HAJJ CONVENTION
COMMON COMPLAINTS AND MEDICAL PROBLEMS IN HAJJ TO MECCA

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The Objectives

1. Know the environmental changes in Hajj area
2. List the most common medical problems seen in Hajj
3. Discuss the pre travel assessment, especially in people with chronic diseases
The 'Five Pillars' of Islam are the foundation of Muslim life:

1. Faith or belief in the Oneness of God and the finality of the Prophet hood of Muhammad.


3. Concern for and almsgiving to the needy (Zakah).

4. Self-purification through Fasting.

5. The Pilgrimage to Makkah for those who are able (Hajj).
Common Medical Problems During Hajj

- Hajj is an annual pilgrimage to Mecca
- Performed by Muslims who can afford it
- Starts from the 1st zhul hajjah and culminates on the 10th zhul hajjah, the day of Eid
- Annually 2.5-3 million people from all over the world visit Mecca and Medina around this period
The season of Hajj varies every year as it follows the lunar Islamic calendar.

The Lunar month goes back 10 days every year.

Therefore, the diseases too vary depending on the temperature in the two holy cities (Mecca and Medina).

Khan LA, Khan SA. Hajj and health. JK-Practitioner 2001;8:50-51
Pilgrims wear special clothes: simple garments that strip away distinctions of class and culture, so that all stand equal before God (Ihram).
Hajj is considered as a dynamic system

On arrival the Hajj goes for Tawaf, the circumambulation the Ka`bah 7 times

Then perform the Sa`i, jogging 7 times between the hills of Safa and Marwah (500m x 7 = 3.5 kilometer)

On Arafat they assemble from morning until sunset
De man dient te rennen tussen de groene vlaggen (lampen), dit is het diepste punt van de rivier (voorheen).

Men noemt de dhikr die weergegeven is.

As-Safa

As-Sa'y

Al-Marwa
After sunset a mass exodus starts from Arafat to Muzdalifah, an open plain, where they spend most of the night.

Then they head towards Mina, where they spend 3 days in camps.

Here 2 rites are performed: stoning the devil and sacrificing an animal.

Return to Mecca for farewell circumambulation.
Day 1 of the Pilgrimage (8th of Dhul-Hijjah)

During Hajj, Mina turns into an enormous tent city housing millions of pilgrims.

S. M. Amin/Saudi Aramco World/PADIA
The day-long station at Arafat symbolises Muslims' wait for the day of judgement. They spend the day praying...
The pilgrims make a sea of white as they stream in their thousands onto the plain of Arafat.
All rites of the Hajj entail *strenuous* physical effort.

Overcrowding is another major problem.

Accommodation is difficult to find and is very expensive.

Lack of sleep and physical exhaustion can affect the elderlies.
Nearly two million Hajj pilgrims make their way to Muzdalifah
The huge ocean of humanity constitutes males and females of all age groups.

Medical illnesses are therefore not uncommon.

The various categories of common problems faced by a Hajj are:
I. Age related: Fatigue, dehydration, falls, trauma, and chances of stampede

II. Infections: URTI are very common during Hajj

Lower RTI, Open TB, Meningococcal meningitis are rare

III. Heat related: problems are common if Hajj falls during the summer.
- Sun burn on the face, shoulder, and chest can be seen.
- Heat exhaustion and rarely heat stroke is encountered.
- **IV. Metabolic:** problems like hypo- or hyperglycemia are common. Diabetic Ketoacidosis is rare.

V. Cardiovascular problems like accelerated HTN, angina, MI, CHF are common

- Patients with AF are often found collapsed
- Reasons: missing the dose stopping the treatment or exertion.

