



## Hijamah: An Exploration of Hadith on Health Benefits

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### Abstract

Hijamah or cupping therapy is one of the most recognized medical practices in the Islamic tradition, with deep historical roots in the practice of the Prophet Muhammad. Research on hijamah often integrates medical and spiritual dimensions; with this in mind, the analysis of Hadiths referring to hijamah includes recommendations and praise for the practice, as reported in several hadiths, including Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim. This study used a qualitative method using thematic hadith and a grounded theory approach. Hadith are essential to understanding the basis and validity of this practice. The results of this study can provide moral guidance and highlight the importance of balance, cleanliness, and commitment to religious teachings in achieving a social status in accordance with Islamic values.

**Keywords:** Hijamah, health, Hadith, Thematic Hadith

### Abstrak

Hijamah atau terapi bekam adalah salah satu praktik medis yang paling dikenal dalam tradisi Islam, dengan akar sejarah yang mendalam dalam kebiasaan Nabi Muhammad. Penelitian tentang hijamah sering kali mengintegrasikan dimensi medis dan spiritual; dengan pemikiran ini, analisis Hadis-hadis yang merujuk pada hijamah mencakup rekomendasi dan pujian untuk praktik tersebut, sebagaimana dilaporkan dalam beberapa hadis, termasuk Sahih al-Bukhari dan Sahih Muslim. Penelitian ini

menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan menggunakan hadis tematik dan pendekatan grounded theory. Hadis sangat penting untuk memahami dasar dan keabsahan praktik ini. Hasil penelitian ini dapat memberikan tuntunan moral dan menyoroti pentingnya keseimbangan, kebersihan, dan komitmen terhadap ajaran agama dalam mencapai status sosial yang sesuai dengan nilai-nilai Islam.

**Kata kunci:** Hijamah, kesehatan, Hadis, Hadis Tematik

## Introduction

Within the treasury of Islamic medicine, hijamah or cupping occupies a unique position, not only as a traditional practice that has been inherited, but also as an act mentioned in various hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. (Nusantara 2024) This practice involves the extraction of a small amount of blood from the surface of the skin using special tools, with therapeutic as well as preventive aims. Interest in hijamah has resurfaced along with increasing public awareness of complementary and alternative medicine methods, as well as a desire to understand the religious basis of certain health practices. Therefore, an in-depth exploration of the hadith related to hijamah becomes crucial for understanding the Islamic perspective on its health benefits. Health is not only about being free from physical, mental, or social problems. More than that, health is a state of well-being in terms of spirit, body, and social aspects that enables a person to live productively, both in social interactions and in economic activities. In other words, health is an important capital for society to live productively and contribute. Therefore, various health efforts are aimed at achieving an adequate level of public health so that each individual can lead a productive life. (Andriyani 2019:179)

Hijamah is related to the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, which is the primary source of Islamic teachings after the Al-Qur'an, including guidance on health and medicine. Various narrations mention the practice of hijamah, and the training and practice of cupping have attracted the interest of many doctors after various scientific studies in different countries around the world have shown the effectiveness of this traditional therapy approach in treating and alleviating various diseases. (Widada et al. 2023) Especially because cupping holds a special position in the tradition of the Prophet's medicine, to the extent that it is given a specific significance in several hadith. (Malik 2015) Although hijamah, as a complementary therapy, has the potential to improve health, it is important to understand that hijamah cannot stand alone as a solution to address the entire spectrum of diseases. (Suharmanto 2023:1618) Its indications for use cover various ailments, as

well as recommendations to perform it at specific times. However, not all hadith possess the same level of authenticity, thus requiring a careful study of hadith science to categorize and analyze their validity and meaning.

