

# Hairfall ( *Intithar al Sha'r*) in Unani Medicine: Exploring Preventive and Curative Remedies – An Overview

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**Abstract:** Hair fall (*Intithar al-Sha'r*) is a common concern affecting individuals worldwide, with various underlying causes such as genetic predisposition, nutritional deficiencies, hormonal imbalances, stress, and environmental factors. Unani medicine, a traditional system of healing, offers a holistic approach to managing hair fall through dietary regulations (*Ilaj bil Ghiza*), lifestyle modifications (*Tadbeer*), and herbal formulations (*Ilaj bil Dawa*). This review explores the Unani perspective on hair fall, highlighting preventive and curative remedies, including time-tested herbal preparations like *Roghan Amla*, *Roghan Bhangra*, and *Roghan Til*, as well as internal medications such as *Jawarish Amla* and *Majoon Murabbayat*. Additionally, detoxification therapies (*Munzij Mushil*), scalp massages (*Dalak*), and dietary interventions play a crucial role in strengthening hair follicles and promoting regrowth. By integrating traditional wisdom with modern scientific insights, Unani medicine provides a comprehensive and natural approach to hair fall management.

**Keywords:** *Hair fall, Intithar al-Sha'r, Unani Medicine, Herbal Remedies, Regrowth, Holistic Treatment.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

According to Unani system, the term used is *Intithar al-Sha'r*. Various Unani scholars like Dioscorides, Ibn Maswayh, Zakariyya Razi, Ali Ibn Abbas Al-Majust, Ibn Sina described *Intithar al-Sha'r* in detail with its etiopathogenesis and management in their treatises. They stated that the most common cause is poor production of *bukharat-e-dukhaniyya*, leads to poor athering in the *masamaat* (Skin pores), thus, producing *yabusat* in the whole body. This *yabusat* alter the normal structure of body's skin, make it extremely thin and loose. So, hair comes out easily when gently pulled, resulting in hair thinning and shedding. The purpose of this review is to highlight the concept of Diffuse Hair Loss in Unani system

with its treatment as mentioned in classical Unani books<sup>1</sup>.

As per Unani medicine, the intricate balance between actions and reactions of opposing attributes within these four elements, coupled with their interactions, facilitated by their inherent powers (Qualities) in varying proportions, gives rise to the distinct *Mizaj* (Temperament) of each individual (4). *Saudavi khilt* typically provides nourishment to specific organs such as bones, retinas, skin, hair, and sclera. An imbalance in *Saudavi khilt* can cause excessive dryness and coldness, resulting in poor blood circulation, flaky dandruff, frizzy and brittle hair, as well as issues like hair thinning and split ends due to insufficient nourishment. Excessive *Safra khilt*, however, can lead to heightened heat within hair

follicles, which may be damaging and cause a greasy scalp texture, prone to boils and itchy dandruff.

In damvi and baghami mizaj, the hair texture remains lustrous as governs the oil and sebum production in your scalp tissues. Balghami individuals have thin, scanty hair with a slower growth rate and lighter color and tend to be white (17-21). An imbalance in Damvi and Balghami mizaj can result in an excess of oil secretion, which can lead to blockage of scalp follicles, resulting in wet and sticky flakes due to heightened humidity (21, 26). Every person aspires to beauty to admire themselves. Not only is beauty a source of joy, but it can also inspire pride and confidence to some extent. Since hair reveals a person's outward look, it is the most crucial factor in determining beauty. The objective of this study is to evaluate the correlation between Mizaj-dependent attributes and patterns of hair loss<sup>2</sup>.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A Manual literature survey of modern and classical unani manuscripts was conducted and collected information available on Hairfall [Intithar al-Sha'r] and its unani and modern perspective were taken into consideration and also secondary data was collected regarding Unani Remedies from all available modern and Unani literature and latest studies done in national and international research papers and internet respectively.

### ➤ Epidemiology

Due to the preclinical nature of the disease, the true incidence or prevalence of telogen effluvium is unknown. It has no racial predilection and affects both males and females, with females having a greater incidence rate, because women present more frequently with this complaint, as they tend to find hair shedding more distressful than men and thus, women seek more medical attention<sup>1</sup>.

### ➤ Etiology

Hair loss occurs because the hair material production is in a balance state and this balance is achieved with in a specific structure and equality and it continuously reaches from the inside out. this causes the inner part to produce the outer part initially binding and covering it outwards so its root remains inside<sup>3</sup>.

Physical or emotional stress, after severe febrile illness, Hemorrhage, Sudden starvation, Malignancy, Impairment of liver or kidney function, Certain drugs<sup>14</sup>.

Drugs such as enalapril, beta blockers, retinoids, oral contraceptive pills, lithium, levodopa may be responsible<sup>12</sup>.

