

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Azodi Hospital and University in Shiraz (10th – 14th Century AD)

Abstract

Hospitals have a long history throughout the history of medicine. First hospitals are originated from Persia in ancient times in the Sassanid Dynasty (2nd to 6th century AD). After the advent of Islam in Persia (Iran) in 637 AD, medical knowledge and also hospitals were flourished and advanced by Persian scholars. Shiraz Azodi hospital and University was one of the important hospitals in Persia. This hospital was built under the order of *Azod od-Dowleh Panah (Fana) Khusraw* in 971-973 AD in Shiraz. It had a great library, belonging to the university. A number of important physicians of the time Such as Haly Abbas were in practice at this hospital. The last report about this hospital dates back to 14th century. Azodi hospital and University were valuable scientific centers in Shiraz. The status of this medical center shows the close connection between medical education and therapy.

Key words: Azodi Hospital, Shiraz, History of Medicine, Persia

Received: 26 Jan 2012; Accepted: 25 Apr 2012; Online published: 28 April 2012

Research on History of Medicine/ 2012 May; 1(2): 37-40

Introduction

Hospitals have a long history throughout the history of medicine. First hospitals are originated from Persia in ancient times in the Sassanid Dynasty (2nd to 6th century AD).¹ After the advent of Islam in Persia (Iran) in 637 AD, medical knowledge and also hospitals were flourished

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1- Modanlou, 2011: 236-39.



and advanced by Persian scholars.^{2,3} On the other hand, Fars province was a political as well as scientific center of Iran from at least 500 BC. The *Parseh* medical center, as an educational and therapeutic center, was founded in this era in the Achaemenid Empire.^{4,5} In the Islamic era, Shiraz flourished scientifically and hence was called “*Dar al Elm*” (The house of science).⁶ In this era, many important medical centers were built in this city and great scholars worked there. In this study, Azodi hospital and University, as one of the important medical centers in Iran, is introduced.

History of Azodi hospital and university

Azodi hospital was built under the order of *Azod od-Dowleh Panah (Fana) Khusraw* in 971-973 AD in Shiraz.⁷ *Azod od-Dowleh* (936-983 AD) was the great king (emir) of Buyid dynasty in Iran. He also built another hospital with the same name (Azodi hospital) in Baghdad (979AD).⁸ A large number of physicians, nurses and staffs worked at Azodi hospital.⁹ This hospital belonged to the University of the City (Shiraz) in which many branches of science, such as philosophy, astronomy, medicine, chemistry (alchemy) and mathematics, were taught.¹⁰ In addition a great library, belonging to the university, was built near the king’s palace. Mohammad ibn Ahmad Moghaddasi, the historian in 10th century mentioned: “*any book in all the science branches were not written unless a copy of those are sent to this library*”.¹¹

Owing to the large endowments devoted to Azodi hospital, patient were treated free of charge.¹² After the dynasty of Buyid, although it was still a great hospital, its activities reduced to some extent until 1100 AD.¹³ According to *Shiraznameh*, written by *Shahab al Din abi al Kheir Zarkoub Shirazi* in 1364 AD, the hospital functioned as an important health institution until the 14th century.¹⁴

A number of important physicians of the time were in practice at this hospital. *Ali Ebn Al-Abbas-al-Majusi* (Haly Abbas) was one of the greatest Persian physicians working there in the 10th century (930–994 AD). He was the special physician of *Azod od-Dowleh*.¹⁵ His great manuscript entitled *al-Maleki* (Royal Book) was one of the greatest medical textbooks in the medieval times. This book was translated into Latin by Stephen of Antioch in 1127.¹⁶ *Abu Sahl Arrejani* (died in 1027) and *Abolala Farsi* (died in 990) were two other physicians who worked in this hospital whose names were remained in the history.¹⁷

Conclusion:

Azodi hospital was in Shiraz, the center of Fars province. Fars province in general and Shiraz in particular, were important Middle Eastern medical centers in the medieval period. It introduced an especial doctrine in medicine and gave house to many famous physicians thorough the history.¹⁸ Azodi hospital and University were valuable centers in this city and had an important role in promoting that doctrine. The status of this medical center shows the close connection between medical education and therapy. On the other hand, the importance of health care, medical ethics and science can be seen clearly in the Shiraz. Developed University with various fields of study, advanced free of charge hospital and finally the huge library in a unique complex are valuable evidences to prove this fact.

- 2- Zargaran et al, 2012: 389-390.
- 3- Tajbakhsh, 2000.
- 4- Zargaran et al, 2011: 103-110.
- 5- Christensen, 2005.
- 6- Mahallati Shirazi, 1962.
- 7- Tajbakhsh, 2000: 92.
- 8- Ibid: 37.
- 9- Abu Abdollah Mohammad ibn Ahmad Moghaddasi, 1982: 642.
- 10- Elgood, 2007: 201.
- 11- Abu Abdollah Mohammad ibn Ahmad Moghaddasi, 1982: 668.
- 12- Tajbakhsh, 2000: 92.
- 13- Ibn Balkhi, 1964: 174.
- 14- Shahab al Din abi al Kheir Zarkoub Shirazi, 1961: 51.
- 15- Ahmadzadeh et al, 2012: 121-9.
- 16- Aciduman et al, 2010: 1466-74.
- 17- Tajbakhsh, 2000: 96-7.
- 18- Golshani, 2012: 17-19.



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A view of PERSEPOLIS, ancient capital of Iran in Fars province, Achaemenid Empire (550-330BC.)

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