Integrating complementary therapies into a holistic approach alongside conventional medicine can be a more effective way to address various health conditions. Evidence from several medical studies suggests that the cupping technique has the ability to treat metabolic disorders arising from the narrowing of blood vessels or an increase in red blood cells, as well as relieve joint pain and other serious illnesses. Furthermore, there is a view that cupping works by removing toxins and damaged blood cells due to the influence of free radicals.(Ningsih, Wismanadi, and Siantoro 2016:137) Free radicals can prolong the lifespan of blood cells but impair their function, thus disrupting the body. These damaged cells accumulate in the skin because they do not die, so cupping is used to forcibly remove them and stimulate the bone marrow to produce new, healthier blood cells.(Malik 2015)

Cupping therapy has a long and deep history. Records of cupping practices have been found on papyrus scrolls from ancient Egypt. The ancient Greeks also used this method, which was later adopted by the Arabs and recommended by the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Subsequently, cupping spread to various parts of the world, including the European continent. This indicates that cupping is a common treatment method in the historical records of global medicine. As one of the oldest forms of therapy, the exact origins of cupping are difficult to determine due to the lack of clear data regarding the inventor or the first nation to practice it. However, the practice of cupping was primarily used in the Middle East and the West. It is said that cupping was first used by the Egyptians, as evidenced by the Ebers Papyrus dating from around the year 1550 SM.(Qurota Aini, Oktavia, and Widada n.d.:45) In another view, cupping was also practiced by the Sumerians around 4000 BC, which then spread to Babylonia, Saba, Persia, and also to Egypt.(Khaleda 2019)

Naddiah Thayyarah quotes Ibn Qayyim stating that cupping is more effective in cleansing the outer parts of the body compared to phlebotomy (drawing blood through an opened blood vessel), while phlebotomy is more beneficial for the deeper parts of the body. Cupping is also considered more suitable for children and individuals who cannot undergo phlebotomy. Furthermore, cupping can prevent diseases such as hypertension, heart conditions, and lung problems. Prophet Muhammad SAW himself recommended cupping as a good method of treatment, saying that the best of servants are those who perform cupping because of its benefits in removing impure blood, relaxing stiff muscles, and sharpening vision. In relation to this, the practice of Hijamah (cupping) is currently emerging in many

places in Indonesia. It is claimed that Hijamah is the Prophet's way of treatment, a sunnah that Muslims want to revive due to the many hadith that discuss it.

Some written works that examine cupping include: first, an article written by Hakmi Hidayat regarding "Cupping Therapy (Hijamah) in Islamic and Medical Perspectives" from the State Islamic University of Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang in 2022. This article discusses hijamah (cupping) with an understanding of the Al-Qur'an and medical experts, and aims to explore the history of cupping until it became a form of health therapy, as well as the views from Islamic and medical perspectives on cupping therapy using a literature study.(Hidayat et al. 2022) whereas this article discusses hijamah with hadith using a grounded theory approach. Second, a thesis written by Syahrul Muharram entitled "Factors Influencing Public Attitude in Choosing Cupping Alternative Medicine" from the State Islamic University of Alauddin Makassar in 2017. This thesis discusses the factors of cupping that influence public attitude towards the alternative healing method of cupping.(Muharram 2017) whereas this article focuses its research on hijamah from the perspective of hadith using thematic hadith. Third, a journal written by Muhammad Qustulani entitled "Analysis of the debate on hadith regarding cupping while fasting and its significance to the status of fiqh law from the perspective of the imams of the madhhab" in 2016. This journal discusses the controversy surrounding hadith about cupping while fasting, specifically whether it invalidates the fast or not.(Qustulani 2016) This article explains the benefits of hijamah with hadith using the grounded theory method. There are many other scientific works that generally discuss cupping from a health science perspective. Hijamah, as a form of traditional medicine, has attracted increasing interest from the scientific community. Although many questions remain unanswered, existing research offers hope that hijamah can be a beneficial therapeutic option for some people. With the support of ongoing research and the development of better practice standards, we can maximize the potential benefits of this therapy.

