Quran and Medicine. 2013 October; 2(1): 26-9. DOI: 10.5812/quranmed.13704

Published Online 2013 November 01. **Research Article**

Extraction and Classification of Medical Narratives of the Book "Al-Kafi", According to Authentication

Reza Ilkhani [1,*], Zohreh Ghazimoradi [1]

[1] Research Deputy of Traditional Medicine, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, IR Iran

*Corresponding author: Reza Ilkhani, Research Deputy of Traditional Medicine, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, IR Iran. Tel: +98-2133364238, E-mail: ilkhani@razi.tums.ac.ir.

Received: July 28, 2013; **Revised:** August 04, 2013; **Accepted:** August 11, 2013

Background: The precious book "Al-Kafi" written by Seghat ul-islam Kolaini, is one of the four valuable Shia narrative books. "Kolaini" is one of the prominent Shia clerics. A unique feature of this book, compared to the other three books, is the precedence in writing in a way that some of its narratives have been cited from the infallibles (AS) by three mediators. According to the documented narratives of the book, "al-kafi" is one of the most reputable Shia narrative reference books which its extraction of medical narratives and assessing their authentication, is of great importance.
Objectives: This study aimed to extract medical narratives of the book "al-kafi", determine their number, and evaluate their authentication.
Materials and Methods: The current research was a qualitative study which evaluated all narratives of the book "al-kafi", by "Derayat Annour" software designed by "Islamic Sciences Computer Institute", evaluated its medical narratives and classified them according to the level of authentication.
Results: From all narratives of the book "al-kafi" (pillars, furoo, and rouzat al-kafi), 2233 narratives which indicated the effect of material factors on human health, environmental health, and treatment were extracted as medical narratives. Extracted narratives were categorized in three groups: accurate, authentic, and poor. Total number of accurate/authentic and poor narratives were 1272 and 961, respectively. In other words, around 60% of medical narratives of the book "al-kafi" were assessed as accurate/authentic and just 40% as poor.
Conclusions: The current study showed that poorness and unreliability of "al-kafi" narratives is a vain thought. Hence, it is recommended to perform clinical trial studies (at least) on accurate/authentic narratives, and also consider them as reputable and valid narratives, along with traditional medicine references.

Keywords: Qualitative Research; Medicine, Traditional; Islam

1. Background

Avicenna, the great sage, has defined "medicine" as: a science which human health and illnesses can be diagnosed through it (1). According to a theory, the industry (science) of medicine has been created by God. Some of the great sages, such as Galen, support this theory (2). The fact that how man could explain many actions and properties of things, plants and animals more than some thousands years ago without any laboratories and equipped modern research centers, and these sources were used for health care and treatment for hundreds of years is the question that to answer it, the theory should be accepted. According to Shia beliefs, the 14 infallibles (AS) are away from any oral and functional faults. A part of the infallible Imams` narratives are about directions and recommendations regarding health care and treatment which some of them do not exist in any traditional medicine books. Their authentication is an obstacle to use them. If the authentication of medical narrative is approved, then they are very close to be used in medicine. In cited sciences, such as narrative sciences, scientific issues reference should be mentioned; in a way that, citing an issue without mentioning reliable reference is invalid.

Shia has four reliable narrating references which are called as "The Four Books" (3). One of them is the precious book of "al-kafi". This book has been written by Seghat ul-Islam Kolaini (250-329 A.H). Kolaini is one of the prominent Shia clerics who are very famous there is no need to praise him. To explain the ideas of Sheikh Sadough, Sheikh Mofid has introduced the book "al-kafi" as the most precious and beneficial books of Shia. Allama Majlesi in the introduction of his book"Mira't ul-oghoul fi Sharhe Akhba'r e Alerrasoul", which is one of the most important descriptions on "al-kafi", wrote: "al-kafi" is the most accurate, comprehensive, and the best and greatest

Implication for health policy/practice/research/medical education:
The present study was a qualitative survey which evaluated the relations between religious teachings and medicine. In the current study, medical narratives of one of the four reputable narrating Shia books, "Al-kafi", were considered and the medical narratives were categorized after extraction.

