Objectives: To assess the awareness, practice, and utilization pattern of Unani medicine among the general population of Trilokpuri, East Delhi.

Materials and Methods: A cross-sectional, observational descriptive survey was conducted in New Delhi using pretested, predesigned, and structured questionnaire to assess the awareness and utilization pattern of Unani medicine on a sample size of 100 subjects.

Result: Out of 100 subjects, 60% were males and 40% were females with mean age 38.96 ± 9.12 years, ranged between 18 and 65 years. The awareness about Unani medicine was found in 67% of adopted population, while 57% population among them preferred Unani system of medicine as a mode of treatment. Unani is preferred because of minimal side effects associated as reported by 47% users. On the other hand, among nonuser (n = 29), 48% population do not prefer Unani medicine because of its slow action. Very few (2.6%) users adopted Unani medicine exclusively, while most of them preferred Unani as an adjuvant with allopathic. Unani medicine is preferred mainly for the management of musculoskeletal disorders (35%), followed by GIT disorders (19%) and their related disorders.

Conclusion: The awareness level regarding Unani medicine is good rather utilization of is relatively lower as compared to modern system of medicine. There is a need and scope for promotion of health education as well as improvement in the people’s attitude towards Unani system of medicine.

Keywords: Awareness, AYUSH, traditional medicine, Unani medicine, utilization
alternative medicine is rising because of its affordability, accessibility, and rise in awareness about the adverse effects associated with allopathic medicines. The World Health Organization (WHO) encourages country members to support the traditional medicines by formulating policies and appropriate regulations indoctrinating it in preventive, primitive and curative aspect of health. Also, WHO has launched the traditional medicine strategy 2014–2023 to mainstream the traditional medicine along with allopathic system of medicine as population in rural areas mainly rely on it for their basic health care needs.

India has recognized indigenous system of medicine viz., Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, Homeopathy, Yoga, and Naturopathy and they have been given an independent identity under Ministry of Ayush. Unani medicine is a recognized system of Indian System of Medicine which has been systematically integrated in the national healthcare delivery system by the Government of India. Unani medicine is popular in South Asian countries and its use is growing in other parts of the world as well due to increase in scientific research. It has now become part of the mainstream system of medicine in Bangladesh, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, and few others.

The fundamental framework of this system is based on Hippocratic theory of four Humours (Akhlāt)–Blood (Dam), Phlegm (Balgham), Yellow Bile (Safrā‘), and Black Bile (Sawdā‘) and in its holistic approach. Admixture of different elements and their qualities in specific ratio in a particular entity, whether living or nonliving, denominates its temperament (Mizāj). Human temperament is commonly denoted by the dominant humor, that is, Sanguine (Damawī), Phlegmatic (Balghami), Choleric (Safrā‘i), and Melancholic (Sawdāwi), which can be correlated with the temperament of diet, drugs, and environmental factors, etc., Humoral imbalance can be corrected by proper diet and medication. The physician prescribes drugs according to the temperament of patient, causative humor, faculty of organ involved and severity of the disease. These drugs are classified as per the specific temperament (Mizāj) and are graded in I, II, III and IV degree according to their potency. Unani Medicine gives much importance to maintenance of health and prevention of disease.

There are limited studies reporting utilization of Unani medicine in India. Understanding the utilization pattern of Unani medicine is important for various reasons including an increased focus on its mainstreaming and integration with biomedicine-based health care system. The present study was carried out to assess the awareness and practices about the Unani system of medicine among population of New Delhi.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted at Trilokpuri, East Delhi with a sample size of 100. It was a cross-sectional survey which was conducted from July 2021 to October 2021 to assess the awareness and utilization pattern of Unani medicine. Voter list of the adopted study area was downloaded by the government website. Then random table of house numbers as mentioned in voter list was generated by using simple random technique. The data was collected by interview method. Door to door survey was done in specific houses (according to random table) by using pre-tested questionnaire prepared for the purpose (Reference). Data collection was conducted physically through a structured interviewer-administered questionnaire. The objectives of the study were duly explained to each and every selected participant and doubts, if any, were clarified. Prior to the study, the respondents were informed verbally about the purpose of the study and their verbal consents were taken for participation in the survey. Approval from Institutional ethics committee has been obtained dated 25.10.2021.