From the descriptions outlined above, the author is interested in researching and deeply examining this phenomenon, namely **"Hijamah: An Exploration of Hadith on Health Benefits."**

## **Method**

This research employs a qualitative approach that aims to explain and explore the health benefits of hijamah treatment, with primary data sources in the form of hadith books from the online digital hadith library Maktabah Syamilah, and the original sources of the Kutub Sittah (the six canonical hadith collections).

Secondary sources consist of writings related to hijamah. The data collection technique used is library research. This study utilizes a contemporary thematic hadith collection method by gathering hadith related to the discussed theme, and the Grounded Theory method by continuously analyzing data while data in the field is still being collected. The next process is open coding, which is part of the data analysis, where the researcher identifies, names, categorizes, and elaborates on the hadith found in the hadith books and their relevance to hijamah treatment. Following this is axial coding. This stage involves connecting the various research categories in the form of property arrangements by linking codes, and it represents a combination of inductive and deductive reasoning. (Walidin, Saifullah, and Tabrani 2015)

## Result

The results of this research are part of the method used in this study. That is, it focuses on data obtained from the research by categorizing and elaborating on the hadith found in the hadith books and their relevance to the concept of Hijamah: An Exploration of Hadith on Health Benefits.

Table 1. Themes of Hadith (see hadith details: [ebook hadith](#))

No	Kode Final / <i>Caption Hadiths</i>	Hadith Data
A	Definition of Hijamah The virtue of Hijamah and Hijamah as the best remedy	Ahmad – 20096 Sunan Abu Dawud -3857 Bukhori – 5681 Jami' at-Tirmidzi – 2053
B	Recommended times for performing hijamah	
1	Good dates for performing hijamah	Jami' at-Tirmidzi – 2053 Ibnu Majah – 3488
2	Days when hijamah is not permitted	Sunan Ibnu Majah – 3488 Jami' At-Tirmidzi 839 Sunan Abu Dawud – 3364
C	Health benefits of hijamah	
1	Treating all illnesses	Shahih Bukhori – 5264
2	Helping to eliminate impure blood, relieve back pain, and clarify vision	Sunan Ibnu Majah -3478
3	Increasing Mental Strength	Sunan Ibnu Majah -3478

Based on Table 1: Themes of Hadith above, the hadith review regarding Hijamah: An Exploration of Hadith on Health Benefits indicates the following:

## Discussion

### Definition and Virtue of Hijamah

Some of the hadith related to the definition of hijamah include the following:

➤ هَذَا مِنْ خَيْرِ مَا تَدَاوَى بِهِ النَّاسُ (Ibn Ḥanbal, 2001, vol.19 p.373)

(This is the best form of medical therapy for humankind.)

➤ إِنْ كَانَ فِي شَيْءٍ مِمَّا تَدَاوَيْتُمْ بِهِ خَيْرٌ فَالْحِجَامَةُ (Abū Dāwud, 2009, vol. 19 p.374)

(If there is anything better for you to use for treatment, then that thing is cupping.)

➤ الشِّفَاءُ فِي ثَلَاثَةِ شَرَبَةِ عَسَلٍ وَشَرْطَةِ مِحْجَمٍ وَكَيْتَةِ نَارٍ وَأَنْهَى أُمَّتِي عَنِ الْكَيِّ (Bukhāriy 1422:7 p.123)

(The treatment therapy consists of three methods: drinking honey, cupping, and cauterization (applying hot iron to the injured area))

➤ نِعَمَ الْعَبْدُ الْحِجَامُ يُذْهِبُ الدَّمَ وَيُخَفِّفُ الصُّلْبَ وَيَجْلُو عَنِ الْبَصَرِ (Tirmiziyy 1996:19 p.379)

(The best of servants are cuppers, they remove blood, lighten the back, and sharpen the eyesight.)

