

A Comparative Study of Medicine and Treatment for Women in the Tib Book, Traditional Chinese Medicine, and Ayurveda

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Abstract

Kitab Tib, a "medical book" in Arabic, is a sub-genre of the Traditional Science Library genre. It is categorised as one form of writing that discusses traditional Malay medical knowledge, including diseases and the medicines used to treat them. The purpose of this study is to examine various types of women's diseases and cures and treatments for women seen from a gynaecological point of view, such as menstrual pain, postpartum depression, late menstruation, bleeding, and medicine to cure menstruation. This study uses a qualitative method with a content analysis approach. Data is taken from Kitab Tib, MSS 2219, found in the collection of the National Library of Malaysia. This study aims to identify the comparison between Malay traditional medicine with Chinese and Indian traditional medicine. The study found that there are various treatments to cure women's diseases, especially those related to gynaecological aspects. Most of the ingredients found in the treatment are fruits and vegetables that are easily available. The names of medicines or cures found in the Book of Tib are no strangers to modern times. The results of the study found that there are great differences in each traditional treatment to cure the disease, and the various natural ingredients used include various herbs, plants, and animals.

Keywords: Kitab Tib, Malay Traditional Medicine, Ayurveda, Chinese Traditional Medicine, Remedies, Cure

Submitted: 04 July 2024

Revised: 15 January /2025

Published: 30 September 2025

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Kajian Perbandingan Perubatan dan Perawatan bagi Wanita dalam Kitab Tib dDan Perawatan Tradisional Cina serta Ayurveda

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Abstrak

Kitab Tib yang membawa maksud "buku perubatan" dalam bahasa Arab, merupakan sub genre dalam genre Perpustakaan Sains Tradisional. Ia dikategorikan sebagai salah satu bentuk penulisan yang membincangkan ilmu perubatan Melayu tradisional, termasuk penyakit dan ubat-ubatan yang digunakan untuk merawatnya. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk meneliti pelbagai jenis penyakit wanita, dan penawar serta rawatan untuk wanita yang dilihat dari sudut ginekologi seperti sakit haid, kemurungan selepas bersalin, haid lewat, pendarahan, dan ubat untuk menyembuhkan haid. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah kualitatif dengan pendekatan analisis kandungan. Data diambil daripada Kitab Tib, MSS 2219 yang terdapat di dalam koleksi Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia. Kajian ini bertujuan mengenalpasti perbandingan antara perubatan tradisional melayu dengan perubatan tradisional Cina dan India. Kajian mendapati bahawa terdapat pelbagai rawatan untuk menyembuhkan penyakit wanita, terutamanya yang berkaitan dengan aspek ginekologi. Kebanyakan bahan dalam perawatan yang ditemui adalah buah-buahan dan sayur-sayuran yang mudah didapati. Malah, nama ubat-ubatan atau penawar yang terdapat di dalam Kitab Tib sudah tidak asing lagi pada zaman sekarang. Hasil kajian mendapati bahawa terdapat perbezaan yang besar dalam setiap rawatan tradisional untuk menyembuhkan penyakit, dan pelbagai bahan semula jadi yang digunakan termasuk pelbagai herba, tumbuh-tumbuhan, dan haiwan.

Kata Kunci: Kitab Tib, Perubatan Tradisional Melayu, Ayurveda, Perubatan Tradisional Cina, Remedi, Penawar

Dihantar: 14 Julai 2024

Disemak: 15 Januari 2025

Diterbit: 30 September 2025

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1.0 Introduction

Kitab Tib is an Arabic word for "book of medicine," "medical book," or "book of medicine". A subgenre of the larger Traditional Science Library genre, which includes other sciences such as astrology, astrology or divination, language science, plant science, accounting science, carpentry science, and sexual science or sexology, is the traditional Malay literature genre. Kitab Tib categorises all writings that discuss traditional Malay medical knowledge, which includes a variety of ailments and the medications used to cure them. Many techniques that are supposed to be utilised to treat an illness are often described in Kitab Tib, which frequently includes treatment procedures, medications, prayers, as well as spells and mantras employed during the healing process (Siti Aisah Yusoff & Harun Daud, 2013). The Arabic term 'tib', also means "the study of medicine", "the use of herbal remedies", and "medical care" ("Meaning of Tib in English," n.d.). Other than that, druggist (tabib), letter of medicine (wasfatu't-tabib), and medicine or medical science (ilmut'tab), are derived from the Arabic language.

