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Foods Recommended by the Prophet ﷺ and Their Importance in Preserving Health: An Islamic Perspective

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Abstract
Harmonious nutrition and natural food elements of bioactivity are very important in sustaining and enhancing human health. Numerous plants due to their high nutritional and bioactive composition are now considered as superfoods and have been used traditionally to prevent and treat disease. The use of these foods can be traced back to the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) who encouraged people to consume a wide range of plant-based food that is characterized by health benefits. Such foods as dates, pomegranate, olives, figs, grapes, and black seeds were also promoted as the focus of prophetic advice and became popular today as superfoods because of their therapeutic effects. These are some of the traditional foods that are said to be desirable dietary interventions that can assist in preventing diseases and maintaining health with little side effects as compared to synthetic treatments. This literature review discusses the literature available to investigate the ways in which foods recommended in the Sunnah demonstrate a variety of positive activities, such as immune support, anti-diabetic effects, and antioxidants, as well as anti-inflammatory and hepatoprotective, which show the importance of the prophetic dietary guidance in contemporary nutritional science.
Keywords: Sunnah Foods; Islamic Dietary Guidance; Preventive Health; Functional Foods

Introduction

Islam is a holistic view of human life when the inseparable role of physical wellness, spiritual and ethical behavior is highlighted. The health is treated as a divine gift of Allah, and the health care of the body is a both religious and moral duty. Quran puts forward that human beings are in charge of their well-being and need to take care of their bodies by using halal and wholesome foods. Islam however, does not view food as a preventive to disease or mental and spiritual well-being, but as something that brings body and balance, makes one feel healthy, and prevents disease. This holistic concept of health is the basis of

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predictive nutrition, which puts particular focus on foods that are helpful in health in general.

The prophet Muhammad teachings on nutrition, which are recorded in the Sunnah, are based on moderation, variety, and consumption of natural and wholesome foods. Dates, figs, olives, pomegranates, honey, and black seeds among others were always prescribed because of their preventive and health-promoting effects. The foods were also appreciated due to their energy and flavor, as well as their capacity to build immunity, aid digestion, and health metabolism and cardiovascular functions.

The practical wisdom that is inherent in the guidance of the prophets has been proven right by the contemporary research which has found that most of these foods have bioactive compounds with antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and immunomodulatory properties. This kind of highly nutritious natural foods are superfoods, as they could not only provide nourishment but also prevent diseases, which is why this concept is rather similar to the postulates of the Sunnah. So that fruits and plant-based food, which have traditionally been suggested as healthy diets, contain bioactive phytochemicals that are important to human health.

Dietary guidance is a practical and ethical method of preserving health as demonstrated by the historical development of Islamic medicine. Tibb-e-Nabawi (Prophetic Medicine) comprises an integrated approach to the prevention of diseases and health in order to take care of a disease by incorporating spiritual, ethical, and practical wisdom. These writings lay stress on the need to exercise moderation in consumption, the choice of foods that are not only nourishing but also non-toxic, and also therapeutic value of natural substances. The Prophetic dietary advice was spiritual, but also based on empirical observation and practical understanding of the impact of food on the human body. There is the role of spiritual medicine in the Islamic history where a dietary practice was regarded as part of the physical and mental health and defines nutrition as a part of moral and spiritual development.

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Literature Review

The ethnomedical researches give additional support to the health-promoting value of the foods advocated in the Sunnah. Studies carried out on the Arab and South Asian societies reveal that the application of plant-based food products, fruits, and herbs as preventive and therapeutic remedies remains a trend in the areas. The practices demonstrate that communities traditionally used natural dietary interventions to stay healthy, cure diseases, and boost immunity. The similarity of these practices between the various regions and the different time periods will show that what the Prophet ﷺ advocated as foods was not only culturally relevant but also practical and empirically useful in relation to the spiritual direction and practical results in health.

These prophetic prescriptions find a lot of relevance in the contemporary age with the concept of superfoods that have been known to prevent disease and enhance health in terms of bioactive compounds. Modern nutrition research confirms the wisdom of prophetic foods more and more, as it serves to protect cardiovascular health, metabolic activity, immune response, and wellness in general. It reveals that the ethical, spiritual, and practical aspects regarding nutrition in Islam offer a holistic approach that still continues to influence the modern health practice.