➤ حِينَ عُرِجَ بِهِ مَا مَرَّ عَلَى مَلَأٍ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ إِلَّا قَالُوا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحِجَامَةِ (Tirmiziyy 1996:19 p.379)

(Indeed, when the Prophet shallallahu 'alaihi wasallam ascended (was raised by Allah to the heavens), he did not pass by any angel except that they said, "You should perform cupping.")

The Hadith of Prophet Muhammad SAW stating that "the best of remedies is hijamah" has garnered widespread attention from both religious and health perspectives. Hijamah, also known as cupping, is a traditional treatment method involving the extraction of blood through small incisions in the skin. This hadith indicates a strong recommendation from the Messenger of Allah SAW for hijamah as one of the effective ways of treatment. This hadith about cupping implies the profound understanding of Prophet Muhammad SAW regarding health and medicine. He not only recommended cupping but also provided guidance on the ideal times and places to perform it, signifying that hijamah is not merely a tradition but has a strong foundation.

The term "hijamah" is also known as cupping therapy or glass therapy, specifically referring to dry cupping. When associated with Arab tradition or Muslims, this therapy can be referred to as Islamic cupping therapy, referring to the method of treatment performed by Prophet Muhammad SAW. The term "bloodletting" or "blood suction" is used to describe wet cupping, which aims to remove blood that is considered damaged. The combination of dry cupping and wet cupping can be called cupping and bloodletting therapy. In addition, to refer to needling cupping, the term glass therapy with incision or prick surgery can be used. In general, there are two main types of cupping with different methods and benefits.

In the book Fathul Baari, it is explained that before this hadith, there is the first hadith in the chapter on cupping for illness, the wording of which is, "(Nī'ma al-'abdu al-hajjaamu yadhabu bid-daami wa yukhfifu al-sullaba wa yajlu al-basara)." This discussion is primarily addressed to the people of Hijaz and hot temperature regions because their blood is thinner and closer to the surface due to the heat. The conclusion is also that this recommendation is more relevant for adults and not the elderly, whose body temperature tends to be lower. (Nuril Fajri 2021) In the hadith, honey is indicated by the Prophet Muhammad SAW as if having a function as a laxative. On the other hand, cupping is a method of treatment performed by removing impure blood from the body. Scholars have even broadened the definition of cupping, concluding that any way of removing impure blood from the body can be considered "cupping." As an illustration, one way to treat a fever is by removing impure blood through cupping or similar methods. This helps eliminate harmful substances from the body and lower the metabolic temperature.

The popularity of cupping as a treatment method is currently on the rise again. Besides being recognized as a good alternative medicine, cupping also has theological legitimacy based on the sunnah. Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jauziyyah in *At-Tibbu al-Nabawi* quotes a hadith of the Prophet mentioning cupping as one way to seek treatment. Cupping therapy is explained simply by combining the principles of traditional and modern medicine to facilitate understanding, acceptance, and proof. According to traditional medicine, there are special points in the subcutaneous layer, muscles, or fascia that are interconnected forming a network. This network shows a strong connection between parts of the body, so the body is considered an inseparable and mutually responsive whole. (Nuril Fajri 2021:318) Due to the interconnectedness of points in the body, a disruption or illness in one area can cause problems in another. Similarly, therapy at one point can have a healing effect on a different point. This explains why, for example, someone with an eye ache does not necessarily need to be cupped around the eyes but can benefit from cupping in the head or back of the neck area.

Cupping, which literally means to suck or draw out, is a therapeutic method involving the removal of blood from the body through the skin. This process is carried out by creating negative pressure on the skin to draw blood to the surface, which is then extracted. Syihab al-Badri Yasin quotes Dr. Ali Muhammad Muthowi stating that cupping has a strong scientific basis. This scientific basis lies in the connection between the internal organs of the body and specific areas on the skin through nerve entry points that channel nutrients to these organs along the spinal nerves. (Khaleda 2019:18) Hġamah or cupping therapy was not a new invention during the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW; rather, it had been known long before, even thousands of years before the Common Era, making it one of the oldest treatment methods in history. It is believed that the practice of cupping was carried out by the people of Prophet Lot before 1800 BC. However, at that time, cupping was done in an unusual way, by throwing stones at passing strangers until they bled, and then the perpetrators would demand payment for the blood drawn. Although this practice demonstrates bad behavior, this story indicates that cupping has been used since ancient times. (Khaleda 2019:24)

