Module 1: Philosophical Principles of Tibb
The training module, based on the book “Theoretical Principles of Tibb” has been compiled by the Ibn Sina Institute of Tibb to promote the training and practice of Tibb (aka Unani-Tibb) locally and internationally.

Ibn Sina Institute of Tibb
PO Box 72449, Parkview, 2122, Johannesburg
2 Loch Avenue, Parktown, 2193
Email: info@tibb.co.za
Tel: +27 11-991 7323
OVERVIEW: PHILOSOPHICAL PRINCIPLES OF TIBB

This module begins with a brief historical overview of Tibb, followed by a description of the key Tibb concepts of physis, creation, temperament, humours, lifestyle factors and qualities within the context of health and disease. Tibb’s holistic nature is highlighted in the relationship between the person and the environment, and within the context of the body’s anatomical structures, physiological actions and metabolic functions. The most significant consequences of this module are the realisation of the relationship between man (the microcosm) and the universe (the macrocosm); the recognition of everyone’s uniqueness; recognising and respecting the inherent self-healing mechanism of physis; and the appreciation of the insights provided by the temperamental and humoral theories in healthcare.

Main learning outcomes
After completing this module the student will have insights into the philosophical concepts underpinning Tibb, and their relevance when integrating these into their practice. The outcomes of this module include the ability to:

- Compare and contrast the historical development of Western medicine and Tibb;
- List and understand the unique features of Tibb when compared to Western medicine;
- Demonstrate understanding of the Tibb philosophical concepts of physis, creation, qualities, temperament, humours and lifestyle factors;
- Describe how the body’s anatomical structures, physiological actions and metabolic functions are part of a fully integrated living system;
- Appreciate the holistic nature of Tibb regarding the inner microcosm and the surrounding macrocosm, as modelled in the ‘wheel of life’;
- Describe the lifestyle factors, and explain how they are central to both health promotion and disease management.
- Successfully identify the dominant and sub-dominant temperament of patients.
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A. INTRODUCTION TO TIBB PHILOSOPHY

Tibb, also known as Unani-Tibb, literally translates as Greek Medicine. Over the centuries Tibb has been known as Graeco-Arab Medicine, Unani Medicine and Western Herbal Medicine.

Tibb is a total system of holistic healthcare based on the original principles of medicine that were applied by Hippocrates, Galen and Ibn Sina (aka Avicenna), the ‘founding fathers’ of present day scientific medicine. It includes the basic principles of modern clinical science, embracing both its theory and practice.

Tibb embraces a whole new way of looking at our body. It considers our health to be the result of a natural, harmonious balance. Tibb believes that our bodies have a way of finding the path back to health; healing comes from within. Recognition of this inherent wisdom to self-healing is essential in the treatment of, and recuperation from, clinical disorders and the maintenance of health.

Tibb recognises the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual origins of both health and illness. It promotes the early diagnosis of possible pre-dispositions to diseases, well before physical symptoms appear. This prevents these diseases from appearing in a more severe form. Thereafter, treatment is integrative – combining various therapies in response to specific needs.

Tibb is truly holistic, in that it is a total system of healthcare, recognising the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of both health and illness. Tibb therapy focuses on harmonising these where feasible, so improving the person’s clinical risk profile. Tibb treatment is integrative, and combines well with other healthcare systems for both acute and chronic, recurring disorders as Integrative Medicine.

In this module we cover the basic philosophical aspects of Tibb. Its holistic nature is illustrated by the core concepts of physis, temperament, humours, qualities, and lifestyle factors. Furthermore, the axiomatic inter-relationship between the person and the environment, both the internal and the external, is described.

B. DEFINITIONS & DESCRIPTIONS

Tibb. This term is derived from the Arabic word for medicine. The healing philosophy underpinning Tibb is derived not only from Greek thinkers such as Aristotle and Arabic pioneers such as Averroes, but also from ancient Egyptian, Indian and European healing systems. Tibb generally refers to the art and science of preserving health, preventing illnesses, curing or alleviating disease, and aiding recuperation from ailments. Tibb embraces knowledge and understanding of (a) the various states of the human body, in both health and disease; (b) the means by which health is likely to be lost; and (c) when lost, how health can be restored.

This is highlighted in Ibn Sina’s definition of Tibb:

“Tibb is a branch of knowledge that deals with the states of health and disease in the human body for the purposes of adopting suitable measures for the preservation or restoration of health.” [Ibn Sina]

Complementary medicine. There is a wide variety of medical or healing systems which differ from Western medicine in both underlying theory and actual practice. These are termed complementary or
alternative, or collectively as CAM. This term is used interchangeably with fringe; holistic and natural. Most forms of CAM are united in one important core aspect – when treating the patient, they act primarily to boost and protect the body’s inner healing mechanisms, rather than merely suppress the patient’s symptoms.

CAM can be divided into four broad categories:

- Healthcare systems or paradigms – e.g., Tibb, Naturopathy, Ayurveda, Homeopathy
- Diagnostic techniques – e.g., pulse diagnosis, iridology, hair analysis
- Therapeutic techniques – e.g., cupping, aromatherapy, hypnotherapy
- Self-help techniques – e.g., dietotherapy, Yoga, detox

**Western medicine.** The standard scientific or medical model (paradigm) for developed countries; It is also termed allopathic, conventional, orthodox bio-medicine or modern medicine.

**Integrative.** The deliberate and logical combination of complementary and Western therapy aimed at rectifying the patient’s clinical disorder. CAM practice is increasingly being used alongside Western medicine in order to improve treatment outcome. Examples are herbal remedies, acupuncture, meditation and therapeutic cupping.

**Holistic.** The state of well-being in which the person’s body, mind, emotions and spirit are in tune with the physical, mental, spiritual and social environment. Holistic therapy describes treatment in which the physical, mental and social factors are taken into account, rather than just the signs and symptoms of a particular disease.

**Traditional medicine.** An indigenous medical belief typical of a particular region, in different parts of the world. This is often referred to as folk medicine or ethno-medicine.

**Health.** This is commonly regarded as the absence of disease. It is described in terms of how well we feel and how capable we are of functioning. According to one dictionary, health is:

“...freedom from bodily or mental disease or decay; a state of bodily or organic soundness; the absence of disease”. [Cassell’s English Dictionary]

Tibb believes that good health is much more than the absence of disease. Health does not merely mean not being sick, and is certainly more than the absence unwanted physical signs and symptoms. A person is considered healthy if he or she is able to carry out his general physical, mental, occupational and social functions and responsibilities completely satisfactorily. In line with this is the more appropriate World Health Organisation definition:

“Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” [WHO]

More specifically Tibb views the notion of health as the dynamic and enduring balance between the body humours in relation to the person’s temperament and lifestyle. According to Tibb, therefore, health is:

“...a state of physical, emotional, and spiritual harmony resulting from the most favourable balance of humours in a person” [Chishti, 1985]

**Disease.** Western medicine defines disease as:
“... a disorder with a specific cause and recognisable signs and symptoms; any bodily abnormality or failure to function properly, except that resulting directly from physical injury”. [Oxford Medical Dictionary]

According to this definition:

- Western medicine simplistically implies that the human body is a composite of physical mechanisms, with specific causes and effects present when it becomes dysfunctional. Patients are regarded as collections of body parts and systems, not as individual persons.
- It is primarily concerned with the physical dimensions of the person. This contrasts with CAM systems, such as Tibb, which place no barriers between physical, mental and spiritual well-being.
- It seeks single causes for specific diseases. CAM, on the other hand, regards most if not all diseases as multifactorial in nature; i.e., arising from multiple causes.

C. HISTORY OF TIBB

The history of codified medical practice goes back several millennia. Chinese Herbal Medicine, for example, is recorded from 3000 BCE, and Egyptian Pharaonic Medicine, practiced by Imhotep (also known as Aesculapius), as long ago as 2980 BCE.

Greek medical philosophy originated with the insights of ancient philosophers such as Aristotle, Hippocrates and Democrats. Previously, ideas on the nature of health and disease were dominated by theology, mythology, metaphysics and astrology.

The school of Greek Medicine at Cnidus originally placed emphasis on subjective symptoms, but little on objective signs. It originated the organ-based scheme of disease and therapy. A breakaway group, led by Hippocrates then set up Medical Schools on the Isle of Cos at Athens in Greece, and elsewhere. The origins of Tibb can be traced back to this pioneer of modern medicine. Hippocrates is widely regarded as the embodiment of the ideal physician, and even now acclaimed as the “Father of Medicine”. Hippocrates introduced the concept of the humours. He believed that health is the expression of a harmonious balance between these humours, the environment that surrounds us, and our adopted lifestyle. He also believed that there is a natural and powerful tendency towards self-healing, which is regulated and driven by physis. This is the body’s innate vital life force, which helps to maintain the body’s inner harmony, so allowing the proper functioning of the cells, tissues and organs.

“Life is short and the Art of medicine long, the occasion fleeting, experience fallacious and judgement difficult”. [Hippocrates, 469 - 399 BCE]

Galen, a Greek doctor living in Pergamum, Asia Minor, around 130 CE, compiled Hippocrates’ work and all other available medicinal information. He introduced both the term pneuma, the creative force for being, and the idea of temperament. He thought that everyone was unique and distinct in nature and behaviour, and allocated each person to one of four dominant temperaments: sanguinous, phlegmatic, bilious or melancholic. Not only did he accept the humoral theory, but he extended it to include foods, each of which, he suggested, had a characteristic temperament. From this the science of dietetics arose.

After the demise of the Roman Empire the practice of medicine stagnated for more than a millennium. During the Dark Ages in Europe, which lasted for more than 800 years, little of note was produced in the medical sphere. However, Ibn Sina came to the fore in 980 CE. He is generally regarded as the most famous polymath in history. Resident in Persia, he codified medicine into a science, and is
justifiably lauded as the “Prince of Physicians”. He authored two major books on clinical practice: *The Book of Healing* and *The Canon of Medicine*. The latter is considered by Encyclopaedia Britannica as “the single most famous book in the history of medicine”.

Ibn Sina’s philosophy of medicine was adopted by the emerging European medieval schools of medicine, and his influence on the development of healthcare cannot be overstated. His *Canon of Medicine* is still the preferred reference handbook for Tibb practitioners.

Muslim Tibb practitioners introduced medical botany and chemistry; organisation of the pharmacy; and the founding of hospitals, with lecture halls, charity wards, kitchens, dispensaries, qualified medical and nursing staff. Innovative techniques also appeared at this time – distillation, filtration, sublimation and calcination.

By the early 1700’s Tibb was the foundation of virtually all healing systems in most of the known world. In the mid-1800s the principles of Tibb formed the basis of *Homeopathy*, which was developed by S. Hahnemann, (1755-1843), and later natural therapeutics, introduced into Western medical practice as *Naturopathy*. The English physician, N. Culpeper, a major figure in Western herbal medicine, is acknowledged for his contribution to the practice of Tibb in Europe.