The meaning of prophetic food advice goes beyond the personal health to the wider social and environmental aspects. Sunnah foods are mostly natural, less processed, and local and this encourages sustainable food consumption. Additionally, the effects which such foods have are relatively small as compared to synthetic drugs and therefore such foods are appropriate in the long-term diet plans geared towards prevention of health. The Islamic approach to nutrition assumes the holism of the body focusing on physical health as well as on the interdependence of the ethical, spiritual, social, and environmental factors in ensuring general health.

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Major Life-Threatening Illnesses and Their Management/Treatment

Cancer, diabetes mellitus, and obesity are life-threatening conditions that represent a considerable health burden in the world and still pose a challenge to the healthcare systems in many countries across the world. Cancer is one of those diseases that are the most complicated because of the multifactorial character of its molecular pathogenesis and heterogeneity. The field of molecular oncology has revolutionized the study of pharmaceuticals, as it has been found to be critical signaling pathways that play role in tumor initiation, progression, and metastasis. This has made the design of specific anticancer agents that are able to interfere with certain molecular abnormalities and minimize harm to normal tissues possible.

Epidemiological data indicate that the cancer mortality has considerable differences among various regions and groups of people with divergent socioeconomic status, the availability of healthcare, and the access to early diagnosis. Extensive studies of the trends of cancer mortality over the long term suggest that a particular population is still disproportionately impacted regardless of the improvements in treatment. These results highlight the significance of holistic approaches to the treatment that involve the prevention, early diagnosis, and innovative forms of treatment to lower the mortality rate in cancer diseases. Chemotherapy is still one of the pillars of cancer treatment, but it is not always effective due to systemic toxicity and resistance to drugs. Chemical engineering principles have been applied in chemotherapy, which has resulted in the creation of new drugs formulations aimed at improving the therapeutic effects and reducing adverse effects. The delivery of drugs in nanoparticles has become a promising technology, which allows targeting and regulation drug release with better diagnostic applications. Such developments can be viewed as an important move in the direction of precision oncology and personalized cancer treatment.

Another significant life-threatening illness that is characterized by a large number of global prevalence is diabetes mellitus. It is estimated that there will be a significant increase in

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the number of cases of diabetes as a result of change of lifestyle, urbanization, and ageing of the population. The pathophysiology of diabetes is a combination of insulin resistance and progressive pancreatic failure of 80 cells leading to chronic hyperglycemia and metabolic dysfunction. Diabetes may result in severe complications, including cardiovascular disease, neuropathy, nephropathy, and retinopathy, in case it is not managed properly.

The new forms of insulin therapy are being actively developed to make the process more convenient to patients and more effective in the treatment of diabetes. Other methods of delivery including oral insulin preparations seek to address the issues relating to injections and enhance patient adherence. Insulin also exhibits other therapeutic properties in addition to glycemic control such as wound management in combination with hypertonic glucose, and this indicates the wider clinical utility of Insulin.

Obesity is a serious life-threatening disease and also a leading cause of metabolic diseases such as diabetes and heart diseases. Its management is in need of long run, multidisciplinary approaches that includes diet change, physical exercise, pharmacotherapy and behavioral education. Bariatric surgery has been shown to be helpful in the severe obesity cases and bring about a weight loss that is significant and sustained, an enhanced metabolic health, and a decreased inflammation. Nevertheless, surgical procedures are associated with some risks and could cause changes in the absorption of micronutrients and require regular monitoring and nutritional support.

This is due to the growing trend of using herbal medicaments and nutritional supplements by patients with chronic and life-threatening diseases, which leads to consideration of safety issues. Polypharmacy and polyherbacy is frequent; especially among elderly, which increases the likelihood of adverse interactions. Although some conventional herbal preparations have been proven to have anti-fatigue and other health supportive effects, their clinical application should be informed by scientific evidence and safety assessments. The combination of traditional and complementary medicine can also be approached rationally

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and evidence-based in order to provide a more comprehensive approach to the treatment of life-threatening conditions.

Foods Recommended in the Sunnah and Their Role in Health Protection

Dates

Dates (Phoenix dactylifera L.) is a special food of the Islamic tradition, a Sunnah food, and has traditionally been appreciated over centuries due to their nutritional and medicinal benefits. Other than being important spiritually, scientific research has established that dates are abundant in natural antioxidants such as flavonoids and phenolic compounds. Date fruit aqueous extracts have been reported to possess a high antioxidant and antimutagenic properties which implies that they have a protective effect against cellular damage caused by oxidative stress. These properties uphold the traditional application of dates in sustaining the general well-being and ailment of degenerative diseases.