### **Recommended times for performing hijamah**

Hadith related to the recommended times for performing hijamah:

➤ إِنَّ خَيْرَ مَا تَحْتَجُمُونَ فِيهِ يَوْمَ سَبْعَ عَشْرَةٍ وَيَوْمَ تِسْعَ عَشْرَةٍ وَيَوْمَ إِحْدَى وَعِشْرِينَ (Ibn Mājah 2009:4 p.525)

(Indeed, the best days for cupping are the 17th, 19th, and 21<sup>st</sup>).

➤ الْحِجَامَةُ عَلَى الرَّيْقِ أَمْثَلُ وَهِيَ تَزِيدُ فِي الْعَقْلِ وَتَزِيدُ فِي الْحِفْظِ وَتَزِيدُ الْحَافِظَ حِفْظًا

(Cupping in the morning is very good, as it will increase brainpower and memory.)  
(Ibn Mājah 2009:4 p.553)

➤ فَاحْتَجِمُوا عَلَى بَرَكََةِ اللَّهِ يَوْمَ الْخَمِيسِ (Ibn Mājah 2009:19 p.376)

(So perform cupping seeking blessings from Allah on Thursday.)

➤ وَاحْتَجِمُوا يَوْمَ الْاِثْنَيْنِ وَالْاِثْنَاءِ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الْحِجَامَةَ يَوْمَ الْاَرْبَعَاءِ فَإِنَّهُ الْيَوْمُ الَّذِي أُصِيبَ فِيهِ أَيُّوبُ

(Perform cupping on Mondays and Tuesdays, for indeed Monday and Tuesday are the days on which Allah healed Ayyub from the affliction that befell him on Wednesday.) (Ibn Mājah 2009:4 p.553)

➤ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الْحِجَامَةَ يَوْمَ الْجُمُعَةِ وَيَوْمَ السَّبْتِ وَيَوْمَ الْأَحَدِ (Ibn Mājah 2009:19 p.376)

(Avoid cupping on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.)

➤ لَا يَحْتَجِمُ الْمُحْرِمُ إِلَّا مِنْ ضَرُورَةٍ (Tirmiziy 1996:2 p.188)

(A person in ihram is not allowed to perform cupping except in cases of emergency.)

One of the hadith often cited regarding the best time for cupping is the hadith that mentions that the 17th, 19th, and 21st days of the Hijri calendar are the most optimal times to perform cupping. This hadith indicates that Prophet Muhammad SAW had profound knowledge about the most effective times to administer treatment, including cupping. The hadith suggests that there is wisdom behind choosing specific times for cupping. These times are believed to have an influence on the body's condition and the success of cupping therapy. However, it is important to remember that this hadith is a recommendation, not an obligation. Scholars have varying opinions regarding the hadith about the best time for cupping. The majority of scholars agree that the hadith is a good recommendation, but they also emphasize the importance of considering the individual's health condition and consulting with experts.

Hadith regarding the best times for cupping provide interesting guidance for us to delve deeper into the relationship between time, the human body, and medicine. Although further research is needed to scientifically prove the truth of these hadith, there is no harm in trying to follow the recommendations of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. However, the most important thing is to consult with a doctor or a competent cupping practitioner before undergoing cupping therapy. These hadith indicate effective times for cupping. Ustadz Ahmad Fatahilah, in his book "The Potency of Cupping," explains that these hadith strongly emphasize the importance of maintaining health by having regular cupping sessions in the middle of the month. This is linked to the phenomenon of the full moon and high tide, which signify that the blood condition is at its peak and has the potential to cause illness. It is important to understand that cupping functions to remove poisons or toxins from the body, thus improving blood circulation and bringing healing. Therefore, if someone is sick, it is not a problem to have cupping done on days that are not actually recommended, such as (wa-ijtanibū al-hijāmah yawma al-jumu'ah wa yawma as-sabt wa yawma al-ahad). (Ibn Mājah 2009:19 p.376) wednesday, friday, Saturday, and sunday. (Ardianti 2022:40)