Severe emotional stress, Radiation therapy, Chemotherapy, Age, Genetic, Rapid weight loss, Protein increase hair loss, Skin disorder, Endocrine disorder, Aging<sup>13</sup>.

The growth of the hair occurs due to formation of material (Bukharat-i- dukhaniyya) this formation requires specific equal and balanced proportion. this balance is maintained as nourishment and is consistently supplied from within ensuring that the inner and outer parts remain properly connected and intact. the outer part cover in a way that its root remain firm inside meaning some part remains buried inside like the root of tree and some part appears outside like a branch therefore the reason for hairfall could be a deficiency in diet and moisture, tightness of pores or such reason. the connection between the relevant material (Bukharat-i- dukhaniyya) and pores is what matters<sup>4</sup>.

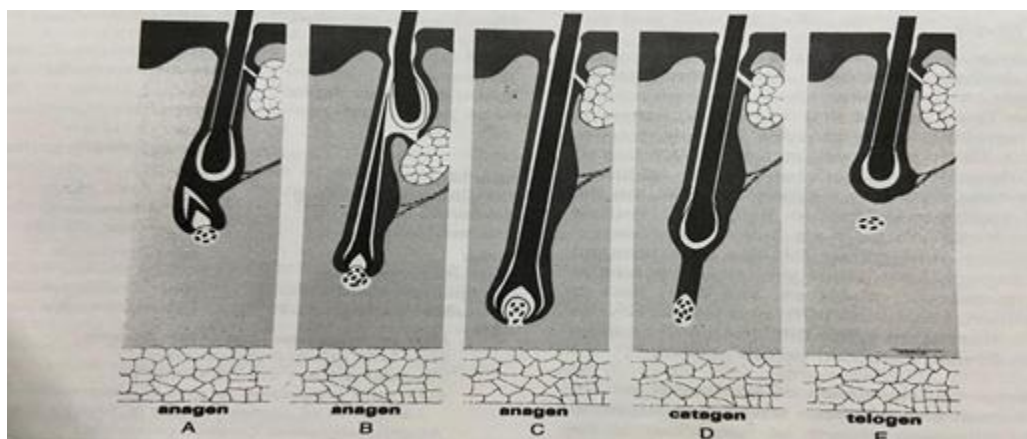
Comprehensive statement about hair falling breaking and thinning is that it is either due to some bad substance that by staying in the limb mixes with the flesh and prevents the hair from getting its nourishment or its happen due to excessive moisture which causes hair to deteriorate and the excess of moisture exceed the moderation. its example is like water overflowing in the field and ruining the crop or it is due to lack of moisture so the hair like plants dries up and start falling which are not water. The reason for hair loss and breakage is that the skin there is thin or porous compared to the hair. Its basic treatment principle is to strengthen the brain and attract healthy blood towards it. Therefore, its treatment should not be done with compound medicines (but rather with brain tonics), and it is even better if an astringent medicine like Lawsonia is added to it because when Lawsonia is mixed with Roghan and applied to the head, it stops hair from falling out. However, the head should be rubbed and reddened before using it. hair loss and breakage is the dryness or roughness of the skin there compared to the hair. Its basic treatment is to strengthen the warm brain and attract and divert pure blood towards it. Therefore, it should not be treated with moist medicines. (Rather, it should be treated with brain-strengthening medicines) and along with it, if a medicine like laun (lavender) is added, it is even better because when laun is mixed with oil and massaged into the head, it stops hair loss, but the head should be rubbed and reddened before using it<sup>5</sup>.

### ➤ Pathophysiology

Each hair follicle goes through a growth cycle, which consists of a growth stage, a regression stage, and a resting stage. During the growth (anagen) stage, cells of the hair matrix divide. As new cells from the hair matrix are added to the base of the hair root, existing cells of the hair root are pushed upward and the hair grows longer. While the cells of the hair are being pushed upward, they become keratinized and die. Following the growth stage is the regression (catagen) stage, when the cells of the hair matrix stop dividing, the hair follicle atrophies (shrinks), and the hair stops growing. After the regression stage, the hair follicle enters a resting (telogen) stage. Following the resting stage, a new growth cycle begins. The old hair root falls out or is pushed out of the hair follicle, and a new hair begins to grow in its place. Scalp hair is in the growth stage for 2 to 6 years, the regression stage for 2 to 3 weeks, and the resting stage for about 3 months. At any time,

about 85% of scalp hairs are in the growth stage. Visible hair is dead, but until the hair is pushed out of its follicle by a new

hair, portions of its root within the scalp are alive. Normal hair loss in the adult scalp is about 70-100 hairs per day<sup>13</sup>.



**Fig 1 :** Phases in the cycle of a hair follicle

**A :** Anagen begins with the renewal of the intimate relationship between the follicular papilla and the undifferentiated follicular epithelial cells that enclose it partially.