The translated version of: http://dx.doi.org/10.5812/quranmed.13704

Copyright © 2013, Quran & Etrat Center, The Ministry of Health and Medical Education. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

[Downloaded from quranmed.com on 2024-03-28]

book of Shia (4). Regardless of the dignity of the author, and comprehensiveness of his book (5), its unique feature is the precedence in writing among "The Four Books". In "al-kafi" some of the narratives have been cited by two or three mediators from the infallibles (AS). According to the authentication of most of the "al-kafi" narratives, extraction of medical narratives and evaluating their authentication is of particular importance. On the other hand, Kolaini (864-941 AD) was contemporary of Ali bin Ribn Al-tabari (808-861 AD) author of "Firdous Al-hikma", Razi (865-925 AD), Ali bin Abbass Majousi Ahwazi (930 or 950-994 AD) the author of "Kamel As-sana't Al-tabiia" who are among great Islamic physicians and sages, and constitute the pillars of Islamic medicine (6). One of the most precious books of Razi, is the"Medicine of Souls" (in order to reform spiritual ethics) which talks about precedence of intellect, elimination of passion and its consequences, and spiritual reforming ethics which are in contrast with health and hygiene (6). In this book, Razi has not referenced to Quran verses and narratives. According to the style of Razi, Kolaini has categorized the narratives of the infallibles (AS) and like Razi has started his book with discussion on intellect (7). The science of using narratives, such as using any other science, has particular pillars and rules. Holy Quran, which is a reason to deduct divine's commandments, states that: "do not follow what you do not know" (8). In the science of "familiarity with narratives" news (narratives or hadith) are divided into two groups, according to their authentications: frequent news and single news. Frequent news is the piece of news that the number of its mediators till the infallibles (AS)is of a size that consensus of their falsehood is impossible, and through their news trust can be achieved; for example the phrase of: "whoever I am his master, Ali is also his master" in Ghadir hadith. Single news is the news which has not reached the size of frequent news (9). According to the disagreement of mediators, single news is divided into four groups, from the viewpoint of justice, faith and recording: accurate, good, authentic, and poor (3).

1. Accurate narrative: is the narrative that its mediators sequence connects to the infallibles (AS) and all its mediators, from any level, have been introduced as twelver Shia, bailiff and fair (10).

2. Good narrative: is the narrative that connects to the infallibles (AS), and mediators are praiseworthy (not to the extent that justice can be established) (10).

3. Authentic narrative: is the narrative that its mediators sequence connects to the infallibles (AS) and at least one of its mediators is not twelve Shi, but authentic narrative (10).

4. Poor narrative: when a narrative does not have at least one of the above mentioned conditions (10), for example does not connect to the infallibles (AS), or the mediator is a liar, unfaithful and etc. the narrative is called poor.

Many religious scholars believe that accurate, good and authentic narratives are practically equal (3).

2. Objectives

The current study aimed to extract medical narratives of the precious book "al-kafi", determin their number, and evaluate their authentication and also categorizing them. Another aim of the present study was to perform clinical trial or other studies, using the results of the current study to find out therapeutic or hygiene secrets of these orders; and also improving the contents of poor medical narratives with the help of comparing them with the same contented strong narratives (if any available).

3. Materials and Methods

The current study is a qualitative survey which has evaluated all narratives of the book "al-kafi", from the first narrative of pillars of Kafi to the last narrative of "Rouza Al-kafi", using "Deraya An-nour" software designed by "Islamic sciences computer institute" (11). Simultaneously, narratives which relate to the health care or environment issues, and narratives which point to the specific disease were extracted. Extracted narratives were named under the general title "medical narratives". Then, according to the authentication of mediators, medical narratives were categorized into three groups as: accurate, authentic and poor.

4. Results

From 16199 narratives mentioned in three books "al-kafi" (pillars, furoo, and rouza al-kafi), 2233 medical narratives (around 14% of the whole book) were extracted from its different sections as follows:

- "Pillars of Al-kafi" is a two-volume book containing ethical and theological narratives. The first volume with 8 medical narratives, contains the following books (topics): "al-aghl va al-jahl", "fazl al-elm", "at-touhid", and "al-hojjat". The second volume with 7 medical narratives, contains the following books: "aliman va al-kofr", "ad-doa", "fazl ul-qura'n" and "al-hashra". Totally, from the first book, "Pillars of Al-kafi", 15 narratives were extracted.