Nutritionally, dates are a high-density energy source of essential nutrients (carbohydrates, dietary fiber, minerals, and bioactive compounds) that promote health of the metabolism. Soluble and insoluble fibers have been found to help in the regulation of the gastrointestinal system and their micronutrient content improves physiological resilience. These traits are in line with the Prophetic guidance on the consumption of healthy and nutritional foods in order to keep the body healthy.

Role of Dates in Gut Health:

The recent studies also focused on the aspect of dates in maintaining the gut health and prevention of diseases by modulating the intestinal microbiota. Date fruits have been found to produce polyphenols that have a positive effect on gut microbial ecology and bacterial metabolite production. These modifications have been linked to slowed down multiplication of colon cancer cells and this suggests that it has a possible protective effect on colorectal malignancies. Such emerging evidence highlights the significance of Sunnah foods in the conventional health practices as well as in contemporary prevention diet.

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Antitumor activity of dates

Ajwa dates extracts have been demonstrated to prevent the increase of human breast cells that have cancer by causing cell death and disrupting the progression of the cell cycle. These results indicate that dates could aid in disease prevention on cellular level as it will attack the processes involved in cancer formation. With all these scientific reasons, the opinion that dates as a food of Sunnah have a significant impact on health improvement and prevention of the risk of chronic and life-threatening illnesses is justified.

Grapes

The Islamic tradition talks of grapes as a blessed meal and is considered a source of nutrition and life. This Sunnah wisdom is confirmed by modern research which demonstrates that grape fruits are rich in antioxidant polyphenols, which prevent the onset of chronic disease.

Cardiovascular Diseases

The polyphenolic compounds that are abundant in grapes include flavonoids, resveratrol, and proanthocyanidins, which are potent antioxidants and anti-inflammatory agents. Such bioactive compounds benefit the protection of the cardiovascular system through enhancing endothelial work, lowering oxidative stress, and promoting normal lipid metabolism. Frequent intake of grapes and grape products has consequently been linked with the minimized risk of cardiovascular diseases.

Diabetes

Grapes have been reported to have positive experience in glucose regulation and sensitivity to insulin in the metabolic health. Research has shown that whole grapes and grape-based products do not have a negative impact on glycemic response and might be used to enhance glucose regulation patterns of people with type 2 diabetes. This renders grapes an effective dietary value that can be used to maintain metabolic balance and diabetes control.

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Cancer

Also, the grape seed proanthocyanidins have been shown to protect against oxidative damage and cancer. It has been experimentally demonstrated that these compounds inhibit lipid peroxidation and fat deposition and in effect prevent the damage of cells and processes that contribute to photo carcinogenesis. Generally, scientific evidence has affirmed the role of grapes as one of the health-promoting foods with health preventive effects against chronic diseases.

Pomegranate

Antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties:

The fruit of pomegranate (Punica granatum) is highly important in Islam, and Quran is a blessed fruit of the Paradise, which has long been recognized because of its nourishing and healing effect. Contemporary scientific studies prove this Islamic view by proving that pomegranate is rich in polyphenols with high antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. These bioactive compounds assist in protecting the cells against oxidative stress and contribute to the suppression of inflammation, which is the core of the prevention of most chronic diseases, including cancer.

Prevention from leukemia

In vitro experiments have demonstrated that pomegranate bioactive compounds can suppress the proliferation of leukemia cells as well as initiate the programmed cell death process which posits its protective effects against the development of cancers. These results are in line with Islam which teaches the use of natural foods that are wholesome and prevent diseases and maintain health.

Role in preventing cancer, diabetes and CVDs

Pomegranate also has anticancer effects besides promoting cardiovascular and metabolic well-being. The clinical research has evidenced that the intake of pomegranate juice can decrease serum cholesterol levels of people with type 2 diabetes and hyperlipidemia and thus decreases the risk of cardiovascular. Moreover, pomegranate polyphenols have been

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found to have neuroprotective properties against brain damage on experimental models. Such scientific knowledge enforces Sunnah-based knowledge of pomegranate as a functional food that promotes the overall well-being and prevents life threatening diseases.

Black seeds (Nigella sativa)

Antioxidant activity

The black seed (Nigella sativa) has a special place in Islamic culture because it is mentioned in the Sunnah as the curing of various diseases. This guidance of Prophets has attracted the scientific interest on its medicinal value. Recent studies have found black seed to be high in bioactive compounds and specifically thymoquinone, which is potent as an antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and immunomodulatory and is applicable in its traditional purpose of health preservation.

