays was extended gradually from two to 10 minutes. The paste was washed off the affected parts after half an hour of application. The time of retaining the paste on the affected parts was gradually increased from half an hour to one hour.

Duration of treatment

In each group treatment was give for a minimum period of three months in the first instance. This was extended to a maximum of 24 months.

General therapeutic response

In the responding cases appearance of new patches was completely checked. Repigmentation in depigmented patches was achieved in variable degrees depending upon the age of the patient, chronicity of the disease, part of the body affected and the type of vitiligo. Percentage of repigmentation varied according to the duration of the treatment. Treatment group-wise details are as follows.

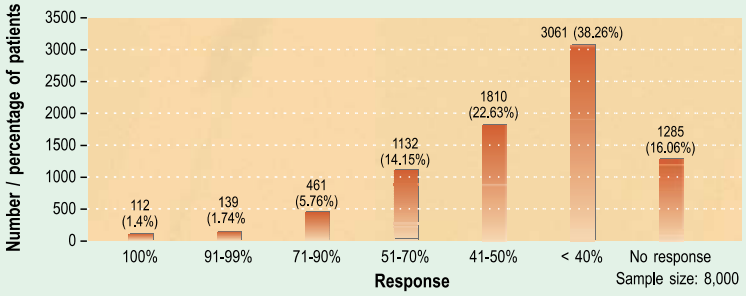
Side effects/drug intolerance

The oral drugs used in the treatment of Bars (vitiligo) showed no major intolerance or side effects. Minor intolerance in the form of nausea or gastric irritation was observed in some cases, which was controlled by adding pure ghee (clarified butter) to the diet. Some patients with sensitive skin showed itching or blister formulation on local application of the drugs. In such cases patients were advised to apply coconut oil or some soothing cream. In such cases dilution of the paste was

Table showing general therapeutic response of coded Unani drugs tried in cases of Bars (vitiligo)

Treatment Group	Sample Size	Percen-tage of responding cases	Area of repigmentation						
			100%	91-99%	71-90%	51-70%	41-50%	<40%	No response
UNIM-001+ UNIM-003	8000	83.94%	112 (1.40%)	139 (1.74%)	461 ((5.76%)	1132 (14.15%)	1810 (22.63%)	3061 (38.26%)	1285 (16.06%)
UNIM-004+ UNIM-005	14000	88.74%	296 (2.11%)	526 (3.76%)	1176 (8.40%)	1864 (13.31%)	4481 (32.01%)	4081 (29.15%)	1576 (11.26%)
UNIM-007	257	92.20%	48 (18.70%)	14 (5.40%)	56 (21.80%)	69 (26.90%)	26 (10.10%)	24 (9.30%)	20 (7.80%)
UNIM-008	272	87.90%	45 (16.50%)	26 (9.60%)	49 (18.00%)	23 (8.50%)	22 (8.10%)	74 (27.20%)	33 (12.10%)

General therapeutic response of coded Unani drugs (UNIM-001+003)

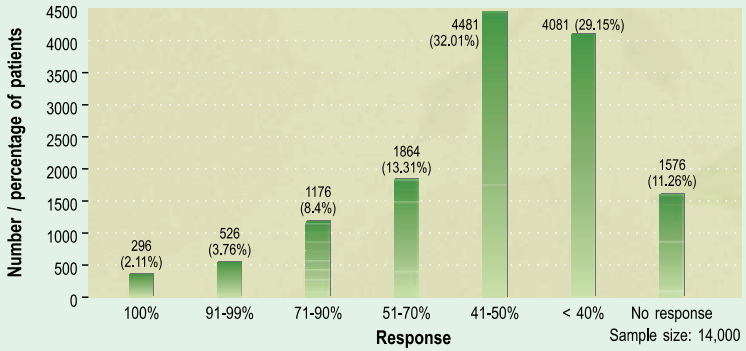


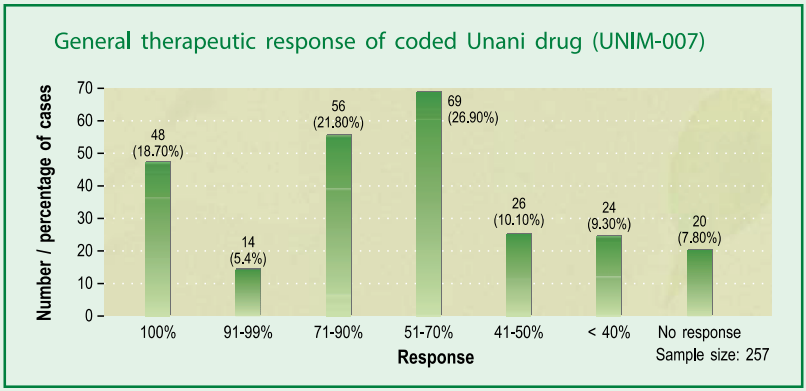
also increased and they were advised to apply the local drug on alternate days.

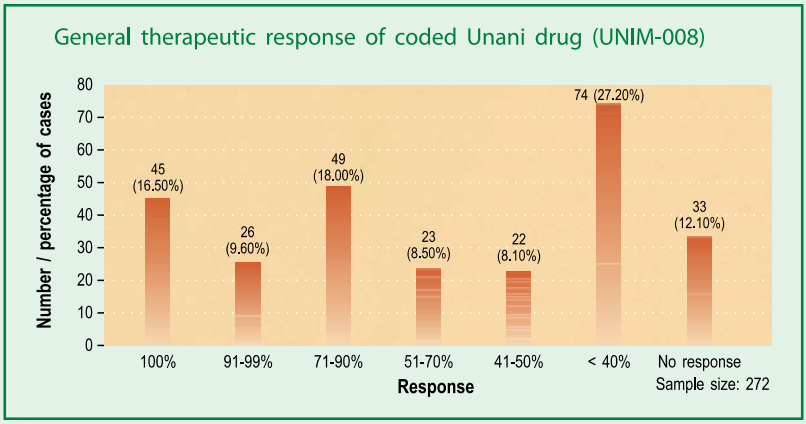
Role of diet in the treatment of Bars (vitiligo)

Diet plays an important role in the treatment of Bars. According to Unani system of medicine all cold and phlegm producing food articles are harmful in this disease. Clinical experience of the Council's researchers shows that frequent use of such articles not only delays the response but also aggravates the lesions. Food articles that are restricted and recommended for Bars patients are as follows.