The Tibb system of healthcare provided the basis of medical practice in many parts of the world until the mid- or late- 1800’s, when the Theory of Specific Aetiology (“Germ Theory”) was introduced towards the end of the 19th century by Pasteur and Koch. This was followed closely by the arrival of industrialised pharmaceutical medicine early in the 20th century. These major developments together heralded profound changes to medical practice, and the formation of the pharmaceutical industry. Even so, Tibb-inspired healing practices to this day remain the treatment of choice for around 25% of the world’s population.

Tibb is presently practiced on the Indian sub-continent, Middle Eastern countries, Xinjiang province in China, and in South Africa. In the latter, Tibb is regulated by the Allied Health Professions Council of South Africa.

The practice of Tibb has embraced:

- Pre-history – the *Egyptian Era*  
- 000 to 300 CE – the *Graeco-Roman Era*  
- 300 to 1450 CE – the *Byzantine Era*  
- 500 to 700 CE – the *Persian Era*  
- 530 to 1250 CE – The *Arab Era*  
- 950 to 1200 CE – *Unani-Tibb in Spain*  
- 1300 to 1800 CE – *Western Holistic Medicine in Europe*  
- 1200 CE to the present day – *Tibb in the Indian sub-continent*  
- 2001 CE to present day – *South Africa*
Synopsis

- The major pioneers of Tibb are Hippocrates, Galen and Ibn Sina.
- Tibb has its roots in traditional medicine extending back many centuries to ancient Egypt, Greece and Persia.
- Tibb was the mainstay of medicine until recently, and practiced all over the known World.
- The advent of the Theory of Specific Aetiology detracted from the practice of Tibb.
- Tibb is widely practiced on the Indian sub-continent, the Middle East, and parts of China.
- Tibb provides the basis for both Homeopathy and Naturopathy
- Tibb is in many ways the foundation of present-day Western medicine.

D. UNIQUE FEATURES OF TIBB

1. Emphasis on health

According to Tibb, a healthy person empowered with relevant healthcare knowledge can become even healthier. Its mission is both restoring health by first treating the symptoms of the illness, and then actively supporting the person in dealing with the underlying disorder.

2. Holistic nature

Holistic health has been defined as:

"... the state of well-being in which an individual’s body, mind, emotions and spirit are in tune with the natural, cosmic and social environment" [American Holistic Medical Assn.]

Holistic medicine deals with the physical, mental, emotional and social factors in the patient’s ailment, rather than just the disease that has been diagnosed. In keeping with this definition, Tibb has as its basic focus of activity the person’s optimum health, not simply the alleviation of illness.

3. Natural healing

Tibb accepts that symptoms such as diarrhoea, vomiting and fever are the body’s natural self-healing responses, as attempts to restore inner harmony. They are the body’s way of ridding itself of toxins which have disturbed homeostasis.

If these symptoms are actively subdued by the use of anti-diarrhoeal, anti-emetic or antipyretic drugs, the patient will no doubt gain relief. However, as the toxin affecting him or her has not been totally flushed from the body, other complications may arise.

4. Everyone is unique

A primary feature of Tibb is the concept of temperament, and its importance as part of diagnosis and therapy. Tibb says it is important to assessing a patient’s authentic temperament as a precursor to treatment. This is in contrast to Western medicine, which focuses almost exclusively on diagnosing, usually with extensive laboratory testing, the patient’s disorder, then treating it with one or more potent drugs. Scant attention is usually paid to the patient’s individual nature. In other words, Western medicine treats the disease; Tibb treats the person with the disease.

"It is more important to know what sort of a person has a disease than to know what sort of
disease a person has” [Hippocrates]

5. Cost effectiveness
Tibb is able to meet the challenge posed by the high cost of health care. As it has a comprehensive understanding of the causes of illnesses, it allows for inexpensive, low-tech, easily accessible means to achieve health, rather than resorting to expensive high-tech interventions. Understanding the causes as well as the progress of a disease lets the practitioner diagnose ‘syndromes’ long before the appearance of symptoms, so forestalling more serious diseases.

6. Empowerment
Tibb emphasises the need to empower patients in understanding their ailments, and provides insight into various ways for preventing illness. The Tibb philosophical principles provide a comprehensive understanding of the causes of diseases which enables the practitioner to advise his patients more effectively on health promotion and in the management and treatment of illness.

7. Integrating Tibb with Western Medicine
Tibb is an ideal partner with Western medicine because of its common routes to Hippocrates, Galen and Ibn Sina. Recent research supports the Tibb principles of temperament, humours and lifestyle factors etc. Personalized medicine is now coming to the fore in certain Western medical circles, as the differences between different patients becomes increasingly obvious. Also, the humoral theory can be interpreted differently, in terms of neurotransmitters and metabolic profiles, based on factual evidence not available to previous generations of physicians. In addition, lifestyle changes are now recognized in most Western medical practice as a viable and meaningful alternative to intensive drug therapy.

Synopsis
The Tibb healthcare system:
- Treats the symptoms, of clinical disorder then deals with its causes.
- Deals holistically with the physical, mental, emotional and social factors in disease.
- Accepts that symptoms are the body’s natural self-healing responses to restore harmony.
- Accepts the key role of temperament in the diagnosis and treatment of disease.
- Provides a true understanding of the multiple causes of illness.
- Applies low-tech, cost-effective and accessible ways for restoring health.
- Treats the person with the disease, whereas Western medicine treats the symptoms.
- Favours empowering patients by providing information on ailments and their prevention.
- Is an ideal partner for Western medicine, largely because of their common heritage.
- Emphasises the need to pursue good health, not treat disease.
- Is cost-effective, having a comprehensive understanding of the causes of illnesses.

E. COMPARISON: TIBB AND WESTERN MEDICINE
Tibb and Western medicine have a common heritage in Hippocrates, the acclaimed ‘Father of Medicine’. He made the momentous break from the previous magical and superstitious attitude to disease, to a theory and practice of medicine based on logical and scientific principles. Even today the
Hippocratic Oath is the cornerstone of medical ethics in Western medicine. For millennia, the progress of both medical paradigms, one of which evolved into Tibb and the other into Western medicine, moved along the same developmental pathway. Other early pioneers such as Galen, Ibn Sina, Culpeper and, later, Claude Bernard also made important contributions. However, the two pathways diverged with Descartes during the Renaissance, and separated completely when the chemical industry arrived as part of the Industrial Revolution, and the influence of Pasteur and others, with their Theory of Specific Aetiology – the 'magic bullet' concept – became dominant.

Western medicine focuses on suppressing the patient’s troublesome symptoms. It is undeniably effective in dealing with trauma, emergencies and most acute disorders (such as infection, pain and inflammation), with both powerful drugs and physical therapies available. However, addressing the underlying disorder is usually of lesser priority.

For Tibb, the objective of therapy is to encourage and enhance physis so as to deal with internal and external disturbances which lead to a particular ailment with emphasis on addressing the cause/s of the illness condition/s. This approach is particularly effective in dealing with chronic and recurring ailments.

1. Differences in Theory

Tibb is true to the Hippocratic tradition. It adheres to the principle of: “First, do no harm”, which is a cardinal feature of the Hippocratic Oath. All Tibb treatment and techniques are consistent with this. Tibb also accepts the Hippocratic advice of “Assist nature”. All Tibb measures cooperate with physis.

Tibb takes an holistic approach to the treatment of disease. In Tibb, disease results from several negative factors coming together to cause humoral imbalance, so bringing disharmony to the person’s body, mind or soul. The aim of treatment is to support and enhance physis, based on lifestyle changes, behaviour modification, active physical and mental therapies and appropriate herbal remedies. Tibb takes into account the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and social aspects of the patient, rather than just the physical features of the disease. Conversely, Western medicine tends to adhere to the theory of specific aetiology, which is essentially one disease, one cause, one treatment.

Tibb is health, not disease, focused. The main objective of Tibb is achieving and maintaining realistic wellbeing and optimum physical activity. It is prevention focused, both for the original complaint, and for any recurrence. Western medicine, on the other hand, is not convinced of the value of lifestyle changes in its approach to disease prevention.

Tibb views the human body differently. It sees the human body as a highly adaptive and complex interacting system, probably beyond our comprehension. There are both physical and metaphysical aspects. Western medicine, however, considers the human body as a highly complex, intricate machine. Broken parts can be fixed or replaced by transplants, and different actions fine-tuned by drugs. There are only physical aspects.

Tibb regards each patient as unique. This is described as temperament, a major part of Tibb diagnosis, treatment and the long-term maintenance of wellness. Western medicine tends to view their patients as examples of carriers of a particular disorder, effectively identical in metabolism, and with a ‘one size fits all’ approach to drug therapy.

Tibb accepts the body-mind interaction. It recognises the existence of a powerful and significant link between a person’s physical and mental state. This linkage has major consequences in deciding
anyone’s state of health. Western medicine, however, rejects the existence of non-physical aspects of wellness, as it cannot be readily identified and quantified.

Tibb accepts that many diseases have a spiritual dimension. There is a powerful spiritual component in maintaining optimum health and alleviating chronic disease. Tibb feels that there is often a need to consider this when deciding therapy, by including spiritual support from contemplation, fasting or prayer, for example. Western medicine, however, downplays or rejects any influence of a spiritual nature in health and disease. It only accepts influences if they can quantified with laboratory or observational data. "If you cannot measure it, it doesn’t exist".

2. Difference in Diagnosis

Tibb does not rely on hi-tech diagnosis. It prefers empirical, traditional and time-tested diagnostic techniques. Tibb may use quantitative data in support of a provisional diagnosis where there is uncertainty. In contrast, Western medicine relies very heavily, often overwhelmingly, on quantitative data, especially laboratory results, before making a diagnosis.

3. Differences in Treatment

Tibb supports inner healing. Tibb therapy is designed to support or boost physis, not oppose, ignore or override it. Western medicine does not accept the existence of physis, as it cannot be isolated and quantified. In fact, Western medical treatment often undermines the patient’s physis with drugs like chemotherapy, antibiotics and steroids.

Tibb treats both symptoms and underlying causes. Tibb acts to relieve any bothersome symptoms immediately. It then seeks to identify and correct the underlying causes of the ailment. Western medicine generally focuses on alleviating the symptoms troubling the patient, with little attention paid to any underlying causes.

Tibb is better suited for chronic, recurring disorders. Chronic disorders, as opposed to acute ones, make up most of the healthcare burden. Tibb treatment is natural, patient focused, and respectful of the force of inner healing. It focuses on rectifying any obvious aspects of a faulty lifestyle. As Tibb treatment is not drug focused, it minimizes adverse reactions. Western medicine does, however, provide effective short-term relief of symptoms with drugs like pain-killers, anti-inflammatoryatories, decongestants and bronchodilators. Unfortunately, over the long-term, serious adverse reactions and unwanted metabolic effects occur. These in turn often need further drug treatment, and patient compliance is usually low and unsatisfactory.