Study tool (questionnaire related to objectives of the study) was designed for the purpose of the study. The questionnaire was short and simple consisted of 18 items with appropriate options which included multiple choice and close-ended understandable questions. The questionnaire

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents (n=100)

| Age Group (%) (n=100) | 18-40 years | 58 (58%) |
|----------------------|-------------|----------|
|                      | 41-60 years | 41 (41%) |
|                      | >60 years   | 1 (1%)   |
| Mean±SD              | 38.96±9.12  |
| Gender n (%) (n=100) | Male        | 60 (60%) |
|                      | Female      | 40 (40%) |
|                      | Others      | 0        |
| Religion n (%) (n=100)| Hindu      | 87 (87%) |
|                      | Muslim      | 13 (13%) |
|                      | Christian   | 0        |
|                      | Sikh        | 0        |
|                      | Others      | 0        |
| Education Status (%) (n=100)| Illiterate | 11 (11%) |
|                      | Primary School | 35 (35%) |
|                      | Secondary School | 36 (36%) |
|                      | Under graduate | 11 (11%) |
|                      | Post graduate | (7%)     |
was segmented into two sections; the first section collected sociodemographic characteristics including gender, age, religion, and education status. The second section comprising nine questions focusing individuals’ knowledge, awareness and attitude towards Unani medicine by asking questions about individuals’ awareness about Unani system of medicine and the last section consisted of nine questions regarding utilization pattern and effect of Unani medicine as per their experiences. Mentally sound adults of 18 and above were included in the study.

**Observation and Result**

**Sociodemographic details**
The demographic details are summarized in Table 1. Among 100 respondents, 60 were male and 40 were female. The mean age of respondents was 38.96 ± 9.12 years, ranged from 18 to 65 years. The majority of them, that is, 58% were in age group range of 18–40 years and 41% were under the range of 41–60 years. Only 1% of participants were above 60 years. Majority (87%) of the respondents were Hindu, while 13% were Muslims. While assessing the education level of the participants, it was revealed that 11% participants were illiterate, while rest 89% was educated with different standards. Among total literate participants, 36% were up to the level of secondary school, followed by 35% of participants who were upto primary school While 11% respondents were undergraduates and 7% were post graduates [Table 2].

**Awareness**
Coming to the awareness regarding Unani system of medicine, 67% participants were aware, while 33% were unaware of the system. Awareness is more in male as compared to female participants, as it has been reported that 58.2% males were aware [Figure 1]. If categorized according to religion, 55 participants among 67 were Hindu, while rest 12 were Muslim [Figure 2]. Regarding source of awareness, it was observed that among 67 participants who are aware 27% came to know about through social media followed by 24% through by neighbors. Sources of information were family trend and friends i.e., 19% and 12% simultaneously [Figure 2].

Mode of treatment among unaware population was also screened out and it was revealed that the preferred choice of treatment is allopathic (88%), followed by Ayurveda and Homoeopathy (4%) [Table 3].

**Utilization pattern**
When enquired about utilization of Unani medicine among the respondents who were aware about the system of medicine ($n = 67$), it was observed that only 57%, that is, 38 subjects preferred Unani system of medicine for treatment. Users also mentioned reason for opting Unani as a mode of treatment. Amongst all, 47% of users, cited minimal side effects associated as the reason for preferring utilization of the same. While nine subjects, that is, 24% adopted Unani for being natural in form and 11% users preferred Unani medicine because of its connotation with general wellbeing and as a family tradition. Only 8% users assumed Unani medicine as cost effective. Reasons for preferring use of Unani medicine were also recorded, and it was revealed that 52% subjects (among nonusers, $n = 29$) avoid Unani

Table 2: Religion wise distribution about awareness of Unani medicine

| Do you know about “Unani Medicine” as a mode of treatment? ($n=100$) | Hindu | Muslim |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 55 (55%) | 12 (12%) |
| No | 32 (32%) | 1 (1%) |

Table 3: Preferred mode of treatment among participants unaware about Unani medicine ($n=33$)

| Mode of treatment | No. | % |
|---|---|---|
| Allopathic | 29 | (88%) |
| Homoeopathy | 2 | (4%) |
| Ayurveda | 2 | (4%) |
| Sidha | 0 | 0 |
| SowaRigpa | 0 | 0 |
| Naturopathy | 0 | 0 |

Figure 1: Awareness about Unani Medicine

Figure 2: Source of awareness about Unani medicine
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Due to slow action while 48% do not prefer because of low effectiveness [Table 4]. Among users, 36.8% used Unani medicines along with combination of modern medicine, that is, allopathic medicine followed by 31.5% who preferred Unani with Homoeopathy system of medicine. While 29.8% used Unani medicine with Ayurveda and only 2.6% among users consume exclusively Unani drugs [Figure 3].