- "Furoo of Al-kafi" is a five-volume book containing volumes from the third to the seventh. This book includes judicial narratives. In the third volume which contains 302 medical narratives, the following books exist: at-tahara, al-heiz, al-jena'ez, as-sala't, and az-zaka't. The forth volume which contains 65 narratives, the residual part of az-zaka't book, and the books as-siam and al-haj have been included. The fifth volume with 103 narratives includes the books: jihad, al-ma'eisha, and an-neka'h. The sixth volume which has 1648 narratives includes these books: al-aghigha, at-tala'gh, al-atagh (slavery) va al-tadbir va al-ketaba, al-sayd, al-zaba'h, at-touma, al-ashraba (drinks), az-zee va al-tajammol va al-marva'h, al-davajen (domestic

[Downloaded from quranmed.com on 2024-03-28]

animals). In the seventh volume, with 45 extracted medical narratives, the following books exist: al-vasaya, al-mavaris, al-hodoud, ad-diya't, ash-shahada't, al-ghaza' va al-ahka'm, al-ima'n (swears) va an-nozours va al-kaffarat. Totally, from the book "Furoo of Al-kafi", 2163 medical narratives were extracted.

- "Rouza al-kafi" is a single-volume book which contains 55 narratives regarding sermons and preaching of the infallibles (AS) and some historic events. In the current study, narratives regarding physical medicine were extracted. Hence, narratives that recommend the spiritual factors, such as Quran, prayer and charity, to treat or prevent some diseases were not included. From 2233 extracted medical narratives, 891 were found accurate, 381 authentic, and 961 poor. Hadith scientists do not differentiate accurate /authentic narratives (3). The results of the current study showed that from 2233 medical narratives of the book "al-kafi", 1272 narratives were accurate/authentic, and 961 narratives were poor. In other words, around 40% of the medical narratives were poor. The authenticities of narratives, attached to their full texts, have been provided in three different files as "accurate", "authentic" and "poor" narratives.

5. Discussion

The current study showed that poorness and unreliability of "al-kafi" narratives is a vain thought, and most of the medical narratives of this book, around 60%, are accurate/authentic. Hence, it is recommended to perform clinical trial studies (at least) on accurate/authentic narratives, and also consider them as reputable and valid narratives, along with traditional medical references. Sometimes the authentication of a narrative depends on the authentication and the trustworthiness of the mediator (3), as included in the current study (3). In this regard, the practical result of the current study was to observe accurate, good and authentic narratives, and also refuse poor narratives, whereas no equity relation between the authentication and proof of medical narratives is established. In other words, the proof of narrative does not only depend on its authentication, and it doesn't mean that poor narratives are not reliable (12).

Evaluating the authentication of a narrative is only one way to rely on it. However, other practical evidences should be considered. Perhaps mediators of narratives are all trustworthy, but the narrative is definitely inaccurate, and the trustworthy mediator has underdone in narration; like the positive features of mediator, such as trustworthiness, justice and etc. have not been reported, but the authentication of the narrative can be assured (12). In this regard, many sages and narrators trust in some poor narratives about costumes, sermons, morality, history, and some medical issues through the text conforming indications, and their frequencies (13). On the other hand, referring to the old medical texts, many scientific hints of a narrative can be found, or through performing clinical trial studies, the accuracy and truth of the narrative can be testified; in this regard, the authenticity of those narratives can also be approved.

For example, according to the reference books of traditional medicine, the evaluation of the poor narrative of the book "Furoo Al-kafi", volume 6, page 379 is as follows:

Abi Aziz Al-moradi narrates from the sixth Imam (AS) that: "wash your teeth with sedge which refreshes your breath and improves your sexual energy. Avicenna in his famous book "Canon" wrote that: "sedge, which in Persian called "musk of the earth", is a plant root, which its leaves are like Torre, and its nature is second in warmness and dryness lightens the face skin, refreshes the breath, and empowers the sexual ability; and is also beneficial to treat nasal infection (bad breath) (14). Sahib Ikhtiarat Badiei (1329-1403 AD) wrote that: "sedge, lightens the face skin, and refreshes the breath, and reviles nasal infection and gum pyorrhea (15). Aghili Khorasani in his book "Makhzan al-advia" wrote: "one of the benefits of sedge is the sexual empowering; it can also revile the bad breath (16). In some medical narratives, unawareness about the situation of the patient and the history of his illness, and also his temper, make confusion in the understanding of medical words of Imams (AS); because the medical recommendations of the infallibles (AS) are specified to the addressed person. Hence, observing such recommendations have no benefits for the others, even they may cause suffers in some people. Sheikh Sadough (RA) in his book "Al-etegha'da't" which has been addressed to these narratives and have been specified to the specific audiences wrote: "some medical narratives and news are specific for the weather of Mecca and Medina cities, and are useless in other climates (17). It seems that not too many narratives in this regard exist; for example the following narrative from volume sixth, on page 324: It has been narrated that: I wrote Imam Baghir (AS) and complained of hyperemia and gallbladder filling, in a way that if I do phlebotomy, I will suffer from biliary disease, and if postpone it, hyperemia hurts me. What is your command? The infallible answered me: do phlebotomy and then eat fresh roasted fish. Again I wrote a letter in this regard which He answered me: do phlebotomy and then eat fresh roasted salty fish and drink water. I obeyed his command, I healed and it is my food. Or the following narrative which has been mentioned in the book "Furoo Kafi", the sixth volume, page 341: Mohammad Ibn Feiz has narrated from the sixth Imam (AS) that: "a man came to him and said: my daughter has become skinny and suffers from diarrhea. The infallible said: what banns you from rice and suet? Put 4 or 5 stones in fire. Bake some rice, and then add suet and hot stones to it. Keep it close and do not let vaporing. Shake hard to melt the suet; then, pure on the rice and wait for bubbling". Is it reasonable to follow this narrative to treat any patient with diarrhea? Generally it is

[Downloaded from quranmed.com on 2024-03-28]

not possible to say that all accurate and authentic medical narratives, are applicable, without considering the conditions; and in contrast it is not reasonable to refuse all poor narratives. However, it is recommended that before taking any actions, conduct clinical studies on some of the accurate and authentic narratives which are along with Iranian health and medical priorities.

Acknowledgements

The authors thank "Islamic sciences computer institute" of Qom for designing and preparing the software "Derayat An-nour".

Authors' Contribution

None declared.

Financial Disclosure

There is no financial disclosure.

Funding/Supports

No supports/funding has been considered to the present study.

References

1. Avicenna H. *Quanon fe Teb, translated by Masoodi.* kashan: Morsal; 2008. p. 283.
2. Ibn abi usaybia . *Oyun.* Beirut: Dar Maktabat Alhayat; p. 13.
3. Rabbani MH. *Daneshe Derayat al Hadis.* 1st ed. Mashhad: Razavi University of Islamic Sciences; 2009. p. 20–75, 108.
4. Sobhani J. *Kolliate Elm al Rejal, translated by Rouhi.* Qom: Qods; p. 304.
5. Modirshanechi K. *Elme hadith.* Qom: Islamic Pub.; 2004. p. 96–214.
6. Nadjmabad M. *History of Medicine in Iran.* 1 ed. Tehran: Tehran University Pub.; 1988. p. 389–443.
7. Razi M. *Tebbe Rohani.* 2nd ed. Tehran: Parent and Tutor Organization; 2001. p. 9.
8. Verse 36, Al-Isra, translated by Qarib. Available from: http://www.parsquran.com/data/show.php?sura=17&ayat=%DB%B3%DB%B6&user=far&lang=eng&tran=1.
9. Hojjat . *Ashnaee ba Estelahate Hadithi.* Tehran: Science and Hadith University; 2009. p. 7.
10. Ghorbani Z. *Elme hadith.* 1998.
11. Deraya An-nour . Rejali Shea. Available from: http://www.islam-download.org.
12. Rabbani MH. *Daneshe Rejalolhadith.* Mashad: Astane qods Qazavi; 2004. p. 176.
13. Masoodi A. *Vaza va Naghde Hadith.* Tehran: Samt; 2010. p. 12.
14. Avicenna H. *Quanon fe Teb.* 1st ed. Beirut: Alalamy Le- Al-Matbooat Institute; 2005. p. 39.
15. Ansari Shrazi A. *Ekhtiarate Badiee.* 1st ed. Tehran: Razavi Drug Distribution Co.; 1993. p. 223.
16. Aghili MH. *Makhzan al-advieh.* 1st ed. Tehran: Sabze Arang; 2009. p. 457.
17. Sadooq MA, editor. Aleteghadat. Conger Sheikh Mofeed. p. 115.

[Downloaded from quranmed.com on 2024-03-28]