Tibb examines a patient’s diet and lifestyle early on during therapy. Tibb practitioners regard a person’s lifestyle and habits important in attaining good health and avoiding chronic ailments. Western medicine is not inclined to offer detailed lifestyle advice; it is only a minor part of medical training. Nor does it attach much value to lifestyle changes, other than advising on weight loss, smoking and drinking habits. It therefore resorts to potent drugs, often as first resort, before lifestyle changes have been tried.

Tibb does not affect gut bacteria. These are now recognised as major players in health and disease, and to have a major influence on the immune system. Antibiotics cause havoc with the patient’s gut bacteria, often leading to super-infection by pathogenic bacteria and fungoids. No Tibb therapy,
whether lifestyle changes, diet improvement, or herbal or regimental therapies is known to disrupt the patient’s microbiome.

4. Differences affecting the Patient

_Tibb treatment is better tolerated._ As Tibb therapy has been around for centuries there is little chance of unexpected or unusual surprises. Tibb treatment, being predominantly natural, is much less prone to unpleasant or unpredictable responses than Western medicine. Herbal medicine, for instance, is usually less prone to side effects or adverse reactions than is Western medical treatment, which is based upon synthetic drug therapy. This exposes the patient to a wide range of troublesome, often surprising, side effects in the short term and potentially serious adverse metabolic changes over the longer term.

_Tibb is less prone to iatrogenic problems._ Tibb therapy is based on lifestyle changes supplemented by traditional healing techniques and herbal medicine. Tibb therapy is much less prone to problems due to poor clinical practice. Western medicine, in contrast, is prone to iatrogenic problems, due mainly to poor tolerance and drug interactions.

_Tibb therapy is less expensive or time-consuming._ Tibb therapy usually involves repeated face-to-face counselling, and this encourages good patient compliance. Western medical treatment often demands constant laboratory or physical monitoring of clinical progress. For chronic disorders this is both expensive and time consuming.

_Tibb empowers the patient._ A cardinal feature of Tibb therapy is that the patient is more involved in diagnosis, treatment and follow-up. In Tibb, the patient’s active participation in therapy is expected, and personal responsibility is encouraged.

_Tibb therapy requires empathy from the healer._ In Tibb, care and empathy are needed to effect optimum healing and health. Tibb diagnosis focuses on subjective feelings and opinions, as well as symptoms and signs. In Western medicine the doctor is emotionally neutral, detached and usually focuses on objective data alone.

5. Other differences

_Tibb has a constant healthcare message._ The theoretical basis and main practices of Tibb have been generally consistent over many centuries. Western medicine, however, is constantly changing its advice, according to new information and different opinions. This can be confusing to both patient and practitioner.

_Tibb is not exposed to financial influences._ It is not part of a formal trillion-dollar industry dominated by relatively few well-connected multinational companies. Tibb is independent, but belongs to an informal network of natural medicine operatives. The transnational Pharma companies have huge political power and influence on healthcare education, research, publicity, policy and practice. These companies largely control much drug research and are supported by Western medical opinion formers/leaders.
**Synopsis**

Tibb differs from Western medicine in several important ways:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Western medicine</th>
<th>Tibb</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The human body is regarded as a complex machine</td>
<td>Tibb sees the human body as infinitely complex</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tibb deals with the whole patient</td>
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<tr>
<td>The body and mind are seen as separate entities</td>
<td>The body, mind and spirit are interconnected</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emphasises the elimination of disease</td>
<td>Emphasises ways of achieving good health</td>
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<td>Treat the symptoms troubling the patient</td>
<td>Treats the underlying causes of the disorder</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specialises – diseases of the heart, kidney, etc.</td>
<td>Takes an integrated, holistic approach</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use high-tech, impersonal diagnostic techniques, and heroic therapeutic measures</td>
<td>Focuses on diet, lifestyle, and preventative measures and intuition based on experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focuses on objective information (how the patient is doing – charts, tests, statistics)</td>
<td>Focus on subjective information (how the patient is feeling)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The physician is emotionally neutral and detached</td>
<td>The Tibb physician’s care and empathy are critical to healing</td>
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<tr>
<td>The physician is the all-knowing, unchallengeable authority</td>
<td>The physician is a partner with the patient in the healing process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The physician is in total control of the patient’s health problems</td>
<td>The patient has considerable say in their health care choices</td>
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<tr>
<td>The physician treats disease</td>
<td>The Tibb physician promotes health</td>
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**F. TIBB CONCEPT: PHYSIS**

Tibb views the human being as part of the larger cosmos – as are all living entities in the Universe. Everything in the Universe (or *Macrocosm*) is interconnected in one way or another. We as individuals do not exist in our own self-contained world (or *Microcosm*), but are connected to other parts of the Macrocosm: via our behaviour in our families, our communities, our societies, our planet, and our very existence. Everything we do has repercussions far removed from ourselves.

As human beings, we are all ultimately made up of the same basic material as the rest of the Universe. We connect with the Macrocosm by our behaviour, our actions, and even the air that we breathe. We influence all living organisms which share the earth with us.

A harmonious balance normally exists between the components of the Macrocosm, whether at the cosmic, geological, social or physiological levels. The relationship between the fauna and flora, man and animals, the atmosphere, the oceans, and the earth are all carefully and delicately balanced for the maintenance and perpetuation of life. An example of the maintenance of this balance for the perpetuation of life on this planet is seen if we consider the salt content in the sea. Despite the natural
disasters of earthquakes, volcanic eruptions or the effect of mankind extracting salt from the sea over thousands of years, the saline content in the oceans is still ideal for all forms of marine life.

This harmonious balance is guided by an organizing principle, the *Supreme Wisdom of the Universe*, the essence of which exists in every living entity. This inherent wisdom resides in our genetic make-up. This inherent wisdom is recognised in several medical philosophies and disciplines, such as Chinese Herbal Medicine, Ayurvedic Medicine and Homeopathy. Hippocrates and Galen also acknowledged its existence. In Tibb, this inherent wisdom is called *Physis*, which is controlled by the supreme wisdom of the universe.

Our health can be regarded as an expression of a dynamic but harmonious balance between the various components of our nature, our environment, and our lifestyle. Physis is the intrinsic ability of the body to preserve health, and the mechanism that activates the body’s healing processes.

Briefly stated, physis is the vital life force, inherent in the human body, which helps to maintain equilibrium or harmony within the internal environment, so allowing the proper functioning of the cells, tissues and organs. In addition, it regulates the reservoir of energy which is the driving force behind maintaining homeostasis in the myriad of complex processes we recognise as life. It is the origin of movement and rest.

“Nature heals, and the physician is only nature’s assistant.” [Hippocrates]

The various systems in the body – the circulatory, respiratory, digestive, immune systems, etc. – have their own organisation. However, they do not work in complete isolation, but are each connected to the other systems in order to function effectively and efficiently. Physis has the innate ability to orchestrate the body into maintaining dynamic optimum functioning, better known as *homeostasis*. It acts to heal the body when it is sick, restore it when it is depleted, and to develop and thrive when supplied with suitable nourishment. As the regulator for homeostasis, it is essentially the human’s ‘inborn intelligence of health’.

In the event of disease (or even when the body fails to reach its ideal state), physis acts by correcting imbalances and disharmony. One important feature of physis is that it operates in all dimensions of health – in the physical, the mental, the emotional, and spiritual.

1. **Physis and other medical paradigms**

Physis is recognised in other healing philosophies – as *Prana* (Ayurvedic Medicine); *Chi Energy* (Chinese Medicine); the *Vital Force* (Homeopathic Medicine); and *Nature* (Naturopathy). Hippocrates described it as *Vis Medicatrix Natura*. Physis is also akin to the *Yin and Yang* principle of oriental philosophy. It has also been termed the *Divine Wisdom* and in the Abrahamic scriptures as God Almighty.

In early Western holistic medicine, it was labelled the *Etheric Body*. It has also been variously described as the *Vital Force*, *Natura* (“the healing power of nature”), *Mother Nature* and the *Hierarchical Principle*. Physis was used to describe the natural vitality of what is now recognised as the immune system, in its
spontaneous response to environmental influences. It was quickly brought into action to detect and react to both supportive and disruptive factors. In fact, one component of physis is our immunological identity, which forms the molecular basis of healing. Another aspect of physis, which is a key focus of the relatively new discipline of psycho-neuro-immunology (PNI) is the placebo response, and the possibly associated phenomenon of spontaneous healing.

“When physis is powerful enough to withstand the disease, it does not require the aid of the physician, as in the case of minor diseases that are self-healing” [Al-Malki]

2. The nature of Physis

Physis is the administrator of the body, and it operates in the physical, mental and spiritual dimensions. It embraces all metabolic and homeostatic functions of the body. Physis comes into effect from the instant of fertilisation, and is present until the moment of death. It maintains harmony between the individual and both the internal and the external environments. Physis ensures that an ideal balance exists within the body’s cells, in the tissues, between the many internal organs, and the entire body. This dynamic maintenance of harmony within the body is also termed homeostasis, as mentioned earlier.

In the physical context, physis ensures that the many millions of biochemical reactions taking place – for protection, for growth, tissue maintenance, reproduction and repair – which are taking place at any instant, are controlled.

At the psychological level, the harmony or balance of the complex of emotions, the control of destructive urges or thoughts, and the maintenance of good mental health is regulated by physis.

One specific aspect of physis relevant in health and disease is the immune system. This ensures that infections arising from outside do not disturb the body’s internal harmony. It also maintains an extensive surveillance on the body’s many tissues, to detect any cancers in development, and remove them if they become established.

Other aspects of physis in the physiological dimension are the numerous biochemical feedback mechanisms which operate in the body’s metabolic processes, and the regulation of hormone secretion from glands.

Physis is not confined to humans – it pervades all living tissue: it is part of the biochemical unity of life. It follows the laws of nature as we understand them, and works in a pre-determined, instinctual manner.

3. Physis and medicine

The word ‘physician’ is derived from the word physis. The true role of the physician is to aid physis in the healing process, by understanding the factors governing physis, and plan and execute treatment accordingly. For example, when a person has eaten something that disagrees with him or her, then vomiting or diarrhoea is a natural reaction. The physician should be aware of this natural reaction, and assist physis by devising effective treatment which is in harmony with the body’s healing mechanisms.
“Each patient carries his own doctor inside him. We are at our best when we give the doctor who resides within each patient a chance to go to work” [Albert Schweitzer]

“Behind every natural action of the human body is an inherent wisdom, a mechanism [physis] that allows the body to heal itself. In fact, no herb, no food or any other substance or procedure can do anything on its own to heal. It can only assist the body in its own self-healing role. If your finger is cut, it is not the stitches or the bandage or the iodine that causes it to heal; it is the skin itself that performs this miracle” [Chishti, 1985]

A major aspect of Tibb is that physis has to be respected if the healing process is to be successful. The treatment of illness is imposed from outside, whereas actual healing is achieved from within.