## Health Benefits of Hijamah

Hadith related to the health benefits of hijamah:

➤ نَعَمَ الْعَبْدُ الْحَجَّامُ يَذْهَبُ بِالدَّمِ وَيُخَفِّفُ الصُّلْبَ وَيَجْلُو الْبَصَرَ (Ibn Mājah 2009:4 p.525)

(The best of servants are cuppers, (because through it) they remove impure blood, relieve back pain, and clarify vision.)

➤ الْحِجَامَةُ عَلَى الرَّبِيقِ أَمْثَلُ وَفِيهِ شِفَاءٌ وَبَرَكَةٌ وَتَزِيدُ فِي الْعَقْلِ وَفِي الْحِفْظِ (Ibn Mājah 2009:4 p.525)

(Cupping in the morning is very good, for in it lies healing and blessing, it increases mental strength and memory.)

This review will present several benefits that can be obtained from undergoing cupping. Although cupping techniques vary, their healing processes share similarities, including: First, detoxification of blood from food metabolism waste and improvement of spinal nerve function. Second, stabilizing abnormal blood pressure and addressing calcification of blood vessels. Third, relieving headaches, bruises in the head and face area, migraines, and toothaches. Fourth, eliminating convulsions and muscle cramps. Fifth, increasing the permeability of blood vessel walls. Sixth, highly beneficial for individuals suffering from asthma, pneumonia (lung infection), and angina pectoris. Seventh, assisting in the therapy of eye diseases (relieving inflammation and sharpening vision). (Ibn Mājah 2009:4 p.525) Eighth, for women, cupping can help address uterine problems and amenorrhea (cessation of menstruation). Additionally, cupping is effective in relieving shoulder, chest, and back pain. This therapy also helps overcome laziness, lethargy, and the tendency to oversleep. Furthermore, cupping can cure gout and rheumatism, as well as address various skin disorders such as allergies, acne, and itching. Lastly, cupping also has the potential to treat inflammation of the pericardium (membrane around the heart) and kidneys.

In addition to treating various diseases, cupping also strengthens the body's defenses by releasing toxins and old blood cells, as well as promoting the formation of new blood cells. The basic principle of wet cupping is the understanding that unhealthy blood is the cause of health problems. Blood that is considered damaged includes old red blood cells (over 120 days), blood clots, and various harmful substances that enter the bloodstream through various sources, including drugs and chemical pollution. This impure blood circulates in the body but tends to accumulate

in certain areas, especially in the upper back, due to slower blood flow in the shoulders, neck veins, and other parts of the body.(Malik 2015)

## Conclusion

Hijamah, or cupping, is a traditional medical therapy involving the removal of static (thick) blood containing toxins from the human body. Hijamah is performed by making small incisions on the skin and then suctioning the blood using cups. The practice of hijamah has long been known and practiced in various cultures, including in Islam. Many hadith mention the health benefits of hijamah. Among these hadith, some mention that hijamah can treat headaches, improve digestive health, increase fertility, improve eye health, and increase stamina. These benefits have been proven by research and experience. Hijamah, despite its many benefits, should not be practiced carelessly. Hijamah should be performed by trained and experienced therapists to ensure its safety and effectiveness. Hijamah is not recommended for people with anemia, hemophilia, and infectious diseases. Overall, hijamah is a traditional medical therapy that has many health benefits and has been justified in Islam. Hijamah should be performed with caution and by trained therapists to ensure its safety and effectiveness.

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