

# Quran and Protective Barrier System (Skin): Evaluating Wart and its Treatment, From the Viewpoint of Iranian Traditional Medicine

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**Received:** September 23, 2012; **Revised:** November 03, 2012; **Accepted:** December 16, 2012

**Background:** Wart is a circular, self-inoculation, and contagious appendage which in Iranian traditional medicine is called “suloul”, and has different types and causes. Wart has long-term period of treatment with symptoms of multiple relapses which involve larger surfaces. In classic medicine, wart is a viral infection and has no definite medical treatment.

**Objectives:** The current study aimed to evaluate wart and its treatment from the viewpoint of Iranian traditional medicine.

**Materials and Methods:** The current study was a combination of fieldwork and library research conducted according to the traditional medicine reference books.

**Results:** Physicians of Iranian traditional medicine believe that the origin of wart is sauda (black bile), or a combination of them; and advise various, economic and low risk treatments.

**Conclusions:** With the help of Iranian traditional medicine, and according to the six essential principles, the temperament of the patient should be modified, the temperament which caused the disease should be eliminated, and the return of disease should be prevented. Also, with the help of topical treatments, its scars should be removed.

**Keywords:** Warts; Medicine, Traditional; Virus Diseases

Why did you bear witness against us, they will ask their skins, and they will reply: “Allah has given us speech, as he has given speech to everything. It was he who created you the first time, and to him you shall return” (Surah Al-fossilat, 21).

Human skin is an intelligent system which protects body from external damaging factors, and as a tissue contains very small pores which play a significant role in the excretion of waste components from body to the surrounding environment. These waste components are visible in the form of hair, nail, and perspiration, and in abnormal conditions are in the form of different rashes; the body also excretes other components through the central nervous system. One of the skin irritating appendages is the wart.

## 1. Background

Wart is a skin disease with circular appendages, which is called “suloul” in Iranian traditional medicine, has different types and causes. In classical medicine, wart is one of the contagious viral infections which involve skin and mucosal surfaces, and more prevalence is seen on hands, feet, face, legs, and external genitalia. Treatment of wart is difficult and time-consuming, with symptoms of multiple relapses which involve larger surfaces. In classical medicine, there is no definite medical treatment for

warts, and the provided treatments encounter restrictions and side effects. Iranian traditional medicine has provided different, economic, and low cost treatments for warts. With the help of Iranian traditional medicine and using the six essential principles, the temperament of the patient should be modified, the temperament caused the disease should be eliminated, and the return of the disease should be prevented. Also, with the help of topical treatments, its scars should be removed.

### Implication for health policy/practice/research/medical education:

The current study was conducted to help reducing the prevalence of wart skin disease, by economic and low risk treatments.

The translated version of: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5812/quranmed.12584>

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## 2. Objectives

The current study aimed to evaluate wart and its treatment from the viewpoint of traditional medicine; and also an overview on classical medicine concerned with the warts.

## 3. Materials and Methods

The current study was a combination of fieldwork and library research conducted according to the traditional medicine reference books such as the Canon of medicine by Avicenna, Kholasat al-hekmah, exir al-aazam, Akbari medical book, and Sharh al-asbabvaalalamat (description of causes and symptoms). Data were gathered, analyzed, and compared with the scientific information about warts, and Iranian traditional methods to treat warts were provided.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Definition of Wart

Wart is a circular, abnormal appendage in two types of soft and hard (1, 2). It is also called "zakh", in Persian (2).

#### 4.1.1. Types of Wart

In traditional medicine, wart has different types:

- "Retrograde wart" which is in the body.
- "Cleft wart" which is big and round.
- "Cutting edge wart" with big head and slender tail which is in the body.
- "Tarsious" which is an infectious wart.
- "Qrouna" which is long and curved.
- "Adasia and Henatia" which are seen on forehead. "Adasia" is a yellow flat wart, and "Henatia" is a long reddish wart which is similar to wheat (3-5).

### 4.2. Types of Wart From the Viewpoint of Classical Medicine

In classical medicine, warts are divided into 6 categories, according to the anatomical distribution:

1. Common wart
2. Plane or flat wart which is usually seen in juveniles
3. Plantar wart
4. Filiform wart which is seen in filamentous shapes
5. Digitate wart
6. Sexual transmitted (venereal) warts or Condyloma acuminata (6, 7).

### 4.3. Causative Agents of Wart

#### 4.3.1. From the Viewpoint of Traditional Medicine

From the viewpoint of Iranian traditional medicine, diseases are divided into 3 categories: ill-natured, bad function in composition, and scattering in junction. Wart is

