

LETTER TO EDITOR

The Roots of Uterine Tubes Discovery in Medieval Persia

Dear Editor,

As we know, Gabriele Falloppio (1523-1562), better known by his Latin name “Fallopius” was an Italian anatomist of the sixteenth century. He is credited for the discovery of the uterine tube which is now known as fallopian tube in his honor (Bayraktar, Chatzioglou and Gayretli, 2022, pp. 1445-1447). Although the fallopian tube had been described earlier by the ancient Greek physician Galen, Fallopius is credited as the first to elucidate its function and mentioned it as the trumpets of the uterus. (Öncel, 2016, pp. 123-126) Fallopio declared the Fallopian tube as a separate organ that connects the uterine cornu to the ovary and because of its similarity to the trum-

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pet, the classical musical instrument, he coined the term “tuba uteri”. (Thiery, 2009, pp. 93–95)

Although Gabriele Falloppio’s contribution to the understanding of the uterine tube is undoubtedly significant, a historical review reveals that its function was recognized even earlier by Medieval Persian scientists. One of these figures in the history of Persian medicine is Sayyed Ismail ibn Hasan (1042–1137 AD), also referred to as Jorjani. He wrote the book *Zakhireh Khwarazmshahi* (The Treasure of the Kharazmshah) which is known as the most comprehensive medical encyclopedia written in the medieval era. It is considered the most inclusive work in the Persian language (Sharifi et al., 2016, pp. 225-228). In this book, Jorjani described the fallopian tubes as follows: “In women, these ducts are like two horns inclined from ovaries to the pelvis. It is bent like a horn that back of the bend is towards the pelvis while the front of it, is toward the uterus so that female’s semen can enter the uterus through it” (Jorjani, 2012, pp. 161-162). Jorjani has described the uterine tubes in another manuscript (*Al-Aghraz-o-Tebbiah*) and once again has emphasized the horn-like shape of this tube and its function as a transmission pathway for female’s semen from the ovary to the uterus (Jorjani, 1966, p. 99). Although influenced by the earlier works of Avicenna, Jorjani made important contributions to the field of medicine, particularly in understanding the female reproductive system (Sharifi et al., 2016, pp. 225-228).

Although several medieval Persian scientists, such as Avicenna (980-1037 AD) in *Al-Qanon fi-al-tebb* (the Canon of Medicine), Masihi (1060 AD) in *Al-Meah fi al-Tebb* and Rhzes (925 AD) in *Al-Mansouri fi al-Tebb* described the anatomy of the uterus and uterine tubes (Avicenna, 2005, p. 435; Masihi, 2005, p. 68; Rhazes, 1988, p. 77). Jorjani’s description of the anatomy and particularly the function of the uterine tubes stands out for its precision and eloquence.

It is widely acknowledged that the Canon of Medicine, a seminal work by the renowned physician Avicenna, was taught in Italian medical schools during the 16th century, which coincided with Gabriele Falloppio’s lifetime. The Canon of Medicine was highly regarded within the medical circles of that era (Mostafavi, Naseri, and Saeedi, 2012, p. 342). In 16th-century, the books of Hippocrates (370-460 BC) and Galen (129-200 AD), as well as translated works of Muslim physicians like Avicenna, were studied and analyzed in medical schools of Italy (Öncel, 2016, pp. 123-126). Notably, Persian medical



books from that time reveal a clear understanding of the uterine tubes and their functions among Persian physicians (Mostafavi, Naseri, and Saeedi, 2012, p. 342). Given the evidence, it appears that the discovery of the uterine tubes can be credited to earlier scientists whose work predates those of Fallopio. The availability of medieval Persian medical textbooks in Italy suggests that Fallopio may have been influenced by this body of knowledge when writing about the female reproductive anatomy

Authors' Contribution

Najmeh Dehparvar collected the data and prepared the initial and the final version of article; Farzaneh Ghaffari helped in data collection; Arman Zargaran revised the article and edited it; Mohsen Naseri gave the initial idea of writing this article. All authors read and approved the final version of the work.

Conflict of Interest

None.

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