**Synopsis**

- Physis is controlled by the “supreme wisdom of the universe” and exists in every living entity.
- It operates in all dimensions of health: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual.
- Physis ensures that optimum health is maintained, and disease opposed.
- Physis is the innate organising principle present in living beings, responsible for self-healing and self-repair processes.
- Although treatment comes from outside, healing arises from within.
- The term ‘physician’ is derived from the word ‘physis’, Greek for nature.
- Tibb ensures Physis is respected for the healing process to be successful.

**G. TIBB CONCEPT: CREATION**

**1. The nature of matter**

We know that energy and matter are interchangeable, as described by the iconic equation: \( E = mc^2 \), Where \( E \) is energy, \( m \) is mass, and \( c \) is the speed of light. However, in ancient Greece, the philosophers Democrats and Aristotle believed that between Energy and Matter there existed an intermediate “Primary Matter”; or “Elements”, symbolically represented by the universal elements earth, water, air, and fire, each of which is characterised by two qualities: Earth (Cold & Dry), Water (Cold & Moist), Air (Hot & Moist), Fire (Hot & Dry).

**Elements**

According to Ibn Sina, elements are indivisible matter, which provides the basic components of everything in the Universe (macrocosm), including our own body (microcosm). The various substances (compounds) in nature depend on their combination, and their variety is brought about by the degree of complexity. Depending on the ratios of qualities in these elements, everything in the Universe exists in one or other states – solid, liquid, gaseous or in the state of plasma. (Plasma is the state of matter found at very high temperatures in nuclear reactions and inside the sun where the electrons are stripped from the atom.)
According to Tibb philosophy, of the four elements, two are light and two are heavy. Fire and air are light while earth and water are heavy. These elements are described within the context of our planet, where the earth element is in the centre of existence. In its nature it is at rest and because of its inherent weight, all other elements gravitate towards it. It is the heaviest, densest, most solid element. It is by means of the earth element that the parts of our body are fixed and held together into a compacted form. This is how our outward form is maintained.

**Earth** is naturally cold and dry, and it appears so to sight and touch, as long as it is not changed by the other elements. It retains, solidifies, condenses, coagulates, precipitates, sustains, supports, endures and attracts substances towards it.

**Water** in its natural state surrounds earth and is in turn surrounded by air. This positioning is because of its relative density. Water is cold and moist in temperament. Water is easily dispersed and assumes any shape without permanency. In the scheme of things, the addition of water allows the possibility of their being shaped and moulded and spread out. Shapes can readily be made from it and just as easily dispersed. *Moisture dispels dryness, the latter being overruled by the former.* Moisture protects dryness from crumbling (as earth, or mud) and likewise, dryness prevents moisture from dispersing. Thus the two elements of earth and water are interacting and interdependent. Water is of course absolutely essential to life. Water is the most passive, receptive element, and the greatest receiver and absorber of energy. Its properties include cooling, moistening, lubricating, dissolving, cleansing, and purifying.

**Air** is positioned in nature above both water and earth, but beneath fire. The temperament of air is hot and moist and its purpose in nature is to make things finer, lighter and more delicate and thus more able to ascend into higher spheres. When air is hot it rises and when it is cool it descends. Therefore, it is prone to both extremities and affected by the elements around it.

**Fire** is hot and dry in temperament. It is the most active, energetic and volatile element, and the greatest emitter of energy. It is light, rising and penetrating. Its role in nature is to rarefy, distil, refine, extract, digest, metabolise, transform and inter-mingle things. By its heat it has the capacity to overcome coldness of the two cold elements, earth and water, and so creates and maintains harmony among the elements.
Temperament

The overall quality of primary matter/elements that make-up any substance/object/entity, when it is in a state of equilibrium, is known as temperament.

According to Ibn Sina:

‘Temperament is defined as the new state of a matter, having a quality different from that present in the elements before coming into intermixture or combinations, which results from the action and reaction among the contrary qualities and forces present in the elements. When they are combined together, the resultant new quality, a uniform state or the state of equilibrium emerging after the combination of the different elements is called temperament.’

Or simplified as “temperament is therefore an overall quality that emerges from the interaction of the four elements (earth, water, air and fire) with their respective qualities (heat, coldness, moistness and dryness), that make-up any physical matter – in a state of equilibrium.”

2. Creation in the Universe

Physical matter progresses from fundamental particles like the quarks, through electrons and nucleons, to atoms, molecules and finally compounds. Each level of organisation has a specific temperament, and all compounds with their specific temperaments become the building blocks for all materials in existence, from minerals to plants, and from lower animals and, ultimately, to the highest, human beings. They exist in different shapes and structures, each with their unique temperament. Each level of creation has an overall temperament made up from a combination of the four qualities. The overall temperament of a human being is Hot & Moist. This is easily understood when we consider that the human body is at a temperature of 37°C (heat) and 70% water (moistness). Similarly, warm-blooded animals have an overall temperament of between Hot & Dry and Dry & Hot.

Creation, however, goes one step further. God has created living creatures with a suitable structure having an ideal temperament to perform a specific function. Birds have wings to enable them to fly and fish have fins and a tail enabling them to swim. All plants, insects, animals and man have a particular and unique structure with an assigned temperament enabling them to perform a specific function.

“If we examine any corner of the Universe, from the galaxies in space to the living beings in nature, and from our own body to the invisible cells, we see a flawless plan incorporating order, design and purpose. This order, design and purpose illustrate the perfection of creation.” [Yahya, 1999]
3. Creation of humankind

Primary matter gives rise to cells, the basic unit of all living tissues. Just as the atom is the basic unit for the outer environment, so cells are the basic unit for the inner environment for all living beings. Cells combine to form tissues, the combination of which forms organs. Ultimately from the cells, tissues and organs the overall form and function of the body is obtained. Once again each level, whether it is a cell, tissue, organ or the total human being (body, mind and soul), is assigned a specific temperament.

4. Temperament, structure and function

According to Tibb philosophy, every part of the human being has been created with a specific shape and structure in order to fulfil a specific function. For example:

- The shape of ears enhances our ability to hear.
- Our nose filter out impurities from inspired air before it enters the lungs.
- Our eyebrows prevent perspiration from entering our eyes.

When examining the geometry of our internal organs, we see many different shapes, again performing different functions, each having a specific temperament. For example, the shape of the heart facilitates...
the pumping action whereas the overall temperament of the brain is moist (with less heat), enabling
nerve impulses to be transmitted easily, because moisture is the best conductor of electrical impulses.
On the other hand, the overall temperament of the liver is hot (with less moistness), because of the
heat generated during the process of metabolism.
Delving further into the marvels of the body, we realise just how intricate the systems of the body are:
the respiratory, circulatory, immune and digestive systems, and of special significance in the context of
health and disease, the immune system. Each system working independently and yet is associated
with and interconnected to each other.
The human body is unbelievably complex, probably beyond our comprehension. It has been created
with self-regulatory, self-healing mechanisms that are under the control of physis. This governing
principle maintains the correct structure and temperament of the body and its components, in order to
perform the desired functions. Every cell, tissue and organ is in equilibrium with its characteristic
temperament, upon which its structure and functions depends.
Changes in both structure and temperament affect functions. These changes can occur from the
qualitative effects of the interaction of man and his environment. As we are part of the Universe, things
that happen outside our bodies have an influence on us. As everything in the Universe possesses
qualities, whether in the form of energy or matter, qualities are the common link within the Universe.
Panel 2: Creation of human beings

5. Ibn Sina’s interpretation on perfection of creation

In the Canon of Medicine, Ibn Sina brings a philosophical dimension of why different organs have been created with a perfect structure. He relates this to an ideal temperament, in order to perform a specific function. Changes to either temperament or structure negatively affect the function/s of anatomical structures.

Regarding structure, Ibn Sina’s description of the hand stated that:

“Metacarpals provide a concave surface that enables the hand to retain liquids and firmly surround objects”.

In his detailed anatomy of the brain and spinal column, he mentions:

“If the brain supplied all the nerves, it would be too big a burden; if all nerves arose in the brain, the nerves for the hands and feet would travel a long distance and so become exposed to greater risk of injury and damage; The nerves would also be too weak to contract and expand the heavy muscles of the leg and the thigh; The spinal cord arises from the brain like a canal from a spring so the nerves may reach both sides of the body; The source of the nerves has in this way been brought closer to the recipient organs.”

On the maintenance of temperament. Ibn Sina describes the temperament of the brain as phlegmatic, with qualities of cold and wet. “The cold quality allows the brain to work hard, and the moistness quality prevents dryness occurring in the brain’s many functions”. He also mentions that the blood flowing from the heart is hot and moist. “As the brain is cold and moist, the brain’s middle ventricles help with maturation of the blood from the heart to suit the brain’s temperament”. Similarly,
regarding maintenance of compact bones' temperament, which are made up of an outer cortical bone and a central marrow cavity. “As bones have a cold and dry temperament, the bone marrow provides moisture to counteract the dryness produced by, for instance, exercise”.

**On the functioning of organs.** Ibn Sina describes bladder function as a two-phase process which still stands in modern physiology:

> “God has created an organ similar to a cyst in the human body to remove the useless liquids (or urine). This allows urine to gradually pour into the bladder and at a necessary time, it can be completely expelled from the body. Otherwise, the human would have to urinate every minute and every hour”.

Ibn Sina describes the urethra's curvatures, and suggests that they help in preventing involuntary voiding of urine. He wrote:

> “God in his power has made a gullet-like organ to eliminate the removable liquids (urine) through the penile urethra. Thus, this organ that is similar to a water pipe is continuous from the bladder to the penile urethra and it has multiple curvatures so that the liquid material would not be expelled out suddenly and totally”.

**On the positioning of different organs.** Ibn Sina considers that the lungs help cool the heart by the process of breathing.

> “This is analogous to the wings of a bird and its body where the wings represent the lungs and the body represent the heart. As the wings flap they bring a cool breeze to the heart, so keeping it cooler”.

Similarly, he opined that: the nasal passages facilitate exchange of temperature, via air, between the brain and the external environment allowing the brain to maintain its natural temperament.

**Synopsis**

- Energy and matter are interchangeable; an intermediate ‘primary matter’ form or elements.
- The universal elements are *earth, water, air, and fire*, each characterised by two qualities.
- These give rise to cells, the basic unit for the inner environment for all living beings.
- Temperament is the overall quality that describes any substance when in equilibrium
- All creation has a unique structure and temperament, to perform specific functions.
- Ibn Sina highlights the perfection of creation within the context of temperament, structure and function.

**H. TIBB CONCEPT: QUALITIES**

Aristotle noted that everything in the Universe is made up of primary matter with corresponding qualities. The effect that qualities have on human beings, as well as on all living organisms, is an important consideration in Tibb. Whether conscious of them or not, we are constantly experiencing them and being influenced by them.