Ayurveda is one of the oldest holistic healthcare approaches in the world, underpinning the interdependency of mind, body, and spirit in encouraging harmony and preventing disease (M Alswaidi, F., & A. Abualssayl, A., 2025) including complex multimodal regimens in managing infertility (Chandla, A. et al, 2025). The safety and effectiveness of Ayurveda were explored systematically through many studies and experiments in various global contexts, including its historical development, current practice, and epidemiological trends.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is a holistic healing system that aims to restore balance in the body by using various practices like acupuncture, herbal remedies, dietary therapy, massage (tui na), and exercises like tai chi and qi gong. A series of studies have shown that non-pharmacological interventions involving TCM, such as manual acupuncture, electroacupuncture (EA), moxibustion, transcutaneous electrical acupoint stimulation (TEAS) and auricular acupressure (AA), are beneficial for patients undergoing Assisted reproductive technologies (ART) and can improve the success rate of ART and offer new hope for patients suffering from infertility (Li, X, et al (2025).

2.0 Literature Review

Kitab Tib in the collection of the National Library of Malaysia is a compilation of a few manuscripts with each of it describing remedies for specific illnesses such as MSS 2219 is about medicine for constipation, menstruation, and postpartum depression medicine; MSS 1925 is related to medicine for neck pain, indigestion, and purulent pain; and MSS 759 is about medicine swelling in the stomach, nausea, and bloody stools (Perubatan, n.d.). MSS 2219 is a complete 44 pages of documents with 3 added pages after the colophon. It was copied by Haji Ismail bin Haji Mustafa from Pontianak on Wednesday, 5th Zulkaedah 1325 or 10th December 1907 from Kampung Tembalan (Harun Mat Piah, 2015).

The original manuscript of Kitab Tib, with the size of 24.2 x 17.5 cm, and with 40 pages can be found in the collection of PNM under the number MSS 489 (Ab. Razak Ab. Karim, 2002). There is also a discussion book about Kitab Tib that is excerpted and edited from 10 Malay manuscripts in the collection of the PNM. The book that is called "Kitab Tib:



Ilmu Perubatan Melayu” was published by PNM and written by Harun Mat Piah.

Fossil evidence shows that humans have been using plants as remedies for at least 60,000 years as since the beginning of time, people have employed natural remedies made from plants, animals, microbes, and marine creatures to treat and prevent disease (Yuan et al., 2016). Traditional Chinese medicine has developed into a sophisticated healthcare system and has thousands of years of experience in providing health, healing, and longevity treatment regimens (Marshall, 2020). Meanwhile, for traditional Indian medicine, there is a representative system of traditional medicine that is developed through experience called “Ayurveda” (Shi et al., 2021).

Traditional Chinese medicine stemmed from the need for several effective treatments for illnesses, just like other traditional medicines (Ma et al., 2021). Their method is defined by the all-encompassing idea of harmony between humans and the natural world (Mao, 2013, as cited in Ma et al., 2021). Chinese herbal medicines and acupuncture have been practised for at least 2,200 years, even though the Huangdi neijing (The Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic), which dates to the third century BCE, is the first known documented account of Chinese medicine (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2009a).

Meanwhile, one of the oldest traditional systems of medicine (TSMs) that is being used today is Ayurveda (Jaiswal & Williams, 2017). Ayurveda developed in India with a logical foundation and has persisted as a distinct entity from ancient times to the present (Narayanaswamy, 1981). The general treatment techniques include yoga, physical activity, and the use of herbal remedies (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2023b).

3.0 Problem statement

This study aims to bridge the knowledge gap between certain distinct women's diseases and their cures and treatments in view of traditional Malay medicine by studiously investigating conditions such as gynaecological pains, postpartum depression, and irregular menstruation. Then, it aims to undertake a comparison between Malay traditional medicine and Chinese and Indian traditional medicines on contrastive treatments and types of natural resource usage.

4.0 Method

This study aims to investigate the traditional medical remedies based on the Kitab Tib and other types of traditional medicine, namely Chinese traditional medicine and Indian traditional medicine, Ayurveda. Illnesses related to women will be compared and discussed among the three traditional medicines. To achieve this aim, a content analysis was employed for the information reference sources consisting of research papers, journal articles, proceedings, books, articles in magazines and others that focus on the illness among women and the remedies to cure the illness. The data was collected according to the thematic approach to female sickness, which consists of menstrual pain, delayed menstruation, bleeding, and menstrual medicine.

5.0 Discussion

This section presents the findings of the study using thematic analysis that specifically discusses gynaecology for menstruation. The details are discussed below.