**B:** As anagen proceeds, matrical cells generate a new hair that pushes upward toward the skin surface and, in the process, dislodges the old club hair

**C:** Mature anagen hair follicle.

**D :** During catagen, the lower segment of the follicle shrivels upward as a thin cord of epithelial cells and is followed by the papilla

**E:** During telogen, the club hair rests in a cornified sac Whose base is at the level of the muscle of hair erection<sup>9</sup>.

As part of natural hair growth hair in the telogen phase are shed from all areas of the scalp at a rate of up to 150 per day. Normally, these follicles then re-enter and no obvious hair

thinning is apparent. If a large number of hair follicles enter catagen together, however, diffuse excessive hair loss is observed 23 months later. This may be seen following significant physical or emotional stress or after severe febrile illness. Once the stress passes, the hair usually returns to normal<sup>14</sup>.

Certain events can induce hair follicles to enter the telogen phase. This then induces a synchronous growth of hair follicles 6-10 weeks later such that more synchronous hair fall is seen. It commonly follows delivery of a baby, high fever, surgery or other stress. Drugs such as enalapril, beta blockers, retinoids, oral contraceptive pills, lithium, levodopa may be responsible. Treatment is reassurance, removal of stress or drug responsible. Hair density usually returns to normal in 6-12 months<sup>12</sup>.

### III. PROPHYLACTIC UNANI REMEDIES

Table 1: Compound (*Murakkab*) drugs with their functions as mentioned in unani literature with references

S.NO	NAME OF THE OIL	DESCRIPTION MENTIONED IN UNANI LITERATURE	REFERENCE
1	Rogan-e-gilani	It is stated that it helps in softening of hair and also prevents hairfall, It also acts as brain tonic	10
2	Rogan-e-lawan	It is mentioned by the author that it helps in generalised hair growth thereby preventing hairfall.	10
3	Rogan-e-murid	Classical text states that application of this oil promotes hair growth and helps in treating and preventing hairfall	10

4	Rogan-e-kunjad	It promotes the overall hair growth and maintains black colour of hair also reduces the dryness in brain.	6
5	Rogan-e-shuneez	It is mentioned that this oil promotes in blackening of hair.	6
6	Rogan-e- baizae murgh	It is stated that application of this oil helps in strengthening of hair and also promotes in blackening and fast hair growth.	10
7	Rogan-e-kahu	It is mentioned that this oil helps to maintain moisture in brain .	10
8	Rogan-e-badam Shireen	It promotes the overall hair growth and maintains black colour of hair also reduces the dryness in brain.	10
9	Rogan-e-soos	It is mentioned that application of this oil helps in strengthening of hair and also promotes in blackening and fast hair growth.	15
10	Rogan-e-aaas	It is mentioned that application of this oil helps in strengthening of hair and also promotes in blackening and fast hair growth.	15
11	Rogan-e-heena	It is mentioned that this oil promotes in blackening of hair.	10
12	Rogan-e-amla	It is stated that it provides nourishment to hair follicles thereby improving overall hair growth.	4
13	Rogan-e-kaddu	It is mentioned that application of this oil helps in improving tonicity of brain and also helps in reducing and removing of dryness from brain	10
14	Rogan-e-gesu daraz	Improves the overall hair growth and maintains black colour of hair also reduces the dryness in brain.	10
15	Rogan-e-khizaab	It is written that it helps in treating greying of hair thereby maintains and promotes blackening of hair.	10
16	Rogan-e-banafsha	It states that it helps in removing dryness of brain	10
17	Rogan-e-shakakayi	It is mentioned that it helps in promoting growth of hair.	6
18	Rogan-e-shakhaikh	It is mentioned that it helps in promoting growth of hair.	10

Table 2: Single (*Mufarrad*) drugs with their function as mentioned in unani literature with references .

S.NO	NAME OF THE DRUG	PARTS USED	FUNCTION	REFERENCES
1	Gul Gudhel ( Hibiscus rosa sinensis)	Flower	It promotes hair regrowth and nourishment.	6
2	Bhangra (Eclipta alba)	Root	It Revitalises the hair and Blackening of hair	6,7
3	Shahitarg (Fumeria parvifloralam)	Root	It helps in cleansing of hair	7
4	Chukhandar (Beta Vulgaris)	Fruit	It helps in regrowth and softening of hair	7
5	Shikakaiyi[acacia concinna]	fruit	Its helps in Regrowth the hair and lengthens the hairs prevent the drandraff	7
6	Khust[dolomiaea costus]	root	Its help in regrowth the hair	7
7	Darmen turki[artemisia masitima]	root	Its help in regrowth the hair and brain tonic	7
8	Lalla[pulstatilla vulgaris]	flower	Its help in blackening hair and added in other dyes	7

