

History of Iran Medicine

The first evidence of civilization in Iran (Persia) date back to 10,000 years ago. Later on, local civilizations and cities were developed in the Iranian plateau. In the next step, great empires started to be formed by Iranians from 7th century BC. The greatest was the Achaemenid Empire that ruled Persia and most civilized parts of the earth (550-330 BC).

During this long time, medical sciences (Persian medicine) were highly developed, in particular in the Sassanid Kingdom (224-637 AD).

Medical sciences were specialized in ancient Persia, and many physicians with specific specialties like surgeons, psychologists, pharmacists, ophthalmologists, forensic



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physicians, etc. had permission to work. Many medical advancements and findings, e.g. finding pulmonary circulation and uterus contractions during natural vaginal delivery, were reported for the first time in that period. There was an organized medical council in the Sassanid Empire Figure 2. The Sassanid Empire (224-627 AD) to regulate medical services and issue work permissions for physicians. Medical ethics, in particular for women's rights, was highly world, was built and organized by the Sassanids in southwest Persia. It was a huge university, attracting developed and regulated. Jondishapour University and Hospital is the first teaching hospital in the many scientists from all around the world to integrate their knowledge. There were many professors The time of great empires was ended by the elimination of the Sassanid Empire (224-637 AD) by and students with various nationalities and religions working and studying safely and freely.

The time of great empires was ended by the elimination of the Sassanid Empire (224-637 AD) by the Arab Muslims' attack on Persia in the 7th century AD. After this event, the religion of the Persian people started to change to Islam, and the Islamic era of the history of Iran started.

In the Islamic era, this Persian tradition was transferred by Jondishapour physicians to Baghdad, the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate, and was developed in the Islamic world. Physicians of Islamic world (mostly Persians) continued collecting medical knowledge from other civilizations (like Greece and India) and translated their medical texts to Arabic (as the official language of the Abbasid Caliphate), and they then flourished medical sciences during later centuries. It was a revolution in developing medical sciences during 9th to 13th centuries, called the Islamic Golden Age. Many Persian physicians like

Akhawayni, Rhazes, Avicenna, Haly Abbas, Jorjani, etc. advanced all aspects of medical sciences.

Persian medicine is based on a holistic paradigm and based on four elements: Fire, water, earth, and air. Its principles are discussed briefly in this chapter.

The books of Persian medicine, like the Canon of Medicine by Avicenna, were translated to many languages, and this paradigm of medical sciences became the main medical system in the west of Asia and Europe until the 17 century. After the Mongolian attacks to Persia in 13th century, this golden age of Islamic era was ended, and, after that, there was a period of turmoil for Persian medicine. Sometimes, during powerful dynasties like the Safavid era (Fig. 3), a good foundation existed to advance of medical sciences, and scientists created valuable medical works. During wars and unstable and weak governments, there was not any chance to direct attention to this knowledge.

After the 18th century, by developing western medicine and due to the weakness of Persian governments during the Qajar Dynasty (1794-1925) to provide medical services and public health, Persian medicine began to be replaced by western medicine until contemporary era. However, it was preserved within the culture of the people and also by more than 17,000 individual surviving titles of Persian medical texts. After the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979, attention to Persian medicine began, and, finally, the first schools and departments for traditional medicine (Persian medicine) were established, and PhD courses were founded in 2006. Nowadays, there are three related academic fields in Iran:

- PhD course of Persian Medicine, only for MD applicants
- PhD course of Traditional Pharmacy, only for PharmD (pharmacist) applicants
- Msc and PhD courses of History of Medicine