5.1 Menstrual Pain

The term “menstrual pain” and dysmenorrhea” are commonly considered synonymous in clinical practice and literature. They indicate a cramp-like, dull, throbbing pain that usually emanates from the lower abdomen and occurs just before and or during menstruation (Grandi et al.,2012). Dysmenorrhea is associated with late or early menarche, prolonged and heavier than normal menstrual flow, low body weight and body mass index, inadequate physical exercise, genetic predisposition, active and passive cigarette smoking, low socioeconomic status, diet, stress, and mental illness. The proposed distinction between dysmenorrhea and normal menstrual cramps is the need for medication and the inability to function normally in the latter situation (Grandi et al., 2012).

Table 1: Comparative Analysis for Menstrual Pain

Kitab Tib	TCM	Ayurveda
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> take a handful of salang leaves and turmeric, blend this ingredient and drink the essence, while the dregs are applied to the stomach. take a fistful of benalu leaves, seven peppercorns and one bulb of garlic that is peeled, grind them to a pulp, put a little vinegar and drink at three in the morning. take a handful of pekan leaves and seven cloves of garlic, and ten grains of pepper and the tip of rice, turmeric, and porcupine bezoar, blend all the ingredients until smooth, take the water and soak overnight and drink at 3 in the morning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> take peach kernel this medicine is to take powdered peach seed that can be found in Chinese herbal shops, add it to boiling water and drink it as a tea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> it is advised to use Asafoetida (Hing). This cooking ingredient is a wonderful ingredient that promotes digestion. Take Ajwain (Carom Seeds) also be used as a handy home remedy for menstrual cramps, because it provides muscle relaxation, thereby benefiting the entire system (7 Best Home Remedies for Period Pain Relief, 2023).

Based on Kitab Tib, there are three types of menstruation, which include “Senggugut Bangkai”, “Senggugut Lintah” and “Senggugut Bunga”. There are a few options that can be chosen from the Kitab Tib. The Chinese tradition is quite different from Kitab Tib's ways. Traditional Chinese herbs are commonly used to treat different menstrual problems. They are usually combined into specific blends that vary from practitioner to practitioner. Meanwhile, Ayurveda commonly uses cooking ingredients such as spices as a remedy.

5.2 Delayed Menstruation

According to Deligeoroglou et al (2010), amenorrhea, commonly referred to as delayed menstruation, is a medical condition characterised by the absence of menstrual bleeding in females who are in their reproductive years. Amenorrhea is defined as the prolonged absence or delay of menstruation beyond the expected duration of the typical menstrual cycle, which typically ranges from 21



to 35 days. It also has two types of amenorrhea which are primary amenorrhea and secondary amenorrhea.

Table 2: Comparative Analysis for Delayed Menstrual

Kitab Tib	TCM	Ayurveda
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take black glutinous rice flour, seven peppercorns, rice flour, nutmeg, and halia padi (ginger); all the ingredients must be chopped; use lime juice; then eat three in the morning or seven in the morning, and while taking the medicine, use warm water. Also, do not drink cold or hot water. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequently employed interventions encompass acupuncture, herbal medicine, dietary modifications, and adjustments to one's lifestyle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> utilization of herbal preparations, alterations in dietary patterns, modifications in lifestyle practices, implementation of stress management strategies, engagement in regular physical activity, prioritization of adequate rest, participation in yoga sessions, and incorporation of meditation practices.

Consequently, based on the research from the Kitab Tib, delayed menstruation, or amenorrhea, can be defined as a condition in which a woman does not have menstrual bleeding. Nevertheless, the Kitab Tib did not provide a more comprehensive discovery regarding the significance of delayed menstruation throughout the study. Research by Zhou & Qu (2010) stated that the phenomenon of amenorrhea, characterised by the absence of menstrual flow, is interpreted within the framework of traditional Chinese medicine as an imbalance of Qi (the vital energy) and Blood within the human body. In addition, amenorrhea, also known as delayed menstruation, is a physiological condition characterised by disruptions in the harmonious circulation of Qi and Blood within the body. From this study, there is an incredibly significant difference between the medical methods of the Malay community and the Chinese community. It is because traditional Chinese medicine adopts a comprehensive approach to address the concerns, with a primary emphasis on the restoration of bodily equilibrium.

