



Avicenna Viewpoint about Health Preservation through Healthy Nutrition Principles

****Hossein MORADI¹, Bagher MINAI¹, Alireza NIKBAKHT NASRABADI²,
Marzieh-Baygom SIAHPOOSH³***

1. *Dept. of Iranian Traditional Medicine, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran*

2. *Dept. of Nursing and Midwifery, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran*

3. *Research Institute for Islamic and Complementary Medicine, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran*

***Corresponding Author:** Tel: +982155152192 Email: moradi.medicine@yahoo.com

(Received 12 Dec 2012; accepted 15 Jan 2013)

Dear Editor-in-Chief

According to Traditional Iranian Medicine (TIM), health preservation and disease prevention are prior to disease treatment. To get this aim, there are recommendations in TIM such as appropriate physical activity (1) and appropriate nutrition which are introduced as two parts of six principles for healthiness (2). Today, these two factors are very important for health preservation and disease prevention too (3). Representing viewpoints of Ibn Sina (Avicenna), one of the greatest Iranian medical scientists about nutrition is the purpose of this study in order to find out the best quality of nutrition because nutrition is one of the most important things to survive man, which is effective in all aspects of his/her life. Therefore, health and disease of an individual, society, and generations depend on it. In addition, focusing on nutrition has been the main issue in medical sciences in ancient medicine references. Quality of nutrition and the type of food have played a substantial role in organizing medical science (4). According to Avicenna's viewpoint, there are eight important and effective principles in relation with nutrition to be more useful in order to preserve health and prevent from disease include:

1- The quality of nutrition should be according to his/her temperament (Mizaj) and in general,

he/she should eat some foods in balance with his/her temperament.

- 2- Since digestive system is strong in winter and weak in summer, individuals should eat nutritive foods in winter and foods which are easy to digestion in summer.
- 3- The type and quality of foods which are eaten should be in accordance with personal activities and efforts. For instance, athletes should eat more nutritive foods.
- 4- It is necessary to consider digestive system power, i.e. anyone whose digestive system is strong can eat foods which are difficult to digestion and conversely, anyone whose digestive system is weak can eat foods which are easy to digestion.
- 5- Middle-age people should eat less than before.
- 6- Healthy nutrition and habits should be observed in various regions and climates.
- 7- The sequence of eating foods should be based on its digestion time. Some foods are digested early and the others are digested lately. Thus, foods should be eaten in proper time both in order to preserve nutrients of foods and to prevent from food degradation within stomach.

- 8- Subsequent meal should be eaten after digesting previous meal because eating on undigested food has been known as the most harmful thing for healthiness (5).

As a conclusion, this study indicates that various factors about nutrition and its quality have been focused by Iranian medicine scientists. These factors include: temperament, individual, seasonal, climate age, digestive system, gastric condition and so on. Today, according to modern medicine references, nutrition science is often based on pyramid of energy (6), pyramid of food (7), food categories (8), and Acceptable Macronutrient Distribution Ranges (AMDR) (9). This study shows that special and even different viewpoints on nutrition which can improve their knowledge about nutrition have been represented by ancient Iranian physicians and it may be resulted in representing new hypothesis about how prevention from disease by obeying healthy nutrition principles is possible. Further studies in this field are recommended.

Note

Temperament means the dominant quality of the composite object and it is made of the interaction of four basic elements (hot, cold, wet and dry).

Acknowledgments

This study was a part of postgraduate thesis entitled: "explanation of the principles and basics of eating and drinking in Iranian traditional medicine"; and was supported by a grant from Tehran University of Medical Sciences. The authors would like to thank Dr. Dakhili. The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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