According to one dictionary:

> “Quality is a distinctive attribute or property which confers individuality”. [Cassel’s English Dictionary]

The four universal qualities are Heat, Coldness, Dryness and Moistness. In Tibb, the qualities of **Heat** and **Coldness** are said to be the **active qualities.** The qualities **Moistness** and **Dryness** are said to be the **passive qualities.**
Qualities are the common denominator of living beings. In the natural cycle these qualities move according to the natural cycle: from heat to moistness to coldness to dryness. The interaction and effect of these qualities constitutes the fundamental laws of nature such as the laws of thermodynamics, or Newton's laws of motion, or biochemistry, such as the Krebs Cycle, or the processes of catabolism and anabolism, which influence all biological systems and physical matter.

1. Interaction of qualities in nature

Their interaction in nature is shown below, where the quality of heat is opposite to the quality of coldness and moistness opposes the quality of dryness:

Important features of qualities are:

- **Opposing qualities cannot exist simultaneously.** Nothing can be hot and cold at the same time, nor moist and dry.
- **There is always a gradual transition between opposing qualities.** There is no rapid change from one extreme to another. For example, the cold of winter is never followed by the heat of summer.
- **Nature ensures a gradual transition between extreme qualities.** This minimises the negative effects of sudden change to plants, animal and man.
- **There are intermediate qualitative states.** During transition, states of hot and moist, cold and moist, cold and dry, hot and dry exist.

In Tibb philosophy, qualities form the basis of interpreting aetiology, pathology, diagnosis and treatment.
I. TIBB CONCEPT: TEMPERAMENT

Each one of us is unique. Just as we have a unique fingerprint, so we have a unique temperament. The essence of this uniqueness has been a source of fascination for thousands of years. Some have attributed the uniqueness to physiology, others to body fluids, and yet others more recently, to genes. Temperament is a term describing a person’s physical characteristics (constitution) plus his or her psychological, emotional, and spiritual attributes. It assesses personality strengths and weaknesses, and indicates the predisposition (risk factors) for particular disorders.

1. Importance of identifying temperament

The identity of a person’s temperament is a major pre-requisite when practicing Tibb. This has been highlighted by Hippocrates when he mentioned:

“It is more important to know what sort of a person has a disease than to know what sort of disease a person has” [Hippocrates]

The assessment of temperament is a major factor in healthcare in Tibb:

- **Diagnosis.** It is an essential part of Tibb diagnosis, as certain temperamental types are more prone to specific diseases.
- **Treatment.** People of a certain temperament respond better to specific Tibb therapies.
- **Recovery.** A person’s temperament is an important aspect of the success or otherwise of recovery from a disorder.

The importance of assessing a patient’s temperament in Tibb contrasts markedly with the Western medical approach, which focuses almost exclusively on diagnosing and quantifying features of the patient’s presenting disorder, with little or no attention paid to the patient’s uniqueness or individuality.

2. Temperamental types

Each person’s ideal temperament is fixed. In practice, we are all a composite mixture of the four temperament types, with a dominant temperament combined with a sub-dominant temperament. Although the number of possible temperaments is virtually infinite, Tibb has narrowed them down to the four temperamental types below:

- **Sanguinous**
- **Phlegmatic** – sometimes called *serous*
- **Melancholic** – sometimes called *atrabilious*
• **Bilious** – sometimes called *choleric*

The following poem succinctly identifies the key personality traits of the four temperamental types:

```
**God could have made us all Sanguinous.**
We would have lots of fun, but accomplish little.
He could have made us all Melancholic.
We would have been organized and chartered, but not very cheerful.
He could have made us all Bilious.
We would have been set to lead, but impatient that no one would follow!
He could have made us all Phlegmatic.
We would have had a perfect world, but not much enthusiasm for life.
**We need each temperament for the total function of**
The body. Each part should do its work to unify
**The action, and produce harmonious results.**
```

[Florence Littauer, 1985]

From this poem we realise that each of us is a combination of all four personality or temperamental types resulting in a dominance of one with a sub-dominance of another, less of the third and the least amount of the fourth temperamental type. As well as different people being divided into the four temperamental types above, each temperamental type also has a combination of *qualities* associated with it.

As mentioned earlier, the overall qualitative balance of the human being is Hot & Moist. This reflects in the human body having a temperature of around 37°C and consisting of 60-70% water. However, in this Hot & Moist category of the human being there are slight differences between each temperamental type. This is obvious – some of us feel hotter or cooler than others, and some us suffer from dry skin, or sweat less than others. Therefore, each temperamental type also has different qualities assigned to them.

- **Sanguinous** – the qualities of *Hot and Moist*
- **Phlegmatic** – the qualities of *Cold and Moist*
- **Bilious** – the qualities of *Hot and Dry*
- **Melancholic** – the qualities of *Cold and Dry*

The relationship between the four temperamental types and their associated qualities is shown below:

**Panel 3: Relationship between temperaments**
The diagram above indicates that the sanguinous temperament with qualities of Hot & Moist is opposite to the melancholic temperament with qualities of Cold & Dry. As in nature extremes do not exist together in harmony, so it is not possible for a person who is a dominant sanguinous (Hot & Moist) temperament to have a sub-dominant melancholic (Cold & Dry) temperament. What is possible is that a person who has a dominant temperament of sanguinous (Hot & Moist) may have a sub-dominant of phlegmatic or bilious temperament. Similarly, a person with a dominant phlegmatic temperament will have a sub-dominant temperament which is either sanguinous or melancholic.

3. Factors determining temperament
The calculation of temperament is based upon the following factors:

- Maternal food type and consumption during gestation.
- Date and time of birth.
- The temperaments of the parents.

Of the above three factors, the temperaments of the parents, expressed as hereditary factors, have the greatest influence.

4. Identifying temperament
Clinically, a person’s temperament can be diagnosed using the following criteria: Frame and gait (walk); complexion and skin texture; climatic preferences; food and drink; health problems; sleep patterns; speech; personality traits; emotional traits.

The table on the next page lists the above criteria with information on the four different temperamental types. The column with the most ticks will be the dominant temperament, and the sub-dominant temperament with the second most ticks. The following needs to be noted when completing the table.

- The patient’s body frame may alter due to slimming, ageing, side effects of medication (cortisone, for example) or as a result of a severe disorder such as HIV & AIDS.
- Shaking the patient’s hand can also provide valuable clues of the skin texture and the qualities associated with it. It may feel hot or cold, moist or dry.
- The personality and emotional traits are important indicators. This category should be considered for the patient under normal circumstances when he or she is not under stress. A good indicator would be how the person is perceived to be by his/her friends and family.
- Nobody fits perfectly into only one temperament; we all may have characteristics of other temperaments. However, each one will have a dominance of one and a sub-dominance of another temperament – which will be next to each other and not opposite.
Panel 4: Description of the different temperaments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>ANGUINOUS HOT &amp; MOIST</th>
<th>PHLEGMATIC COLD &amp; MOIST</th>
<th>BILIOUS HOT &amp; DRY</th>
<th>MELANCHOLIC COLD &amp; DRY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium to large frame, more muscle</td>
<td>Medium to large frame, more fat</td>
<td>Medium frame, Lean</td>
<td>Thin, bony frame (short / tall)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macho stride</td>
<td>Slow pace</td>
<td>Firm stride</td>
<td></td>
<td>Quick / Anxious pace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate to large eyes</td>
<td>Moderate to large eyes</td>
<td>Small to moderate eyes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Small eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPLEXION and SKIN TEXTURE</td>
<td>Reddish or shiny Moderate in softness and moistness, warm</td>
<td>Whitish / pale Cool, moist, soft</td>
<td>Warm, dry</td>
<td>Dry, rough, cold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLIMATIC PREFERENCES</td>
<td>Prefers cold, dry conditions Winter and Autumn</td>
<td>Prefers hot, dry conditions Summer and Spring</td>
<td>Prefers cold, moist conditions Winter and rainy weather</td>
<td>Prefers hot, moist conditions Summer and raining weather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEALTH PROBLEMS</td>
<td>Healthy appetite with a moderate to excessive thirst</td>
<td>Slow, steady appetite, low thirst, can skip meals</td>
<td>Healthy appetite, excessive thirst, cannot skip meals</td>
<td>Irregular and variable appetite and thirst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prefers cold drinks</td>
<td>Prefers hot drinks</td>
<td>Prefers cold drinks</td>
<td>Prefers hot drinks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPEECH</td>
<td>Clear, moderate to loud</td>
<td>Slow, soft</td>
<td>Sharp, talkative, loud</td>
<td>Fast, less vocal, soft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERSONALITY TRAITS</td>
<td>Persuasive, sociable, outgoing, talkative</td>
<td>Calm, accommodating, patient, good listener</td>
<td>Resourceful, outspoken, dominant, leader, may be short tempered</td>
<td>Thoughtful, logical, analytical, tend to be perfectionists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMOTIONAL TRAITS</td>
<td>Joyful, cheerful, excitable, disorganized, tends to exaggerate</td>
<td>Shy, self-contained, indecisive</td>
<td>Aggressive, angry, irritable, impatient</td>
<td>Fearful, insecure, suspicious, anxious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Identifying temperament of patients – Step-by-step procedure

- **Frame & Gait (walk):** Med to large with more muscle; macho gait – *Sanguinous*; med to large with more fat, slow gait – *Phlegmatic*; lean, firm and fast gait – *Bilious*; thin and bony (tall/short), preoccupied gait – *Melancholic*.

- **Complexion & Skin texture:** Reddish (light skin), shiny (dark skin), moderate in softness & moistness, warm – *Sanguinous*; whitish/pale, cool, moist, soft – *Phlegmatic*; warm, dry – *Bilious*; dry, rough, cold – *Melancholic*.

- **Climatic/Preferences:** Prefers cold, dry conditions; winter & autumn – *Sanguinous*; prefers hot, dry conditions; summer & spring – *Phlegmatic*; prefers cold, moist conditions; winter & rainy weather – *Bilious*; prefers hot, moist conditions; summer & rainy weather – *Melancholic*.

- **Food & Drink:** Healthy appetite - moderate to excessive thirst, prefers cold drinks – *Sanguinous*. Slow, steady appetite - low thirst, can skip meals, prefers hot drinks – *Phlegmatic*. Healthy appetite - excessive thirst, cannot skip meals, prefers cold drinks – *Bilious*. Irregular & variable appetite & thirst, prefers hot drinks – *Melancholic*.


- **Sleep patterns:** Moderate to deep, 6-8 hours – *Sanguinous*. Heavy, at least 8 hours – *Phlegmatic*. Moderate but sound, 5-6 hours – *Bilious*. Interrupted, tendency towards insomnia, 5-7 hours – *Melancholic*.


- **Personality traits:** Persuasive, sociable, outgoing, talkative – *Sanguinous*. Calm, accommodating, patient, good listener – *Phlegmatic*. Resourceful, outspoken, dominant, driver, may be short tempered – *Bilious*. Thoughtful, logical, analytical, tends to be perfectionist – *Melancholic*.