Dhruva et al. (2014) in their research provide an explanation of amenorrhea, which is commonly referred to as delayed menstruation. It is a condition characterised by an imbalance in the doshas and the reproductive system within the human body. The principles of Ayurveda strive to reinstate the equilibrium of these doshas to promote holistic health and well-being. Delayed menstruation can be attributed to several factors, including hormonal imbalances, elevated stress levels, inadequate dietary patterns, and the presence of underlying health conditions. Panchakarma therapies, encompassing detoxification and rejuvenation techniques, may be advised to restore equilibrium and optimise the functioning of the reproductive system. It is advisable to seek the guidance of a certified Ayurvedic practitioner to obtain a customised diagnosis and treatment regimen that considers specific symptoms, medical history, and other relevant factors.



What is expressed, nevertheless, after viewing Indian traditional medicine, is quite different. This is because, even though the three forms of traditional medicine have the same meanings, they all practice medicine in truly diverse and distinctive ways.

5.3 Bleeding

Bleeding, according to Johnson et al. (2019), also known as haemorrhage, is defined as the acute loss of blood from a damaged blood vessel. The bleeding can be minor, such as when the superficial vessels in the skin are damaged, leading to petechiae and ecchymosis. It can also have a significant impact, resulting in a constellation of symptoms that is more ambiguous, which include changes in vital signs and altered mental status. There are two types of haemorrhaging, which are external and internal. External bleeding can come from a traumatised wound or a body orifice. Internal bleeding requires a prominent level of clinical suspicion obtained through a thorough history and physical, laboratory tests, imaging, and close monitoring of vital signs. Particularly in the acute trauma population, haemorrhage is a leading factor in potentially avoidable fatalities (Johnson et al., 2019).

Table 3: Comparative Analysis for Bleeding

Kitab Tib	TCM	Ayurveda
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> take a handful of salang leaves with turmeric, grind it until it becomes mushy and drink the essence. Then, rub the dung or starch on the stomach of the person suffering from this disease. take jernang and manjakani (Oak Galls) together and blend, after that drink the essence (Andini et al., 2020). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yunnan Baiyao is one of the herbs that is frequently used to treat bleeding. This popular Chinese herbal remedy is frequently used to stop bleeding and expedite wound healing. In cases of external bleeding, internal bleeding, or post-surgical bleeding, it is frequently applied topically or taken internally (Borchers, 2015). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use turmeric, also referred to as "haldi" in Hindi. It has antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties. Make a paste out of turmeric powder and a little water to stop bleeding. Directly smear the paste onto the afflicted area (All Things Health, 2022). Indian people always consume fresh amla juice or mix amla powder with water and drink it (Healthline, 2020).

To treat bleeding diseases according to the Kitab Tib, aside from that, herbs such as jernang are also used to treat this disease. 'Jernang' (in the Indonesian language), also called "dragon's blood", refers to the deep and bright red resin obtained from the seeds of rattan palm (*Daemonorops*), which is only suitable to thrive in the forests of Aceh (Andini et al., 2020). Traditional Chinese medicine has a long history of treating bleeding disorders with a variety of herbs and techniques. Turmeric is one of many traditional Indian medicines that are thought to be effective in treating bleeding. Furthermore, Indian gooseberry is another treatment to cure bleeding. Indian gooseberry, known as "amla", is a reliable source of antioxidants and vitamin C. It is believed to strengthen blood vessels



and encourage clotting.

5.4 Menstrual Medicine

The menstrual cycle is regulated by a complex hormonal mechanism that involves the interaction of multiple hormones, including estrogen, progesterone, follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH), and luteinizing hormone (LH) (Hennegan et al., 2021). Menstrual pain, based on modern medicine, is the existence of uncomfortable uterine cramps, which are a typical cause of pelvic discomfort and menstrual disorders that happen throughout menstruation, also called Dysmenorrhea (Bernardi et al., 2017).