Diabetes

The black seed oil has been proved to protect against metabolic diseases especially diabetes by way of experimental studies. Studies with diabetic animal models demonstrate that the volatile oil of Nigella sativa spares the pancreatic 8-cells against oxidative damages and structural inflammation. Black seed can help in the management of glucose regulation by preserving the insulin-producing cells, which would fit in the Islamic focus on preventive care with natural remedies.

Cancer

Besides being an antidiabetic, black seed has demonstrated a lot of potential in prevention of cancer. Research has shown that volatile oil of Nigella sativa has the ability to prevent carcinogenesis in a variety of organs by alleviating oxidative stress and abnormal cell growth. Such results support Sunnah-grounded knowledge of black seed as a beneficial natural substance in preserving health and preventing life-threatening illnesses based on holistic and faith-based nutrition.

Olives

Inflammatory diseases

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Olive oil has a special status in Islam because it is referred in the Quran as a blessed tree and was prescribed by the Prophet ﷺ to be consumed and used in curing. This Sunnah guidance is corroborated by the modern scientific studies on the subject which found that olive oil is abundant in bioactive compounds including olecanthal, hydroxytyrosol and oleuropein, which are potent in antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects. These substances play roles in the general health maintenance and prevention of chronic inflammatory diseases.

Rheumatoid arthritis

According to clinical and experimental research, inflammation and oxidative stress can be decreased by the use of olive oil supplement in a number of disease conditions. Olive oil consumption has been reported to enhance the inflammatory status and promote joint health in rheumatoid patients.

Diabetes and Alzheimer

Besides the anti-inflammatory properties, olive oil demonstrates high potential in the metabolic and neuroprotective health. Olive oil and olive leaves produce bioactive compounds that have been shown to have antidiabetic and antioxidant properties by enhancing the ability to regulate glucose levels and minimize oxidative injury in diabetic rats. Moreover, oleocanthal was found to decrease synaptotoxicity in the pathology of Alzheimer. These results support the Sunnah perspective of olive oil as a blessed food with extensive protective qualities against life threatening diseases.

Figs

Anti-cancer activity

Figs (Ficus carica) have an esteemed place in the Islam religion, being referred to in the Quran as a blessed fruit and traditionally as a source of food and medicine. This Sunnah acceptance is affirmed by the current scientific evidence of the existence of bioactive compounds in figs that have high health-promoting effects. Natural compounds, which are

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obtained in fig resin have been found to inhibit the growth of cancer cells, which shows that they are protective against cancerous diseases.

Role in diabetes prevention

Besides anticancer activity, fig leaves have demonstrated useful activity in metabolic diseases (especially diabetes). Animal-based experiments conducted on diabetic animals indicate that aqueous extracts of fig leave aid in the enhancement of glycemic balance through the regulation of glucose. These results are in line with the Islamic focus on natural and wholesome foods as a way of preventing diseases and maintaining metabolic health.

Dyslipidemia and CVDs prevention

Figs are also beneficial to the metabolism of lipids and heart health. Studies have shown that the extracts of the fig leaf have the potential of positively altering the lipid parameters implying that it can help in lowering dyslipidemia and cardiovascular risks. Combined, scientific evidence increases the Sunnah-based interpretation of figs as a healthy food that helps to maintain health and prevent chronic and threatening illnesses.

Research Objectives and Questions

- To investigate foods that are prescribed in the Quran and Sunnah and their importance in maintaining human health.
- To investigate the scientific evidence about the nutritional and bioactive effects of the selected Sunnah foods.
- To emphasize the topicality of Prophetic dietary prescriptions in modern preventive and functional nutrition.

What foods are advised in the Quran and Sunnah in the preservation of health?

What are the modern scientific literature nutritional and bioactive elements of these Sunnah foods?

What is the role of foods prescribed by the Prophet ﷺ in preventing and controlling chronic and life-threatening diseases?

Research Methodology

This paper uses a qualitative literature review approach based on narrative approach to examine foods that are recommended by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and their contribution to

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health maintenance. The data that are pertinent was also gathered using both the primary and secondary sources, i.e., the Quran and authentic Hadith on the one hand, and classical Islamic literature on Tibb-e-Nabawi on the other. Besides, the nutritional composition of the food, bioactive properties and health-effects of the chosen Sunnah foods were studied by reviewing peer-reviewed scientific articles, review papers and other experimental studies available in the recognized databases.