5. **Qualities associated with temperament**

Just as each person has a unique temperament, so each person has a unique ideal qualitative state in line with their temperament. Each temperamental combination has an overall dominant quality. Someone who is dominant *sanguinous* and sub-dominant *phlegmatic* will have a dominant quality of *moistness*, as this quality is common to both. This combination has less of the qualities of *heat* and *coldness*, and the least amount of *dryness*. (This also applies to a person who is dominant phlegmatic and sub-dominant sanguinous temperament-wise).
Similarly, anyone who has:

- A *bilious/melancholic* temperament has a dominant quality of *dryness*;
- A *sanguinous/bilious* temperament has a dominant quality of *heat*;
- A *phlegmatic/melancholic* temperament has a dominant quality of *coldness*.

Elaborating on the qualities of a dominant/sub-dominant temperament, the line marked X in the diagram above refers to an individual with a dominant sanguinous and sub-dominant phlegmatic temperament. This person’s ideal/overall qualitative state has a dominant quality of moistness, followed in turn by heat, then coldness, and finally the least quality of dryness.

Any change to this ideal qualitative combination has a negative influence on the individual’s health. As moistness is the dominant quality, any excess of moistness will affect this person the most, and the quickest. On the other hand, changes in the quality of dryness, which is the least quality present, will have the least effect.

### 6. Temperament and health

Everyone’s health depends on the maintenance of an ideal qualitative state, which is the unique mixture of qualities embodied in the person’s temperament. Because of the interaction of qualities between a person and the environment, there is always a continuing shift from the ideal. However, physis will adjust these changes to maintain the ideal qualitative state as required. If the person’s physis is incapable of restoring the ideal qualitative state, symptoms of a disorder will appear. The appearance of symptoms suggests that physis needs assistance in restoring a normal qualitative state.

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**Synopsis**

- Temperament is a cardinal feature of Tibb philosophy, needed for diagnosis and treatment.
- It is an overall evaluation of a person’s physique, personality, diet, lifestyle and genetic factors.
- Identified from four main temperamental types: sanguinous, phlegmatic, bilious and melancholic – a combination of dominant, and sub-dominant.
- Each temperamental combination has an ideal qualitative state with a dominance of one quality.
- Temperament provides insights into strengths, weaknesses and predisposition to illnesses conditions.
J. TIBB CONCEPT: THE HUMOURS

A key feature of Tibb is the Humoral Theory, which covers all aspects of disease: prevention, aetiology, pathology, diagnosis and treatment. Historically, the core concept of humours was originated by Hippocrates, expanded by Galen, and formalised by Ibn Sina and his medical contemporaries, who together completed the final classification, codification and application of Tibb. The theory of humours fits comfortably into the physics of primary matter or four elements (air, water, earth, and fire) and four qualities (hot, cold, dry, and moist).

1. Nature of the humours

The humours are the primary fluids that are manufactured from the digestion of food and drink, processed and transformed in the liver. Every level of organisation within the body is infused by and interconnected with the humours. A proper balance of humours ensures efficient metabolism, and prevents the build-up of toxins. Humours give rise to all constituents of the body. Also, a person’s temperament is maintained by the balance of humours within. They are the agents which form the bridge linking the microcosm of the human body to the macrocosm of the Universe. Humours are very much involved in the origin and development of a particular illness, the diagnostic principles involved, and the therapeutic approaches adopted in the healing process.

Humours have been described as:

“…those moist and fluid parts of the body which are produced after the transformation and metabolism of the aliments; they serve the function of nutrition, growth and repair; and produce energy, for the preservation of the individual and his species. A right proportion and inter-mixture (homeostasis) of them, according to the quantity and quality constitutes health, whereas an imbalance according to the quantity or quality and irregular distribution leads to disease”. [Al-Abbas]

There are four major humours, each with different qualities:

- **Blood – sanguinous** humour (Qualities: Hot and Moist)
- **Phlegm – phlegmatic** humour (Qualities: Cold and Moist)
- **Yellow bile – bilious** humour (Qualities: Hot and Dry)
- **Black bile – melancholic** humour) (Qualities: Cold and Dry)

2. Functions of the humours

The humours have three main functions:

- Maintaining the temperamental balance (qualitatively).
- Providing nutrition for the maintenance of the body’s complex structure by replacing body’s tissues.
- Provides the energy requirements for the various activities of the body.

Al-Abbas interprets the role of humours as follows.

- First, the basis of health is the right proportion and specific equilibrium (that is, homeostasis) between humours according to their quality and quantity in the internal environment. As long as this homeostasis is maintained, the body remains healthy. **This is the basis of health and preventative medicine.**
• Second, when the normal proportion and specific equilibrium of humours is altered, the internal environment reaches a state of imbalance, and thus disease develops. This is the basis of aetiology and pathology of disease.

• Third, when this distorted proportion and altered equilibrium of humours is corrected, health can be recovered. This forms the basis of treatment.

The humours can also be regarded from a more metaphysical standpoint. In his translation of the Canon of Medicine, O.C. Gruner states that:

“A humour should not be regarded as matter, but more as “an essence” or a “quasi-material” that make up the body fluids”. [O C Gruner]

The metaphysical nature of humours is similar to the four primary matters of earth, water, air and fire. Both primary matter and humours have assigned qualities which are in essence the link between energy and matter. For example, whilst humours are produced by the liver from food and drink, these also provide the primary matter component that translates into body fluids containing minerals, amino acids, hormones, enzymes, etc.

The metaphysical humours, together with the primary matters and their respective qualities, become the basis for physical matter. This ranges from organic compounds, to sub-cellular organelles, to cells, tissues, body organs, organ complexes and ultimately the human anatomy.

Gruner also states that:

“In a sense the body fluids are the meeting places of various opposing forces and/or primary matter”. [O C Gruner]

[Note: The production, features and functions of the humours are detailed in the Tibb and Pathology module.]

3. Homeostasis between temperament and humours

Just as everyone has a unique temperament, so each person has a unique humoral combination, made up of the four humours, but with a distinct overall quality. The human being is a dynamic entity interacting physically (in the form of catabolism and anabolism), intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. The humours are responsible for ensuring that the ideal qualitative state or temperament of the individual is maintained according to his/her ideal requirements.

The four humours exist in an individual in different combinations. This ensures that the overall qualitative state of the humours is in harmony with the overall qualitative state of the temperament of an individual. For example, if a person has a dominant sanguinous and sub-dominant phlegmatic temperament, the person’s overall qualitative and quantitative ratio will have an overall quality that has more moisture, then heat, then coldness and then the least, dryness. This will be ensured by an overall comparative dominance of sanguinous humour over the others in this individual. Health will only be maintained as long as the overall quality of the humours is in harmony with the overall quality of the individual’s temperament. This ideal state can be altered both qualitatively (changes in qualities of heat, coldness, moistness and dryness) and quantitatively (changes in the ratios of the humours).

[The relevance of maintaining the overall quality of the humours is described in the next chapter on Aetiology and Tibb].
The different elements, qualities, humours and temperaments can be summarised:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Air</th>
<th>Water</th>
<th>Earth</th>
<th>Fire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualities</td>
<td>Hot &amp; Moist</td>
<td>Cold &amp; Moist</td>
<td>Cold &amp; Dry</td>
<td>Hot &amp; Dry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temperaments</td>
<td>Sanguinous</td>
<td>Phlegmatic</td>
<td>Melancholic</td>
<td>Bilious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humours</td>
<td>Sanguinous</td>
<td>Phlegmatic</td>
<td>Melancholic</td>
<td>Bilious</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Synopsis**
- The four humours are sanguinous, phlegmatic, bilious and melancholic.
- Humours relate to body fluids: sanguinous (blood); phlegmatic (phlegm), bilious (yellow bile), melancholic (black bile).
- Humours are produced in the liver from food consumed, and provide nutrition and energy for the body.
- Each has characteristic qualities: sanguinous (Hot & Moist), phlegmatic (Cold & Moist), bilious (Hot & Dry), melancholic (Cold & Dry).
- Humoral theory states that everyone has an ideal humoral balance for optimum health.
- Health is the outcome of the right quantity and quality of humours within the body, and the equilibrium between them.
- Disease arises from serious imbalance in the composition of a person’s humours.

**K. TISSUES AND ORGANS**

The humours are the building blocks of the four major types of tissues – *connective tissue, muscular tissue, epithelial tissue* and *nervous tissue*, each having its specific temperament.

1. **Temperament of organs**

Organs are made from a combination of the four tissues, each of which has a specific temperament. (The dominant quality is shown in bold.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Connective tissue</th>
<th>Cold and <strong>Dry</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muscular tissue</td>
<td><strong>Dry</strong> and Hot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epithelial tissue</td>
<td><strong>Hot</strong> and Dry, to <strong>Hot</strong> and Moist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nervous tissue</td>
<td><strong>Moist</strong> and Hot, to Cold and <strong>Moist</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each organ has a specific temperament, determined according to the following criteria:
- The *ratio of the different tissues* that make up the organ. This will influence the balance of qualities.
- The *amount of blood* that supplies the organ. This will determine the heat and moisture of the organ or tissue.
- How much *movement the organ or tissue* normally undergoes. This will influence the heat and dryness of the organ or tissue.
2. Temperament of tissues and organs

The temperaments of the major organs and tissues within the body are shown in the following panel. The dominant quality is depicted in bold.

Panel 5: Temperament of body tissues and organs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organ</th>
<th>Temperament</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heart</td>
<td>Dry and Hot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liver</td>
<td>Hot and Moist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brain</td>
<td>Moist and Hot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidneys</td>
<td>Hot and Moist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lungs</td>
<td>Hot and Dry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blood</td>
<td>Hot and Moist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gall bladder</td>
<td>Dry and Hot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large intestine</td>
<td>Cold and Dry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small intestine</td>
<td>Hot and Moist, to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moist and Hot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stomach</td>
<td>Dry and Hot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urinary bladder</td>
<td>Cold and Dry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veins</td>
<td>Hot and Moist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ovaries</td>
<td>Hot and Moist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pancreas</td>
<td>Hot and Moist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urinary bladder</td>
<td>Cold and Dry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thyroid gland</td>
<td>Hot and Moist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uterus</td>
<td>Hot and Moist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lymphatic glands and vessels</td>
<td>Hot and Moist, to Moist and Hot</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Organs. These usually combine different tissues, which have their own individual temperament. Organs are divided into three groups under the control of the three main organs the heart (vital), liver (metabolic) and the brain (psychic):

- **Vital** – these are the organs of the cardiovascular and respiratory system, which are controlled by the heart
- **Metabolic** – these are the organs associated with the digestive, excretory and reproductive systems, which are controlled by the liver.
- **Psychic** – these are the organs of the central and peripheral nervous system, which are controlled by the brain.