General therapeutic response of coded Unani drugs (UNIM-004+005)







Restricted food articles

A. Articles that are supposed to produce Fasad-ud-Dam (impairment of blood) e.g.

- Eggs
- Fish
- Beef
- Brinjal
- Heavy and light food mixed simultaneously

Some Unani plants used in the treatment of Bars (vitiligo)

Babchi
(*Psoralea corylifolia* Linn.)

Halela Siyah
(*Terminalia chebula*)
(Gaertn.)

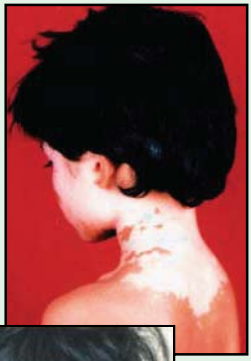
Atrilal
(*Ammi majus* Linn.)

Gulnar Farsi
(*Punica granatum* Linn.)
(Abortive varitey)

Sudab
(*Ruta graveolence* Linn.)

Pictures showing response of Unani drugs in cases of Bars (vitiligo)

Before Treatment

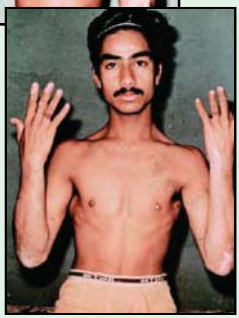


After Treatment

Before Treatment

After Treatment

Before Treatment



After Treatment

Before Treatment

After Treatment

B. Articles that are supposed to increase the production of Balgham (phlegm) e.g.

- Milk
- Curd
- Buttermilk
- Lemon and lime
- Tamarind
- Oranges and other citrus fruits
- Red sorrel
- Parsley
- Custard apple
- Guava
- Prunus
- Chinese dates
- Melon
- Water melon
- Chinese dates
- Tomatoes (if sour)
- Amla
- Indian sorrel

There may not be enough scientific evidence to prove how these food articles adversely affect vitiligo. However, clinical experience has shown adverse effects of different diets in many cases of vitiligo. Therefore it is better to avoid them.

Recommended food articles

- Wheat
- Indian millet
- Pulses (specially Bengal gram)
- Pure ghee obtained from butter
- Broad beans
- French beans
- Spinach
- Bitter gourd
- Ridge gourd

- Onion
- Beet-root
- Carrot
- Chillies (red pepper)
- Black pepper
- Mutton
- Bird's flesh, roasted
- Maize
- Figs (fresh and dry)
- Almonds
- Pistachio nut
- Walnut
- Dates
- Mango
- Apricots
- Grapes
- Potatoes
- Rice
- Amaranth
- Fenugreek
- Drumsticks
- Turnip
- Apple
- Chikoo
- Papaya

Centres of Central Council for Research in Unani Medicine for Treatment of Bars (Vitiligo)

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  Ullaskar Dutta, Masjid Road,
  Karimganj - 788 710, Assam
- Regional Research Institute of Unani Medicine,
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  Patna - 800 001, Bihar
- Regional Research Institute of Unani Medicine,
  D-11/1, Abul Fazal Enclave, Jamia Nagar, Okhla,
  New Delhi - 110 025
- Unani Medical Centre
  Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital,
  New Delhi - 110 001
- Regional Research Institute of Unani Medicine
  University of Kashmir, Hazrat Bal, Srinagar - 190 006
  Jammu & Kashmir
- Clinical Research Unit, National Institute of Unani Medicine Campus, Kotigepalaya, Magadi Main Road,
  Bangalore - 560 091, Karnataka
- Clinical Research Unit, S.H. Unani Tibbiya College,
  Ganpati Naka, Burhanpur - 450 331
  Madhya Pradesh
- Regional Research Institute of Unani Medicine
  J.J. Hospital Compound, Behind Eye Bank, Buculla,
  Mumbai - 400 008, Maharashtra

- Regional Research Institute of Unani Medicine
  Bhadrak - 756 100, Orissa
- Regional Research Institute of Unani Medicine
  1, West Mada Church, Street, Royapuram
  Chennai - 600 013, Tamil Nadu
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  Sitapur Road Yojna, Lala Lajpat Rai Ward
  Lucknow-226 021, Uttar Pradesh
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  Allahabad-211 016, Uttar Pradesh
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  Bhoomiya ka Pul, Meerut-250 002, Uttar Pradesh
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  79-B, 1st Floor, Chitranjan Avenue, Kolkata - 700 073
  West Bengal

Some tips for Bars (vitiligo) patients

- Bars (vitiligo) is more a social stigma than a disease.
- It is neither contagious nor infectious.
- Patients of Bars (vitiligo) should not feel embarassed, ashamed, depressed or worried about other's behavious towards them. This may lead to further emotional stress which may aggravate the disease.
- The patients should try to enjoy social gatherings and parties without any hesitation and let the people know that theyhave only discolouration of the skin.
- The patients should consult the doctor/specialist for treatment.
- The patients should avoid use of incompatible and different types of food items at one time, and protect the skin from excessive heat or exposure to sun.

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