a part of bad composition illnesses and is placed in the subgroup of "illness of increasing the number". Illness of increasing the number have two causes: multiplicity of material, natural or unnatural, or increasing the gravity. In warts, unnatural material increases. Wart has different types and causes. Causative agent of wart is excretion of material from nature to skin and mucus; and its causative material is mucoidcondensed balgam (phlegm), sauda or a combination of both. Sometimes, the melancholy condensed sauda is created from dried balgam which has been increased in blood, and the reason for this increasing is also numerous; for example indigestion. Sometimes, blood overload or blood congestion, especially in microvessels, leads to coldness and dryness; of course in the absence of infection causing agents which are abnormal heat and humidity. The preventive causes of septicemia in microvessels are anemia and closeness to the surface of the body; and these agents usually cause dryness, and not infection. Meanwhile, blood is not naturally so warm to cause infection (2). Generally, causative agent of wart is cold and dry. There are different reasons for cold agents that cause body coldness and cold diseases are as follows: Exposure to cold weather, oral or topical consumption of drugs or eating cold foods, poor feeding which causes anemia, overeating which causes indigestion, skin pores blockage, moving a lot, inactivity, and excessive dilation of skin pores. There are also different reasons for drying agents that cause body dryness or dry diseases as follows: Exposure to hot weather or very warm drugs, eating foods which cause body dryness and dry tempers, or oral or topical consumption of drugs which cause dryness, excessive movement such as sleeping or staying awake for a long time that are among movements, and poor feeding (1).

In this regard, quadruple digestions are from most important matters of traditional medicine. These digestions are as follows: gastric digestion (chylus, first digestion), liver digestion (chymus, second digestion), vessel digestion (Third digestion), and the forth digestion. Any digestion has excrements and waste materials and a way to excrete them. In the first digestion, gastric digestion, waste materials are being excreted as faces. The excretion way of second digestion, liver digestion, is through urine. Vessel digestion also excretes the waste materials through urine, reek and sweat, and in forth digestion the excretion way is through reek and dokhan (a term in Iranian traditional medicine). If digestion is interrupted in any stage, it has its specific clinical demonstration (1). Wart is also caused by excretion of cold and dry material to skin. According to the wart inducing materials, any one of the above mentioned agents may play a role in the formation of warts.

#### 4.3.2. From the Viewpoint of Classical Medicine

In classical medicine, wart is a viral skin infection and the most common clinical demonstration of HPV (Human Papilloma Virus) which involves skin or mucosal

surfaces, and with more prevalence is seen on hands, feet, face, legs, and external genitalia.

#### 4.4. Treatment

##### 4.4.1. Treatment in Traditional Medicine

In Iranian traditional medicine, treatment of diseases has three general categories: applying six essential principles, using drugs, and performing outpatient surgeries (treatments) (4). Six essential principles refers to the factors which human cannot live in their absence, such as atmosphere, foodstuffs and beverages, sleeping and staying awake, movement and inactivity, retention, vomiting and psychological symptoms. Applying "six essential principles" means that the physician should consider the quality and the quantity of involved cases, and has to carry out the required modifications. It has significant effects on the treatment of diseases; and the most important duty of any physician, which has precedence over all other treatments, is to consider the six essential principles. If the medication is required, first the drug in singular, and then in combinatory forms has to be prescribed. Drug can be taken orally or be applied topically. To treat some diseases like warts, outpatient surgeries such as phlebotomy, bloodletting, cauterizing, cutting and etc. can be applied. To treat warts, it is necessary to consider the patient's six essential principles, modify his dietary and moisturize his temperament. Medication includes oral and topical consumption of drugs.

Orally consumed drugs modify digestion, and cause excretion of disease agents such as laxatives. Useful topical drugs refer to the category of drugs which are bitter (bitter: whatever penetrates the surface of thong and is odious and disgusting), and astringent (astringent: prehensile, the taste experience when a substance causes the mouth to pucker; it causes coldness and dryness, and is referred to what causes retention, such as Myrtaceae). Plant sap (a milky liquid which flows from some of cut plants) can be the other topical treatment, such as fig leaf sap; it is applied on the scratched warts. The other treatment for the leggy wart is to tie it with the silk yarn and gradually make it tighter. The wart is gradually weakened and falls (1, 4). Also, the wart has to be continuously lubricated with oils such as flower oil. It is noteworthy that in the case of numerous warts, it is necessary to apply outpatient surgeries such as phlebotomy to excrete disease causative agent properly, purge the body from causing agent, and prevent relapsing the disease (2-4).

##### 4.4.2. Treatment in Classical Medicine

In classical medicine, the following treatments can be noted: salicylic acid, scotch tape, liquid nitrogen, cantharidin, shave excision, 5-fluorouracil, Imiquimod, and Immunotherapy. To treat wart, usually different methods should be applied (8-11).

## 5. Discussion

Wart is a dermatological disease which represents the internal interactions of the patient and his life circumstances. Incidence of warts indicates that the patient was unable to excrete the material. Wart is a warning to patient and his physician to excrete waste materials and prevent its relapsing, through modifying the six essential principles, to guide the patient to health road and prevent serious illnesses. To treat warts three general methods should be considered and applied if necessary. Also, it is necessary to find the cause of diseases in addition to applying topical treatment. In Iranian traditional medicine, considering the cause and mechanism of creating disease, and also the causing material of the disease, for each patient different treatment should be applied. Although applying an appropriate treatment is necessary, a unique treatment for all patients is not available.

## Acknowledgements

We kindly thank to Mr. Dariush Mahmudi for all assistance.

## Authors, Contribution

None declared.

## Financial Disclosure

There is no conflict of interest.

## Funding/Support

The current study was financially supported by Tehran University of Medical Sciences.

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