**Synopsis**

- There are four basic types of tissue; connective, muscular, epithelial and nervous.
- Humours form the building blocks for the four major types of tissues.
- The body's main organs are linked to the vital, metabolic or psychic functions.
- Vital functions relate to the cardiovascular and respiratory systems; metabolic functions to digestive and excretory systems; and psychic to the central and peripheral nervous systems.
- Every living tissue and body organ has its own qualitative nature and specific temperament.

**L. TIBB CONCEPT: THE THREE-ORGAN THEORY**

The three organ theory (heart, liver and brain) is coherent with the Tibb understanding of the three faculties: the vital faculty, associated with the heart; the metabolic faculty, associated with the liver; and the psychic faculty associated with the brain. (See below)
The human foetus develops from three layers: the endoderm, mesoderm and the ectoderm. This corresponds to aspects of the Tibb main organ theory which is not only in keeping with modern medical science, but also brings in the concept of temperament and quality:

- **The endoderm**, or inner layer, develops into the lining of most of the gastrointestinal tract and the organs which serve it - particularly the liver, gall bladder and pancreas. According to Tibb the endoderm is linked with the liver and has a dominant quality of *heat*.
- **The mesoderm**, or middle layer, gives rise to the heart, kidneys, blood and connective tissue. According to Tibb the mesoderm is linked with the heart and has a dominant quality of *dryness*.
- **The ectoderm**, or outer layer, matures into the nervous system, skin and sense organs. According to Tibb the ectoderm it is linked with the brain and has a dominant quality of *moistness*.

The holistic nature of the human is evident early in the development of the three germinal layers of organ formation, and persists until the complete and total formation of the independent foetus. This complex integration of different systems within the body persists throughout life.

The heart, liver and brain are considered in Tibb to be completely integrated in terms of both information and energy transfer. Any imbalances or deficiencies can lead to physical or emotional disorders.

“There is complete integration amongst the main organs. Each of them is the source of preservation for the other. Thus, the preservation of the whole body depends upon the harmonious inter-linkage or integration of energies of these main organs.”  [Abu Sahil Mashi]

This concept is in line with Western medical science, which acknowledges the presence in the body of the three major self-regulatory systems – the immune, endocrine/exocrine, and nervous systems. These communicate and store information, learn from pattern recognition, and activate complex feedback processes. In addition, they communicate with each other via factors such as the cytokines. These systems are all under the control of physis.

**Panel 6: Physis, the regulator of homeostasis between the three main organs**
Synopsis

- The Three Organ Theory refers to the heart, liver and brain in relation to the vital, metabolic and psychic faculty.
- The human foetus develops from three layers: the endoderm (inner), mesoderm (middle) and the ectoderm (outer).
- Preservation of health depends on the harmonious integration of the three main organs.

M. ENERGY, FACULTIES AND FUNCTIONS

According to Tibb, the essential nature of a living entity is closely related to its function. The power of an object to behave in a certain way and produce particular effects reveals the basic nature of that object. This power is derived from the inherent wisdom within the object, and is called a faculty. However, in order for the faculties to perform their functions, energy is required.

Humours are formed in the liver from food after being ingested, digested and metabolised, with the assistance of inspired oxygen. These humours then act as nutrients for the formation, development and maintenance of cells, tissues and organs.

Metabolic energy is mainly produced by oxidative respiration. This process is an interaction between oxygen inhaled and glucose from nutrients, and the resulting formation of adenosine tri-phosphate (ATP), the so-called ‘energy currency’ of living tissue. The faculties of the body continue their functions as long as adequate energy, as ATP, remains available to the respective organs. This energy is used by the three faculties to carry out their specific, pre-determined functions.

1. Faculties and functions

Tibb has identified three basic faculties within the human body:

- **Vital faculty** – this regulates the immune system, controls muscle tissue, using the respiratory and cardiovascular systems. The seat of the vital faculty is the heart, and its characteristic quality is dryness.

- **Metabolic faculty** – this regulates the endocrine and exocrine systems, controls epithelial tissue, using the inherent attractive, retentive, digestive and repulsive capabilities. The seat of the metabolic faculty is the liver, and its characteristic quality is heat.

- **Psychic faculty** – this regulates the nervous system, controls nervous tissue and organs, using the perceptive (sensory) afferent nerves of the external senses of sight, hearing, sense, smell and touch and the internal senses of cognitive, memory, thinking, common sense and imagination. The seat of the psychic faculty is the brain, and its characteristic quality is moistness.

Tibb physicians long ago recognised these three systems, the overall quality associated with each, and the dynamic interactive homeostasis that operates between them. Although they did not have the technology to understand the interrelationship between the systems, they understood that an increase in quality (hyper) associated with any one of the systems will invariably have an opposite affect (hypo) on the other systems.
The panel below summarises the integrative nature of Tibb. It shows the relationship between the main organs, tissues, energies, faculties, functions, temperament/qualities and the three systems of the body that it regulates.

Panel 7: Tibb: a fully integrated system

2. Comparing Ibn Sina’s constitution of humans with the basic sciences

The relationship between the Tibb constitution of the human being and the basic sciences of biochemistry, anatomy and physiology can be summarised:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biochemistry</th>
<th>Anatomy</th>
<th>Physiology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary matter, temperament and humours</td>
<td>The tissues and organs of the body</td>
<td>Energies – originating from oxygen;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Faculties – the systems which make up the body;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Functions – activities, control mechanisms and interactions which take place in the body.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Synopsis

- In Tibb, the essential nature of a living structure is closely related to its function.
- Body organs typically have an appropriate temperament in order to perform specific functions.
- Complete integration exists between the energies, faculties and functions of body organs.
- There are three basic faculties in the body: vital, metabolic and psychic.
- Faculties are based on three organs: the heart (vital); the liver (metabolic); and the brain (psychic).
- Each faculty has its own dominant quality: vital (dryness), metabolic (heat), psychic (moistness).
- The vital faculty controls muscular movement and the immune system.
- The metabolic faculty controls the use of nutrition, and the endocrine system.
- The psychic faculty controls the bodily senses, voluntary muscle activity and intellectual functions.

N. TIBB CONCEPT: THE LIFESTYLE FACTORS

Tibb asserts that our way of life, daily behaviour and personal habits play a vitally important role in determining whether we are healthy, or likely to succumb to disease, or recuperate slowly or quickly from a disorder. Disease is ultimately a clear sign of our failure to assimilate and use properly the many different aspects of lifestyle. The main ones are the food we consume, the exercise we take, and the air we breathe. However, there are several other factors that are capable of influencing our health, both for better, or worse.

Tibb has identified a number of ‘Lifestyle Factors’. These were originally called the "non-naturals", because they affected the body from the outside. How we respond to these factors determines how we grow, move, think and feel. Variations in the qualities associated with the lifestyle factors, especially the diet, are the real initiators of health or disease. Ultimately the lifestyle factors are the main causes of health and disease, and affect everyone.

Tibb says that management of the lifestyle factors determines the outcome of health or disease. If well managed, good health is maintained; if poorly managed, disease results.
1. Main Lifestyle Factors in health and disease

The six main Lifestyle Factors are:

- Environmental air and breathing
- Food and drink
- Movement and rest
- Our emotional life
- Sleep and wakefulness
- Elimination and retention

The effects of the lifestyle factors are determined by changes in the qualities of heat, moistness, coldness and dryness. For example, the weather can be hot, cold, moist or dry; foods have inherent qualities within them which can be either heating or cooling; heating foods increase the metabolic rate, whereas cooling foods decrease it. Similarly, physical movement increases heat, resting confers a cooling effect, and emotions, such as anger, produce heat. Sleeping cools the person down, increasing moistness. The lifestyle factors are responsible for creating and maintaining the ideal qualitative state of humours in relation to the unique qualitative state of a person's temperament.

For health to be maintained, the lifestyle factors need to be effectively managed. This state comes under the heading of ‘hygiene’ in its widest sense (Hygeia was a daughter of Aesculapius, Greek god of health).

The above main lifestyle factors affect every person. The overall qualities of a person’s temperament need to be taken into account as to what quality and quantity of each factor is necessary to maintain the optimum balance, and the manner this can be achieved.

In Tibb, the practitioner must also personally apply the rules of good hygiene, if he or she is to assess and understand the patient correctly:

“The physician who neglects his own will hardly be thought very careful of the health of others”

[Hippocrates]

2. Other lifestyle factors

There are factors other than those above which also play a part, but may or may not apply to everyone. These are:

- Occupation or career
- Place of residence
- Exposure to toxic substances
- Exposure to pathogenic organisms
- Age, gender
- Personal habits and hygiene
Synopsis

- The major lifestyle factors are: environmental air & breathing, food & drink, movement & rest, sleep & wakefulness, emotional state, and elimination & retention.
- There are a number of minor ones such as climate, nature of occupation, and exposure to environmental toxins. All are interpreted within the context of qualities.
- Excessive variations in qualities associated with lifestyle factors, especially food, breathing and activity, influence health or disease.
- For optimum health to be established, all major lifestyle factors need to be in harmony.

O. THE AXIOMATIC CONNECTION

1. Relationships

The scheme below shows the inter-connection between temperament, humours, the lifestyle factors and physis. Although someone’s temperament is fixed, the humours fluctuate constantly from changes to diet and other aspects of lifestyle such as sleep, physical activity, breathing efficiency and stress levels. This dynamic relationship influences the humoral balance qualitatively, with physis constantly striving to restore homeostasis. The inability of physis to restore homeostasis inevitably leads to a pathological process that eventually manifests as a clinical disorder.

The lifestyle factors have a critical role in maintaining the overall qualitative state of an individual’s humours in relation to his/her temperament. For the maintenance of health, the rule to remember is that an excess of the dominant quality associated with an individual’s temperament will negatively affect this person the fastest and the most – health promotion is to ensure that lifestyle factors exert opposite qualities to the dominant quality of an individual is required.

However, of the four qualities exerted by the lifestyle factors, two qualities are of supreme importance in the body – heat and moisture. This is because the human body has two important features. Firstly, as mentioned previously, it contains a large amount of water – up to 70%, present in the blood vessels, between the tissues, or in the cells themselves. This high proportion of water is necessary in order to let the many biological processes to take place. The body’s water amount is strictly controlled. Too little
fluid can lead to dehydration, and too much can lead to oedema. Also, without moisture the body would become overheated. Disturbances in the body’s water composition can lead to serious health problems. Secondly, the human body has a normal temperature of around 37°, which is maintained by physis in a very narrow range. This temperature is necessary for the myriad of enzymatic reactions essential for life. Too high a temperature, will result in damage to the body’s metabolism and structures; too low and hypothermia will develop. Both of these extremes are potentially life-threatening. The body works best at this temperature. As a result of the above features, the dominant qualities in human beings are not surprisingly, heat and moistness. Heat is obtained in the body mainly from the metabolic energy locked into food, from physical activity, and from the environment. Moistness in the body is obtained mainly from food and drink; so these two factors are immensely important in Tibb’s approach to both health maintenance and the treatment of disorders.