The literature has been analyzed and synthesized systematically to find out the recurring themes in regards to preventive health, chronic disease management and functional nutrition. The results were explained through the synthesis of Islamic dietary provisions and modern-day nutritional science and did not involve any experimental or statistical analysis. Such methodological approach is appropriate in bringing out the applicability of Prophetic dietary practice in the present health and disease prevention.

Discussion

This paper shows the eternal applicability of Prophetic eating patterns in the conditions of current health problems. Foods that the Sunnah falls into are not only spiritually essential but also scientifically proven to prevent other serious life-threatening conditions like cancer, diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular diseases, obesity, and neurodegenerative diseases. Among the most striking findings is that the Sunnah food is mainly vegetarian, low processed, and naturally rich in nutrients, which is very similar to the current lifestyle changes with regard to preventive food. Their bioactive properties aid in an inhibition of the oxidative stress and chronic inflammation -two major processes that contribute to the pathogenesis of non-communicable diseases.

The discussion also uncovers that the Islamic approach to nutrition focuses on moderation, balance, and ethical eating, which only adds to the effectiveness of these foods to keep one healthy. In contrast to the synthetic pharmaceuticals, the Sunnah foods are long-term safe, affordable, and sustainable, so they can be used as a continuous diet.

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In addition, the findings confirm the idea that the concept of Tibb-e-Nabawi (Prophetic Medicine) is a comprehensive and holistic health system, which incorporates physical, spiritual, and moral health. The given approach has the potential to promote disease prevention as opposed to simple treatment in the current age of increased chronic illnesses and healthcare expenditures.

Combining Sunnah-based nutrition with the evidence-based one can be a step toward better health results among the population and the use of sustainable lifestyles. Although the current research is based on a qualitative review only, it is highly indicative that more clinical and experimental research should be conducted to understand dosage, mechanisms of action and synergistic effects of these foods.

Results

This literature-based review paper examined foods suggested in the Quran and Sunnah and discussed how they help to maintain health by comparing the classical Islamic sources with the current scientific sources. The results show that the Sunnah food date, grape, pomegranates, olive, fig, and black seed (Nigella sativa) have a lot of nutritional, therapeutic and preventive nutritional effects.

The analyzed articles also systematically state that these foods are abundant in bioactive compounds that are polyphenols, flavonoids, antioxidants, essential fatty acids, vitamins and minerals. The constituents play the role of antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antidiabetic, immunomodulatory, cardioprotective, neuroprotective, and anticancer.

Dates were discovered to possess powerful antioxidant and antimutagenic effects coupled with a beneficial impact with respect to gut wellness and cancer prevention. The grapes showed cardiovascular and metabolic effects such as enhanced endothelial functioning and glycemic control. Pomegranates were demonstrated to have strong anti-inflammatory and anticancer properties, especially in leukemia and metabolic diseases. Black seeds had great antidiabetic and anticancer properties, which is manifested by the preservation of pancreatic 8-cells and the suppression of oxidative stress. Olive oil was mainly correlated

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with the minimization of inflammation, enhanced metabolic regulation, or neuroprotection, and figs had anticancer, antidiabetic, and lipid-lowering properties.

In general, the findings reveal a high degree of overlap between the Prophetic dietary teachings and modern-day nutritional science and this proves that foods suggested in Sunnah indeed act as natural preventive and functional foods.

Conclusion

Conclusively, the Quran and Sunnah teachings provide an integrated approach to human health incorporating physical, spiritual, ethical and social aspects. The foods prescribed in the Sunnah including dates, grapes, pomegranates, black seeds, olives, and figs are scientifically confirmed to possess nutritional and bioactive properties, as well as have a spiritual value. These foods contain antioxidants, polyphenols and other bioactive compounds which help in cardiovascular health, metabolism, immunity and antioxidative stress, inflammation, and chronic diseases. The guidance of moderation, variety, and taking natural, wholesome foods is prophetic and is more or less close to the present-day ideas of preventive and functional nutrition.

Moreover, dietary activities based on Sunnah are an ethical and sustainable system of health conservation. These dietary suggestions take part to both personal and social and ecological duties as they encourage locally produced, minimally processed, and nutrient-rich foods. The present-day literature still supports the prudence of such foods habits, pointing to their possible role in preventing and treating life threatening diseases like cancer, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases.

In general, this combination of spiritual, ethical and practical elements of nutrition in Islam proves the timeless significance of prophetical provisions in modern medical practice. Through the mentioned values, one is able to gain a well-rounded health, be metabolically balanced, and help mitigate the chances of chronic illnesses hence sealing the gap between religious principles and contemporary evidence-based nutrition habits.

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