

# Need for contents on halal medicines in pharmacy and medicine curriculum

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**ABSTRACT**

According to an estimate by 2020 Muslim population, will be almost a quarter of the world population. Pharmaceuticals business sector estimates “Halal Pharmaceuticals” to be multimillion dollars industry. Keeping in view the religious preference of Muslim consumers, many developing and developed countries have taken initiative to establish “halal certification centers” and “halal certification guidelines.” However, till to date it is hard to find any contents in medicine or pharmacy curriculums that aims to develop understanding among pharmacy and medical graduates about the halal and non-halal (haram) animal sources, processing and manufacturing techniques and halal excipients. The current article will aim, to summarize, the concept of halal and non-halal sources of medicines or drugs in the light of recommendation from “Quran and Hadith.” By adding basic contents in pharmacy and medicine curriculum, future graduates will be in a position to distinguish between the non-halal and halal sources of medicine and alternates. Thus, empowering medical and pharmacy graduates will assist them understanding the needs of Muslim patients’ needs in the line with the Islamic regulations outlined in Quran.

**Key words:** Curriculum, halal medicines, medicines, pharmacy

**INTRODUCTION**

Till to date, there are approximately 1.6 billion Muslims around the world, making Islam as the second most practiced religion after Christianity.<sup>[1]</sup> Being the second largest group appears to be a biggest market for the businessmen’s. Addressing the special need of the Muslim community it is really essential to consider Islamic rules and regulations while marketing the products/consumable to Muslim residing in countries where Islam is not a main religion or Muslims are minorities. One of such considerations is the availability of “Halal Food and Halal Pharmaceuticals.” Term “Halal” is an Arabic word means “permissible” and “non-Halal” are the acts/substances/food/items that are not

permissible.<sup>[2]</sup> Applying the same rule in medicines/ pharmaceuticals “Halal Pharmaceuticals are drugs that are derived from a permissible source, that is, animal/plant or organic/inorganic substance, which follows a method of preparation, manufacturing and extraction that is in line with recommendations of Islam. In addition, it must be ensured that a Halal Pharmaceuticals must not contain any additives or excipients that is “not Halal” or derived from a nonpermissible source or a method of preparation, manufacturing and extraction that is not according to the recommendations of Islam.” In Quran Allah clearly has clearly conveyed His message to the Muslims.

“O you, who have believed, eat from the good things which we have provided for you and be grateful to Allah if it is (indeed) Him that you worship.”<sup>[3]</sup>

In the next verse, it is further clarified about the animals and their byproducts that are not permissible and ranked as non-Halal or “Haram.”

“He has only forbidden to you dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to

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other than Allah. But whoever is forced (by necessity), neither desiring (it) nor transgressing (its limit), there is no sin upon him. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”<sup>[4]</sup>

Further explanation is provided in chapter five (verse 2) to explain that what are the “lawful” animals, conditions in which hunting or killing of animals is not permitted and conditions in which animal is considered as “Haram/non-Halal.”

“Prohibited to you are dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah, and (those animals) killed by strangling or by a violent blow or by a head-long fall or by the goring of horns, and those from which a wild animal has eaten, except what you (are able to) slaughter (before its death), and those which are sacrificed on stone altars, and (prohibited is) that you seek decision through divining arrows. That is grave disobedience. This day those who disbelieve have despaired of (defeating) your religion; so fear them not, but fear me. This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed my favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as a religion. But whoever is forced by severe hunger with no inclination to sin—then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”<sup>[5]</sup>

In addition, almost same recommendations are given for Alcohol.

“They ask you about wine and gambling. Say, “In them is a great sin and (yet, some) benefit for people. But their sin is greater than their benefit.” And they ask you what they should spend. Say, “The excess (beyond needs).” Thus, Allah makes clear to you the verses (of revelation) that you might give thought.”<sup>[6]</sup>

## FURTHER CLARIFICATION ABOUT LAWFUL AND UNLAWFUL MEDICINES AND MATERIALS IN THE LIGHT OF HADITH

In Islam, hadith (words of Prophet Muhammad *Ṣallallāhu 'alayhe wa ālehe wa sallam*) and Sunnah (The acts performed Prophet Muhammad *Ṣallallāhu 'alayhe wa ālehe wa sallam*) are the two main pillars that are further clarify the rules mentioned in Quran.