The other qualities have a minor role, mainly because coldness and dryness do not support life. In order to achieve good health, it is necessary to maintain homeostasis between all the qualities. The body’s state of equilibrium of the two main qualities (heat and moistness) is fundamental to a person’s state of health. This equilibrium is not rigidly fixed, but varies throughout the day and changes with food intake, physical activities, elimination of toxins, etc. It is therefore important to maintain these two qualities within strict boundaries or limits through suitable lifestyle choices whenever possible. In addition, these two qualities are mutually supportive, being intimately related within the body. Heat prevents moisture from changing excessively, and this avoids it corrupting the metabolic activities and body structures. A person’s body needs the correct amount of moisture balanced with heat to ensure good health.

“Health, stability and the body’s state of equilibrium are regulated through moisture which opposes the heat. Each of the two qualities upholds the other, and the body is upheld by them both. When one of them exceeds the other, the body becomes indisposed accordingly”. [Ibn Jawziyya]

2. Hippocrates and pepsis

The interaction between an individual and the environment can be interpreted within the Hippocratic principles of pepsis. Hippocrates firmly believed in the interaction of living organisms, including human beings, with the external environment. He felt that we take from the environment the nutrients and other factors which help us grow, develop and survive, and return to the environment the waste products rejected by the body. Our efficient interaction with the environment and the ability to effectively ‘digest’ the environment constitutes health. According to Hippocrates, disease is as a result of the difficulty in the digestion or ‘pepsis’, of the environment, by the organism. His term of dyspepsia is still used today. However, the understanding of ‘dyspepsia’ by Hippocrates extended beyond the inability to digest food and drink but extended to the effective digestion of the total environment in a state of complete harmony – which includes the lifestyle factors.
Our personal health reflects the extent to which this interaction is successful; if we fail to derive adequate nutrition from our environment, then we will fail to thrive. Also, if we are inefficient in rejecting unwanted, waste products, then our very survival will be threatened by a build-up of toxic materials. Disease is invariably the result of our failure to assimilate and eliminate the environment – the Tibb lifestyle factors effectively.

3. Lifestyle Factors in health promotion and in illness management.

A brief overview on the role of lifestyle factors in both health promotion and in the management of illnesses is mentioned below.

Health promotion. Identifying the dominant quality of an individual’s temperament is absolutely essential in health promotion. As previously mentioned a person with a sanguinous/phlegmatic temperamental combination will have an overall quality of moistness. Research has indicated that for this individual lifestyle factors that will increase the qualities of moistness (such as moist foods, humid weather etc.) will be detrimental to this person’s health, whereas lifestyle factors that will increase dryness will be most suitable for this person.

Similarly, a person with a bilious/sanguinous temperamental combination, with an overall quality of heat will be negatively affected by hot spicy foods/strenuous exercises. As mentioned earlier, an excess of the dominant quality associated with an individual’s temperament will negatively affect the person the fastest and the most. Therefore, health promotion is to ensure that lifestyle factors exert opposite qualities to the dominant quality of an individual is required.

Illness management. Tibb interprets the signs and symptoms/illness conditions also within the context of qualities. Colds and flu, for example, are linked to the qualities of coldness and moistness, and osteoarthritis to coldness and dryness. Management of Lifestyle Factors opposite to the qualities linked to the disorder addresses both symptoms and its underlying causes, thereby assisting physis in restoring humoral balance – homeostasis.

Synopsis

- Hippocrates affirmed a constant and strong interaction of living organisms, including human beings, with the external environment.
- There is strong connectivity between temperament, humours, the lifestyle factors and physis.
- Although temperament is fixed, humours fluctuate due to changes in lifestyle, e.g. nutrition.
- Most disease arise from poor lifestyle management – pepsis (digestion) of the environment.
- Physis’ failure to restore homeostasis leads to the onset of a pathological process.
- Identifying someone’s temperament is absolutely essential in promoting optimum health.
- Lifestyle factors counteracting the person’s dominant quality enhance health.
- Lifestyle factors increasing the person’s dominant quality are detrimental to health.
- Tibb treatments ensure lifestyle factors exert opposite quality/ies to S&S/illness conditions.
P. HOLISM IN TIBB - THE WHEEL OF LIFE

The Wheel of Life offers a glimpse of the exquisite complexity of the human being – from single cells to tissues, organs, electrolytes, enzymes, hormones, neurotransmitters, etc. It also illustrates the comprehensive understanding of the relationship between the human and the environment, and the role physis plays in maintaining homeostasis between them. The Wheel of Life emphasises the need for a holistic, integrated approach which recognises every component and respects physis in the maintenance of health and the alleviation or curing of disease.

Whilst other disciplines such as Chinese Medicine and Ayurveda focus on the effect of energetics, the Tibb temperamental and humoral theories allows for a different understanding of the relationship between cosmic energy and the biochemistry of the body.

Panel 8: Wheel of Life; Microcosm to Macrocosm

Q. TIBB: A SCIENCE OF MEDICINE, THE ART OF CARE

Tibb medicine can be described succinctly as:

“A Science of Medicine, the Art of Care”.

It is a Science of Medicine because it is based on the principles of cause and effect, the foundation of which was established by Hippocrates. He made the momentous break from the previous magical and superstitious attitude to disease, to a theory and practice of medicine based on scientific principles.

It is the Art of Care because the Tibb philosophical principles of physis, temperament, humours, the lifestyle factors and qualities provide a comprehensive understanding that supports healthcare professionals in health maintenance as well as in the treatment of disease.
MODULE REVIEW

**General.** Tibb is not a newly emerging or esoteric form of healthcare, but as a major form of traditional medicine which extends back many centuries to ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome and Persia. In Tibb, health is present when the body's functions maintain a correct balance of temperaments, structure and functions. A disease is an abnormal condition which produces a functional disorder as a primary consequence. Disease is an expression of a temperamental imbalance, humoral imbalance or a disorder of tissue structure. In many ways Tibb is the foundation of present-day, Western medicine, and was the main healing paradigm. The main therapies employed in Tibb are dietotherapy, herbal medication, somatic balancing and lifestyle amelioration. All Tibb therapy encourages inner healing. It treats the symptoms troubling the patient initially, and then addresses the underlying causes of disease. Tibb is well suited to being combined with Western medicine, in the form of Integrative Medicine.

**Physis.** The term physician is derived from the word ‘phys’ Its role is to ensure that optimum health is maintained. Physis has a predominant role in the body's survival, self-healing and self-repair processes, and actively counteracts influences which lead to infection, infestation, injury and disease. This inherent vital life force helps to maintain equilibrium or harmony within the inner environment, or microcosm, so allowing the proper functioning of the living organism. In addition, it regulates the reservoir of energy which is the driving force behind maintaining homeostasis in the myriad of complex processes we recognise as life. It is the origin of movement and rest. In Tibb, physis is not only respected but actively supported; otherwise the healing process is unlikely to be successful. When disease does manifest, physis always directs the healing processes in specific ways. Treatment by the Tibb practitioner is imposed from outside, whereas actual healing is achieved from within.

**Temperament.** This concept is one of Tibb's major axioms. Temperament is the quality that emerges from the interaction of the four primary qualities – Heat, Coldness, Moistness and Dryness – when these qualities have attained a state of equilibrium. A person's temperament is
maintained by the humours. It is a combination of a person’s physical, mental, emotional and spiritual attributes. Everyone has a unique temperament, with corresponding qualities. In Tibb, the four main temperaments are sanguinous, phlegmatic, bilious and melancholic. A person is generally a mixture of two basic temperaments; a dominant, and a sub-dominant. The temperament of a specific organ is determined by: (a) the ratio of different tissues it contains; (b) its blood supply; and (c) its functional mobility.

**Qualities.** The four qualities identified by Aristotle and developed by Ibn Sine are Heat, Coldness, Moistness and Dryness. A person’s optimum health depends on the maintenance of an ideal qualitative state, a unique combination of qualities embodied in the person’s temperament. There are constant changes to different quality composition due to the dynamic interaction between the person and the environment. Physis is responsible for actively counteracting these changes, in order to maintain the person’s ideal qualitative state. If the person’s physis is incapable of restoring the ideal qualitative state, signs and symptoms of a particular disorder will begin to appear. In Tibb, the appearance of symptoms suggests that physis needs assistance in restoring a normal qualitative state.

**Humours.** In Tibb there are four humours: Sanguinous, Phlegmatic, Bilious and Melancholic. These are associated with body fluids: sanguinous – blood; phlegmatic – phlegm, or mucus; bilious – yellow bile; melancholic – black bile. Each humour has its own characteristic qualities. The sanguinous humour is Hot & Moist; the phlegmatic humour is Cold & Moist; the bilious humour is Hot & Dry; and the melancholic humour is Cold & Dry. The humours are involved in providing nutrition and energy for the body. An important function is to maintain the individual’s ideal qualitative state, associated with the person’s temperament. Health is the outcome of the correct quantity and quality of humours within the body, the equilibrium between them, and the person’s temperament. Disease arises from imbalances in the composition of the humours.

**Faculties.** Tibb recognises three basic faculties in the body – Vital, Metabolic and Psychic. Each faculty has its characteristic dominant quality: vital (dryness), metabolic (heat), psychic (moistness). The faculties are based on three organs: the heart (vital); the liver (metabolic); and the brain (psychic). The Vital faculty controls muscular movement and the immune system. The Metabolic faculty controls digestion and assimilation, and the glandular system. The Psychic faculty controls the bodily senses, voluntary muscle activity and intellectual functions.

**Lifestyle Factors.** Tibb focuses on the relationship between the individual human being (microcosm) and the external environment (macrocosm). The main lifestyle factors are environmental air & breathing, food & drink, movement & rest, sleep & wakefulness, emotions, and elimination & retention. Variations in the qualities associated with the lifestyle factors (especially food and drink) are the underlying stimulus to the maintenance of health or the onset of disease.

**Energy.** There is complete integration between the energies, faculties and functions of the human body. The food and drink that we consume provides the primary matter for the
production of humours, a process influenced by the interaction between the body and the
environment. Energy is produced from the interaction of oxygen from the air and humours. The
humours form tissues, which combine to form the organs of the body. The organs produced
form a structure with an appropriate temperament, in order to perform specific functions.

Holism. Tibb recognises that the human being is an unbelievably complex living being, and
that the body, the mind and the spirit are interconnected. Tibb takes a holistic approach to
healing through restoration of balance to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects
of the person. It deals with the whole patient, rather than with a particular organ or tissue, or
just with the symptoms of a disease. Tibb’s view of the holistic approach to health and disease
is illustrated in the Wheel of Life, which inter-relates the many functions in terms of their
structures, functions and qualities in the context of the person’s microcosm and macrocosm.

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