VI. Miscellaneous: flare up of psychiatric disorders is occasionally seen
Respiratory Tract Infection

- People from all over the world and Unavoidable closeness facilitate easy spread of those illnesses
- Fatigue, and lack of sleep lower one`s immunity and resistance
- Acute URTI is very common
- Epidemics of flu-like illnesses are also very common
Nearly all URTI are viral

Try Sxtic measures first for sore throat or flu:
- Paracetamol, cough suppressant, gargle with salt water, ice cubes or lozenges, drink hot water with lemon and honey
- Wash hands frequently
- Flu is spread through the air by coughing, sneezing, or hand contact
Should **seek medical care in:**
Prolonged illness with purulent nasal secretion, fever, facial pain, sore throat with fever, shortening of breath, productive cough with fever or shortening of breath
Gastrointestinal problems

- **Diarrhea**: 30% traveler's diarrhea, especially among elderly, Diabetic and chronic IBD
- **Constipation**: very common, due to
- **Dehydration**, stress, not eating enough amounts of fruits and vegetables and eating lots of canned food
Heat Exhaustion

- Commonly caused by dehydration and loss of body fluids
- Manifested by weakness, headache, dizziness, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea
- Treatment: Resting, getting out of sun/heat, sponging the body with water and fanning it, and aggressively replacing fluids and salts.
- Can progress to heat stroke, if not taken seriously
Heat Stroke

- The body loses its ability to regulate body temperature, which can reach up to 106°F (41°C).
- Hallmarks: physical collapse, confusion, coma.
- This medical emergency must be treated aggressively with rapid cooling and IV-fluids.
- If not treated, permanent damage to kidneys, heart, or liver may result.
- Mecca Body Cooling Unit (BCU)
A physiological body-cooling unit for treatment of heat stroke.

Weiner JS, Khogali M.

The high incidence of heat stroke during the Mecca pilgrimage in hot weather prompted the development of a new method of rapidly cooling hyperpyrexial patients. A cooling bed was devised which achieved a high rate of evaporative cooling by spraying patients with water at 15 degrees C and warm air, which reached the body surface at 30-35 degrees C. The cooling bed also made possible the administration of ancillary treatment both efficiently and hygienically.
Preventing Heat Illness

- Prevent dehydration (dark yellow urine)
- Drink enough water to urinate every 2-3 hours
- Don’t be exposed to direct sunlight
- Use ventilated vehicles
- Drink plenty of Zam-zam water
- Don’t walk for long periods
- Avoid crowded places, and not rush when performing rites
- Rest and sleep as needed
Accidental Injuries

- **Trauma** during Hajj is a real surgical problem.
- **Orthopedic and Neurosurgical** cases are the most common surgical cases during the Hajj period.
- **Traffic** and Hajj movement should be improved.
- Hajjies should be taught to avoid crowdedness.
- **Stampede** is a serious problem during the ritual of stoning the devil.
- They built many accessways, footbridges (5 levels) and emergency exits.

*Saudi Medical Journal 2001; Vol. 22(6): 523-525*
Lebanese Medical Delegation

- During 2008 (1429 Hijri) season
- 20,000 Lebanese Hajjis
- 4500-5000 Patients seen in Arafat and Mina
- 50% had viral URTI
- Other common medical problems:
  - Dehydration, Gyn bleeding, heat exhaustion
- This year, Only 5500 Hajji are allowed, because of H1N1 pandemic
Advice to the Hajj

- Bring enough supplies of the OTC medications
- Take multivitamins daily
- Consult your physician if you have chronic medical illness, such as Asthma, DM, CHF,
- Go for daily walk before your journey
- Use facemask
- If you wear eyeglasses, bring an extra one with a plastic frame
- Get The mandatory Meningococcal Quadrivalent Vaccine ACYW-135, and the flu vaccine as well
- Dental checkup, at least 2 months before leaving
- A list of ongoing health problems, such as heart disease, DM, COPD, etc...
- A list of current medications you are taking
- A list of allergies to medications, food, insects, and animals
- Pay attention to your personal safety:
- Stick to the group and the schedule, don’t walk alone, especially after dark, rules of the road
Do it when you are YOUNG and STRONG

Thank You