Table 4: Comparative Analysis for Menstrual Medication

Kitab Tib	TCM	Ayurveda
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Senggugut bangkai" may be treated using a finger-length of non-flowering pandan tubers, non-flowering Champaka flowers, a handful of basil leaves, and three different-sized noni fruits. A pandan sweet potato should have its peel removed and be well washed. After gathering all the rice husks, burn them. Next, gather the ashes and immerse them in water. After chilling, the water is then put on a dish. Then cut the tuber of pandan, mengkudu, basil, and Champaka flower into slices, add water, and mist, and eat in the morning. • "Senggugut Lintah," it is suggested to prepare a mixture consisting of a handful of benalu leaves, seven white peppers, and a single clove of garlic. The ingredients should be ground into a pulp, incorporating a small amount of vinegar. This mixture should be consumed three times in the morning. The effectiveness of the subject matter is evident. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attributed to several prevailing patterns, namely Qi and Blood deficiency, Liver Qi stagnation, Kidney Yang deficiency, and Blood stasis. • The treatment modalities commonly employed in traditional Chinese medicine encompass acupuncture, herbal interventions, dietary modifications, and lifestyle adaptations. Acupuncture is employed as a therapeutic intervention to modulate menstrual cycles, enhance vascular circulation, and mitigate the discomfort associated with menstrual disorders (Zhang et al., 2021). • It is advisable to make dietary adjustments to promote menstrual health, which may involve incorporating nutrient-rich foods such as dark leafy greens, warm soups, and sources of iron and B vitamins (Zhang et al., 2021). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encompasses the delicate task of harmonizing the Doshas, purifying the physical body, and fostering a state of equilibrium. Ayurvedic herbs, namely Ashoka, Shatavari, Lodhra, and Guduchi, are employed to address menstrual imbalances, promote hormonal equilibrium, regulate the flow of menstruation, and alleviate associated discomfort. • To promote optimal menstrual health, it is advisable to adopt a well-rounded lifestyle, implement effective stress management techniques, and adhere to a suitable dietary regimen (Vyas & Kori, 2023).



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- "senggugut bunga", it is recommended to gather enough **pecan flowers, kumuk leaves, the apex of the roof, rice, ginger**, and three sets of seven **pepper grains**, along with a quantity of rice equivalent to the length of one's palm. The suggested procedure involves pulverising the pulp into pancake-like shapes and consuming them before sleep throughout three consecutive evenings.
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According to Kitab Tib, there are a few types of menstrual pain. For example, first, "Senggugut Bangkai". 'Senggugut' means 'menstrual pain', while 'Bangkai' means 'carcass', as senggugut bangkai smells like decaying blood. The second example is "Senggugut Lintah" (Lintah in Malay is a leech), which smells like fish, and finally, "Senggugut Bunga" (Bunga means flower) that smells good. Besides, traditional Chinese medicine places significant importance on menstrual health as an indicator of a woman's general well-being. It prioritises the maintenance of a harmonious flow of Qi and the equilibrium of reproductive organs such as the liver, spleen, and kidneys. Ayurveda places significant importance on menstrual health as a fundamental component of a woman's holistic wellness and the equilibrium of Doshas that are vata, pitta and kapha (Tinsley & Grant, 2020). Menstrual disorders encompass imbalances of Doshas that are influenced by several factors such as lifestyle, dietary choices, stress levels, and other related elements.

6.0 Conclusion

The National Library of Malaysia's Kitab Tib collection comprises manuscripts that suggest cures for a variety of diseases that focus on women, such as menstruation and postpartum depression. These manuscripts provide important insights into traditional Malay medical practices as well as the many techniques and treatments used within the Malay medical system. The comparison between Kitab Tib treatments for women's ailments to Chinese and Indian ways of traditional medicine (especially Ayurveda) shows how every culture has its remedies and beliefs, even on curing something. This study may provide useful insights into the varied cultural viewpoints and practices around women's health in these systems. Researchers may obtain a better grasp of the rich legacy and cultural traditions associated with healthcare by researching and conserving information from Kitab Tib and other traditional medical systems. This study adds to the larger area of comparative traditional medicine by allowing cross-cultural learning and revealing useful insights for the development of integrative healthcare methods that draw on the strengths of many traditional systems.



The research has pointed out the practices that might not be well-known to current generations. In times gone by, when the people lived more or less together in villages with not very good access to doctors, they resolved their medical problems with whatever natural remedies were available to them. Healers among the locals, known as dukun or pawang, believed they were able to cure diseases with whatever means were at their disposal. From fragrant flowers to medicinal herbs and leaves, the villagers tried plants and plant derivatives, now known to be a mix of effective remedies and some perhaps simply the result of trial and error.

The patchwork of culture of our country contains a plethora of traditional healing methods, especially among women. Back in those days, villagers were resourceful; they'd explore their surroundings to discover remedies that could be used to restore health. It is necessary to document these endangered practices so that knowledge can be protected and passed on. In a time when modern medicine may not furnish answers, looking into the past may offer alternative methods to healing and understanding the world around us.

Acknowledgement

We wish to thank the National Centre for Malay Manuscripts and the National Library of Malaysia for their generous help in seeing this paper through. The guidance and suggestions of the officers have carried it from idea to completion. There are special thanks to our lecturer, the inspiration of her constructive comments, which will guide us in the next venture into the rich culture of Malay medical remedies, with particular reference to the Kitab Tib.

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