9	Aaas[myrtus communislinn]	root	Its help in strength to the hairs and blackening the hairs and added in dyes also	4
10	Ber[zizyphusjuba]	leafs	Its help in strength to the hairs and remove the dandruff from the scalp	7
11	Multani mitti[bentonite clay]	clay	Its help in cleansing the hair	6
12	Baalchad[nardostachys jatamansi]	root	Its help in lengthen the hair and blackning the hair	8
13	Amla(emblica officinalis)	fruit	Its help in prevent hairfall and blackning the hair	8
14	Henna(lawsonia inermis)	Leave and flower	Its help in strength the hair root	6
15	Shuneez(nigella sativalinn)	seeds	Reduce hair fall and blackning the hair	7
16	Mazu sabz(quercus intectoriaoliv)	fruit	Its help in blackningbthe hair	7
17	Kunjad(sesamum indicum)	leaf	Regrowth the hair and blackning the hair	7
18	Akhakhiya(acacia arabica wild)	gum	Blackning the hair	7

#### IV. PRINCIPLES OF TREATMENT<sup>4</sup>:-

- Increase nutrients in food.
- Sleep intake should be proper so that digestion process occurs
- Do bath so that the moisture from the cause of hair loss, dryness, etc. can be removed.

If there is heat in the temperament, then...

If the reason for hair loss is moisture, then keep it in the massage for a long time so that the moisture is absorbed. the reason for hair loss may be the moisture that is produced in the skin. In treatment, use astringent and strengthening oils and lotions

#### V. DISCUSSION

Hair fall (Intithar al-Sha'r) is a multifactorial condition influenced by genetic, nutritional, environmental, and lifestyle factors. In Unani medicine, hair health is closely linked to the balance of Akhlat (humors) and the proper nourishment of the body. The Unani approach to managing hair fall is holistic, focusing on dietary adjustments (Ilaj bil Ghiza), lifestyle modifications (Tadbeer), and herbal treatments (Ilaj bil Dawa).

Unani physicians emphasize the importance of a balanced diet rich in essential nutrients such as iron, zinc, and vitamins that nourish the hair. Scalp massage with medicated oils like Roghan Amla, Roghan Bhangra, and Roghan Til improves blood circulation, strengthens hair roots, and prevents excessive hair loss. Detoxification therapies (Munziji Mushil) help eliminate toxins, which are considered a

contributing factor to hair fall.

In Unani medicine, hair loss is understood in terms of an imbalance of the body's humors and the influence of factors like heat, cold, and dryness. Treatments aim to restore balance and address underlying causes, such as digestive issues or deficiencies.

Unani physicians stress the importance of a balanced diet rich in nutrients that promote hair health. For example, foods that enhance *Dam (blood)* circulation, such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, are recommended. Iron, biotin, zinc, and vitamin-rich foods are particularly emphasized.

Unani practitioners recommend regular exercises, stress management techniques, and proper sleep, all of which are thought to contribute to healthier hair growth.

Several herbs are believed to strengthen the hair and prevent its loss, Unani medicine advocates for the use of oils and pastes derived from herbs and minerals to directly treat hair loss, Unani medicine also utilizes specific formulations to balance the internal humors. Some of these might include, Sometimes used in Unani medicine, cupping therapy is believed to help with blood circulation, particularly to the scalp, thus aiding in hair regrowth.

Many individuals use Unani remedies alongside modern treatments like minoxidil or finasteride, providing a holistic approach to managing hair loss. Unani medicine's emphasis on lifestyle factors like diet, stress management, and herbal interventions complements these treatments by addressing root causes of alopecia, such as hormonal imbalances or poor



nutrition. Modern research could potentially support or question the efficacy of these remedies. Some herbs used in Unani medicine, like Bhringraj and Amla, have been studied for their properties in stimulating hair growth, though more clinical trials are necessary to establish their effectiveness conclusively.

One challenge with traditional systems like Unani medicine is the lack of standardization and regulation, which can lead to variations in the quality and potency of treatments. Understanding the cultural context and acceptance of Unani medicine in different parts of the world can influence how widely it is adopted or integrated with Western practices. Although generally considered safe, herbal treatments in Unani medicine must be used under the guidance of trained professionals to avoid possible side effects or interactions with other medications.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Unani medicine provides a time-tested, natural, and holistic approach to preventing and treating hair fall. By addressing dietary deficiencies, improving scalp health, and balancing the Akhlat, Unani regimens offer both preventive and curative measures. The integration of herbal formulations, detoxification methods, and lifestyle modifications makes Unani treatment an effective alternative to synthetic hair treatments. Future research integrating Unani practices with modern scientific methodologies can further validate its efficacy and enhance its application in contemporary hair care solutions.

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