

The Importance of Milk from the Point of View of the History of Turkish Child Care and Some Scientific Results

Ayşegül DEMIRHAN ERDEMİR*

* Prof. Dr., Uludag University, Medical Faculty, Department of Medical History and Ethics, Bursa-Turkey
e-mail:ademirer@yahoo.com

Summary

Milk is a very important nutritive food for children. During the history of Turkish Child Care, milk had an important place and moreover, it was used for the treatments of the diseases of children. Turkish physicians used milk both as a nutritive food and as a drug for child health.

We see many knowledge about this condition in some Turkish medical manuscripts. Milk and its products have been used for centuries in Turkey. Furthermore, yoghurt which is an important milk's product is a valuable food of Turks. Yoghurt has been used for centuries by the Turks. This product is a Turkish food.

Milk and its products are used both as a food for children and they are known as a drug in the Turkish medical folklore.

Milk has an importance from the point of view of Turkish child care. Milk is also used by Turkish doctors for the same aims, today.

Key Words; Milk, Medical Folklore, History of Medicine.

The Importance of Milk from the Point of View of the History of Turkish Child Care

Milk and its products have a very important place in the history of Turkish child care. In the periods of Turkish states such as Huns, Gokturks, (552-745 A.D) Uygurs, Great Seljukians, Anatolian Seljukians (the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries) and Ottomans (1299-1923), milk and its products such as yoghurt, cheese, butter had an important place in Turkish child care. Milk was an essential food of children and infants. Milk was also used in the treatment of children's diseases (4,5).

Yoghurt, butter, cheese was prepared from milk (6). Moreover, **kımız** which was an important milk's product was obtained from milk with kımız leaven. Kımız is both a drink and a drug. It was used for the treatments of some diseases such as tuberculosis, weakness etc.

Yoghurt is a Turkish food. In the period of Huns which was the most ancient Turkish state, yoghurt was prepared for the first time (1,2,3). Moreover, **Li**

was prepared by mixing yoghurt and apricot or cherry. Uygur Turks used yoghurt both as a food and for the treatment of sleeplessness. Garlic and yoghurt were mixed and this mixture was given to the patient. Uygur Turks pronounced yogurt as **yorgurd, yorgut, yogrut** (7,8,9).

In the period of Karahanlılar (840-1212 A.D), **Yusuf Has Hacib** who was a valuable scholar mentioned milk and its products in his book called *Divan-ı Lügat it-Türk* (Turkish Dictionary) (1069-1073). According to this book, the most important food and drug of Turks was milk and its products. Milk was also used for the treatments of some children and infants diseases.

Abu Yusuf Ya'kup Ibn Ishak al Kindî (800-870) who was a famous Muslim physician used yoghurt for abdomen sores of infants and children. Fig, yoghurt, fat and fenugreek were mixed and this mixture was rubbed on abdomen (10).

Milk and its products were highly used by Ottoman Turks in the fourteenth century. **Ishak bin Murad** mentioned milk in his manuscript called

Edviye-i Müfrede (Simple Drugs) with the date of 1390. He stressed that milk was used for treatments of some children and infants diseases such as tuberculosis, weakness, cough etc (11). Another Turkish physician, **Esref bin Muhammed** discussed children and infants diseases in his book called **Hazâinü's Saadat** (The Treasuries of Happiness). Child care after birth, the importance of milk, ways to increase mother's milk, breast feeding methods were stressed in this book (12).

The sixteenth century physician **Nidai** mentioned children diseases in *Menâfi ün Nas*. For example, he wrote in this book: For children with cough, place figs in milk, let them stay for some time, than make them drink it (13).

Milk also was an important food of Ottoman Turks in the seventeenth century. A famous Turkish physician **Zeynelabidin bin Halil** pointed out the importance of milk in his book called **Sifa al-Fu'ad** (14,19).

Gevrekzade Hafız Hasan who was a famous Turkish physician of the eighteenth century pointed out the characteristics of milk.

Another Turkish physician **Dr.Besim Ömer** wrote a paper called Milk in 1899. This author used milk for the treatments of tuberculosis, Jaundice and diabetes. He stressed which milk became a useful food for children. According to **Dr.Besim Ömer**, yoghurt is a useful food for childrens' dysentery (15,16).

The first Turkish professor of paediatrics is **Dr.Salih Bey** (17). He wrote several books on paediatrics. His most important book is **Sari Çocuk Hastalıkları and Tababet-i Etfal** (Children's Diseases) (3). He pointed out the importance of milk. Moreover, **Dr.Server Kâmil Tokgöz** wrote a book called **Hıfzısıhhat (Public Health)**. He mentioned the use and characteristics of milk in this book (18).

Milk and its products were used in the kitchen of Ottoman Palace. Milk and its products can be seen in a Turkish-Primeminister-ship archives' document with the date of 1771 (20).

Today, milk is highly used in Turkey. Mother-milk is a necessary food for child-care.