In a hadith narrated by Umm Salamah (*Radeyallāhu 'Anhā*), the wife of the Prophet Muhammad (*Ṣallallāhu 'alayhe wa ālehe wa sallam*), reports that he once said: “Allah has not placed a cure for your diseases in things that He has forbidden for you.”<sup>[7]</sup> In another hadith,

Abu ad-Darda reported that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: “Allah has sent down both the disease and its remedy. For every disease, He has created a cure. Hence, seek medical treatment, but never with something, the use of which Allah has prohibited.”<sup>[8]</sup> At another occasion Wa'il ibn Hujr Al-Hadrami reported that, “Tariq Ibn Suwaid (*Radeyallāhu 'Anhā*) asked the Prophet (*Ṣallallāhu 'alayhe wa ālehe wa sallam*), if he could use liquor (Khamr) as medicine. The Prophet replied: ‘It is not a cure, but a disease.’”<sup>[9]</sup>

In addition, Muslim scholars have further clarified that any material cause drunkenness or Alcohol intoxication consider as *Khamr* and it is prohibited, this explanation is according to another hadith narrated by Aisha (*Radeyallāhu 'Anhā*): The Prophet Muhammad (*Ṣallallāhu 'alayhe wa ālehe wa sallam*) said, “All drinks that produce intoxication are haram” (forbidden to drink). Also, the prophet said, “Every intoxicant is khamr, and every khamr is haram.” (Narrated by Muslim).<sup>[10]</sup> Regardless from what it is made (fruit juices, grains, vegetables or any other sources), the method of the synthesis (by fermentation or distillation) or the ethanol concentration.<sup>[11]</sup>

## NEED FOR THE INCLUSION OF HALAL PHARMACEUTICALS CONTENTS IN PHARMACY PROGRAMS

According to an estimate by 2020 Muslim population, will be almost a quarter of the world population.<sup>[12]</sup> This represents a huge future market for halal consumables that is, food, beverages, and halal medicines. However, till to date it is hard to find any contents in medicine or pharmacy curriculums that aims to develop understanding among pharmacy and medical graduates about the halal and non-halal (haram) animal sources, processing and manufacturing techniques and halal excipients. Some of the developing Muslim countries have taken initiative to establish guidelines and standards to certify pharmaceuticals that are halal, thus assisting in distinguishing non-halal pharmaceuticals.<sup>[13,14]</sup> In addition, in some developed countries such as Canada and Australia, Muslim consumer groups are doing efforts to establish the halal certification system to ensure the availability of halal medicines to Muslim consumers.<sup>[15-17]</sup> In some Muslim countries, most of the medicines that are sold are halal, however, most of the countries have no halal certification guidelines and nowadays majority of them are in process of establishing halal certification standards to ensure the availability of halal medicines for their consumers. However, on other hand, due to the deficiency of a halal medicines/pharmaceuticals contents in pharmacy and medicine curriculum, the

practitioners graduated from Muslim countries and from developed/non-Muslim countries might have a cursory understanding or remain unaware of the religious influence while selecting medicines for a Muslim patient, therefore it is essential for the prescriber to inform the patients about the availability of halal treatment options.<sup>[15]</sup> Thus resulting in higher patient satisfaction and trust for the medical services provided to them. This opinion recommends adding basic contents in pharmacy and medicine curriculum that enables the future graduated to understand the concept of halal medicines and assist them to distinguish between the non-halal and halal sources. Empowering medical and pharmacy graduates will assist them understanding the needs of Muslim patients' needs in the line with the Islamic regulations outlined in Quran.

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