

HISTORICAL APPROACH OF DRUG DISCOVERY IN UNANI**Neya S., Pavendhan S., Sujai J., Suresh C., Bhaghawan R. K.*, Manivanan R.**

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Article Received on 09 October 2025,
Article Revised on 29 October 2025,
Article Published on 01 Nov. 2025,<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17538937>***Corresponding Author****Bhaghawan R. K.**Department of Pharmacology, Excel
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Dr.M.G.R Medical University.**How to cite this Article:** Neya S., Pavendhan S., Sujai J., Suresh C., Bhaghawan R. K.*, Manivanan R. (2025). Historical Approach Of Drug Discovery In Unani. World Journal of Pharmaceutical Research, 14(21), 1029–1032.

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ABSTRACT

The Unani system of medicine, or Tibb Unani, stands among the oldest healing traditions still practiced today. Rooted in Greco Arabic philosophy, it has evolved over centuries through contributions from Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Greek, Persian, and Islamic scholars. This paper explores how Unani medicine developed as a scientific and holistic approach to health, tracing its transformation from early herbal practices to structured pharmacological systems. It examines key historical milestones, philosophical principles, and the evolution of drug discovery within this tradition. Unani's integration into modern healthcare highlights its continued relevance in promoting preventive, personalized, and integrative medicine. The study concludes that Unani medicine's focus on balance, temperament, and the body's natural healing force offers valuable insights for future

drug discovery and global health innovation.

KEYWORDS: Unani Medicine; Drug Discovery; Historical Development; Pharmacology; Integrative Medicine; Traditional Systems.**INTRODUCTION**

Unani medicine, derived from ancient Greek thought and refined by Arab and Persian scholars, represents a unique blend of science, philosophy, and tradition. At its core lies the idea that health depends on the harmony between the body's four humours blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile and the balance of internal and external forces.

Guided by the principle of Tabiat, or the body's innate healing power, Unani medicine encourages natural recovery through diet, lifestyle regulation, and gentle therapeutics. This research aims to explore the historical roots of Unani medicine, its evolution through various civilizations, and how its pharmacological principles shaped early and modern drug discovery processes.

METHODOLOGY

This study follows a qualitative historical analysis, drawing from both classical texts and contemporary research. Primary sources include the writings of Hippocrates, Galen, Avicenna (Ibn Sina), and Al-Razi, while secondary data were collected from scholarly publications, institutional reports, and the World Health Organization (WHO). The focus is to understand how Unani drug development progressed through observation, clinical experience, and empirical validation. The study also examines how traditional pharmacological wisdom aligns with modern scientific principles such as reverse pharmacology and evidence based medicine.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The earliest evidence of Unani medicine can be traced to Mesopotamian and Egyptian practices, where healers used herbs, minerals, and rituals for treatment. Greek physicians like Hippocrates and Galen transformed these mystical traditions into rational systems of thought by emphasizing observation, diagnosis, and the theory of humours. During the Islamic Golden Age, scholars such as Al-Razi and Ibn Sina expanded these ideas, integrating philosophical reasoning with clinical practice. Ibn Sina's 'Canon of Medicine' became a global reference, shaping medical education for centuries.

In India, Unani medicine flourished under the patronage of the Delhi Sultanate and Mughal Empire. It absorbed Ayurvedic influences, enriching its pharmacopeia and creating new formulations. The modern era saw institutional support through the Ministry of AYUSH and research councils like CCRUM. These efforts have modernized Unani practices through standardization, clinical testing, and integration with biomedical sciences.

DISCUSSION

Unani medicine's approach to drug discovery reveals an early scientific curiosity about nature's healing potential. Its pharmacological branch, *Ilmul Saidla*, systematized drug formulation long before the emergence of modern pharmacy. This approach categorized

substances by temperament and potency, ensuring harmony between treatment and individual constitution. In modern times, researchers have used reverse pharmacology to validate traditional formulations, confirming their efficacy in treating liver, metabolic, and inflammatory disorders. Despite this progress, challenges persist in global acceptance due to limited clinical trials and regulatory inconsistencies. However, the integration of biotechnology, genomics, and artificial intelligence is opening new pathways for Unani medicine's scientific recognition.

CONCLUSION

The journey of Unani medicine from ancient civilizations to modern laboratories reflects humanity's ongoing quest for harmony in health. Its emphasis on prevention, natural balance, and individualized care resonates strongly with today's vision of holistic healthcare. The system's concept of *Tabiat* the body's self-healing force offers a timeless reminder that effective medicine works with, not against, nature. By merging traditional insights with modern research, Unani medicine continues to provide a sustainable and ethical foundation for global drug discovery.

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