The Traditional Use of Milk Among People in Turkey and its Importance From the Point of View of Modern Medicine

Milk is accepted as a necessary food of life in all the world. Modern Turkish physicians use milk for child care and diseases, today. Moreover, milk is also used for various traditional treatments of children. Salep is boiled with milk and it is administered to the child with whooping cough. Almond is powdered and is mixed with milk. This mixture is given to the child for the treatment of weakness and tuberculosis. 2 eggs is mixed with sugar and this mixture is added to a glass of wine, milk and chocolate and it is administered to the child with anemia. Black cumin is pounded and it is mixed with milk and this mixture is given to the child with whooping-cough.

Some foods with milk are also used for stomach diseases of children and their nourishment among Turkish people (21).

Result

We know milk has proteins (casein, lactalbumin and lactoglobulin), lactose, some minerals (calcium, phosphorus etc.) and vitamins (A, B₁ and B₂ etc). Therefore, milk is used for the treatments of weakness, anemia, tuberculosis, whooping-cough etc. It provides the strenghtening of bones. All these characteristics are also accepted by modern medicine (22,23,24).

REFERENCES

1. Abt AF. History of Pediatrics, London. 1965.
2. Benedu J. Pages from the History of Pediatrics, Image, 1974; 44.
3. Tumay SB. Çocuk Hekimliğinin Bizdeki Gelişimi, (Paediatrics in Turkey), İstanbul. 1948.
4. Baysal A. Türk Mutfağının Beslenme ve Sağlık yönünden Değerlendirilmesi, (Turkish Kitchen and Nourishment) III.Milletlerarası Türk Folklor Kongresi Bildirileri (5.Cilt) (Proceedings). Ankara: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1987:89-102.
5. Demirhan A. Mısır Carsısı Drogları (Egyptian Bazaar Drugs). İstanbul: Sermet Matbaası, 1975:113.
6. Eyüboğlu İZ. Anadolu Halk İlaçları, (Anatolian Drugs). İstanbul: Hür Yayın ve Ticaret A.Ş., 1977: 67.
7. Köymen MA. Selcuklular Zamanında Beslenme Sistemi (Nourishment in Seljukian Turks). Türk Mutfağı Sempozyumu Bildirileri. Ankara: Ankara Üniv.Basımevi, 1982:35-45.

8. Sehsuvaroglu BN. Eczacılık Tarihi Dersleri (History of Pharmacy). İstanbul: Hüsnütabiat Matbaası, 1970: 174-179.
9. Kahya E, Demirhan EA. Medicine in the Ottoman Empire. İstanbul.1997: 1-140.
10. Abu Yusuf Yakup ibn İshak al-Kindi (800-870): Formulary or Aqrabadhin of Al-Kindi. London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1965: 72.
11. Demirhan EA: Lectures on Medical History and Medical Ethics. İstanbul. 1995.
12. Esref bin Muhammed.: Hazâ'inüs-Saâ'dât, (Treasures of Happiness) 1460 (Hazırlayan: B.N.Sehsuvaroglu). Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1961.
13. Nidaî.: Menafî ün Nâs (Uses for people), İst. Tıp Fakültesi, Tıp Tarihi Enst. No.3338.
14. Demirhan EA. Hekim Zeynelâbidin bin Halil'in Şifa al-Fu'ad adlı eserinin Türk Tıp Tarihindeki Yeri ve Bazı Orijinal Sonuçlar, Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Derg. 1991; 71: 145-165.
15. Akalın BÖ. Süt, Süt ile Tedavi (Milk). Nevsâli Afîyet (C.1). İstanbul: Alim Matbaası, 1899: 373.
16. Akalın BÖ. Yoğurt, Nevsali Afîyet (C.4). İstanbul: Ahmed İhsan Matbaası, 1906: 78-93.
17. Velicangil S. Koruyucu Hekimlik ve Halk Sağlığı (Koruyucu ve Sosyal Tıp 2) (Public Health) İstanbul: Sermet Matbaası, 1973: 447-456.
18. Tokgöz SK. Hıfzısıhhat (C.1) (Public Health). İstanbul: Mahmud Bey Matbaası, 1925:359-361.
19. Zeynelâbidin bin Halil. Şifa al-Fu'ad, (Healing) Kahire 1872: 1-64.
20. Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Belgesi (Ottoman Archives' Documents): Cevdet, Saray Defteri. No.364, With the date of 1771.
21. Demirhan EA. Doğal İlaçlarla Geleneksel Tedaviler (Traditional Treatments). İstanbul. 2001.
22. Gafter A, Bar-Dayyan Y, Shoenfeld Y. Is the drinking of cow milk in infancy a predisposing factor for insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus? Harefuah. 1998; 134 (6): 489-492.
23. Sealy S. Possible Connection between milk and coronary heart disease: the Calcium hypothesis. Medical hypotheses. 2000; 54 (5): 701-703.
24. Oddy WH. Breastfeeding and asthma in children: findings from a West Australian Study. Breastfeeding Review. 2000; 8(1): 5-11.