Disease-based utilization

As far as disease wise consumption is concerned, Unani medicine is preferred both exclusively and with allopathic medicine in combination. It is preferred exclusively in the management of musculoskeletal disorders (35%), followed by GIT disorders (19%). Amongst all, 16% users preferred Unani medicine in the management of lifestyle disorders. While 29% population, consume Unani medicine with allopathic medicine in the management of musculoskeletal and GIT disorders simultaneously. Further, only 14% subjects used combination of Unani and allopathic in the management of lifestyle and skin disorders [Table 5].

DISCUSSION

In the present study, awareness level of participants was good, 67% of adopted population was aware about Unani system of Medicine. Major sources of awareness about the system of medicine are social media (27%). Finding differs from other studies conducted in New Delhi.[7,8] It may be due to different population adopted in studies, as these studies were conducted on patients attending Unani OPDs and students of Unani colleges, in which there is 100% awareness about the system. Regarding the source of awareness, it may be inferred that present era is of social media and general population mostly became aware regarding various facts through social media platform.

In the present study, 57% of the study subjects prefer Unani medicine which is amore as compared to other studies conducted on utilization pattern of Unani medicine in New Delhi.[7,8] While utilization is less than another study conducted in Nuh (74%).[1] When the respondents were asked about the preferred mode of treatment, the findings revealed that Allopathic medicine was the most preferred mode of treatment in majority of the respondents (88%) which is consistent with earlier studies in which 72.88% of the consumers preferred Allopathic medicines over traditional medicines.[9]

Majority of the participants (47%) mentioned minimal side effects associated with Unani medicines as reason for opting it as a mode of treatment. The findings are consonant to other studies which revealed that Ayush system is nature based and free of side effects.[10] Majority of participants (52%) among the nonusers are reported that they do not prefer Unani system due to its slow mode of action.

When assessed regarding disease-based utilization pattern, it has been reported that majority of users (35%) preferred Unani system of medicine for management of musculoskeletal disorders followed by GIT disorders and Hepatobiliary disorders (19%). The findings are in consonant to other studies conducted in New Delhi.[8,11]

CONCLUSION

Knowledge and general awareness of people about Unani system of medicine is satisfactory but the utilization of medicine is still low. People believe that Unani system of medicine is associated with minimal side effects that could be the reason of its use for many chronic
disorders. Furthermore, there is a need and scope for health education and promotion to improve the attitude about Unani medicine. However, a major study may be planned in future with large population and including all the states of India to come out with better data, which in future can be used development of Ayush system.

Declaration of patient consent
The authors certify that they have obtained all appropriate patient consent forms. In the form the patient(s) has/have given his/her/their consent for his/her/their images and other clinical information to be reported in the journal. The patients understand that their names and initials will not be published and due efforts will be made to conceal their identity, but anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

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Conflicts of interest
There are no conflicts of interest.

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Table 5: Disease based utilization of Unani medicine
For which disorders preference is exclusively Unani medicine? (n=37)

| Disorders                                | No. | % |
|------------------------------------------|-----|---|
| Lifestyle disorders                      | 6   | 16%|
| Musculoskeletal disorders                | 13  | 35%|
| GIT (Digestive)/Hepatobiliary (Liver) disorders | 7  | 19%|
| Respiratory (Lungs) disorders            | 3   | 8% |
| Skin diseases                            | 5   | 14%|
| Gynecological disorder                   | 0   | 0  |
| Sexual disorders                         | 0   | 0  |
| Endocrine disorders                      | 2   | 5% |
| Cognitive disorders                      | 0   | 0  |
| Neurological disorders                   | 0   | 0  |
| Eye and Ear, Nose, Throat disorders/Others | 1 | 3% |
| Others                                   | 0   | 0  |

For which disease condition/s preference is to take Unani medicine and Allopathic medicine simultaneously (n=14)

| Disorders                                | No. | % |
|------------------------------------------|-----|---|
| Lifestyle disorders                      | 2   | 14%|
| Musculoskeletal disorders                | 4   | 29%|
| GIT (Digestive)/Hepatobiliary (Liver) disorders | 4  | 29%|
| Respiratory (Lungs) disorders            | 0   | 0  |
| Skin diseases                            | 2   | 14%|
| Gynecological disorder                   | 0   | 0  |
| Sexual disorders                         | 0   | 0  |
| Endocrine disorders                      | 1   | 7% |
| Cognitive disorders                      | 0   | 0  |
| Neurological disorders                   | 0   | 0  |
| Eye and Ear, Nose, Throat disorders/Others | 1 | 7% |
| Others                                   | 0   | 0  |