

# Is Ear Cupping (Wet Cupping) Effective in Treating Neonatal Jaundice?

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## Editorial letter

Neonatal hyperbilirubinemia is observed in more than 60% of newborns in the first week of life(1). It typically resolves within 7 to 14 days but in some infants, may become severe with risk for bilirubin-induced morbidity or mortality (2). Therefore, by using approved treatments we can prevent complications and neonatal death. Unfortunately, some recent articles refer to treatments that are not designed with the correct methodology(3, 4).

We know There are some main and adjuvant therapies for neonatal jaundice that include phototherapy, exchange transfusion, metalloporphyrins, intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIG), clofibrate-laxatives, ursodeoxycholic acid, fluid therapy, massage, enema, herbal remedies or Ethnomedicinal Plants (5).

Therefore, if we use new or unusual treatments that have not yet been approved, we should not deprive the baby of proven treatments.

Especially when we know sometimes the neurological complications caused by jaundice very late.

Also we know there are different types of neonatal jaundice, for this reason when we want to decide on the type of treatment, we must know the type of neonatal jaundice.

Now the important and basic question is that:

Can it be claimed that ear cupping is useful for treating all types of infant jaundice?

Is there a document to explain the mechanism of reducing jaundice with ear cupping?

Unfortunately, according to our investigation, we did not find any hadith or religious text that recommends ear cupping for newborns, either for

jaundice or for other diseases.

Even in religious text and hadiths, cupping isn't recommended before 4 months after birth.

Also we did not find the history of this treatment (ear cupping for neonatal jaundice), even in traditional medicine texts.

Of course, some authors have claimed that; "wet cupping filters both hydrophilic and hydrophobic material through high-pressure filtration"(3).

This theory seems to be unacceptable considering because we taking only less than 1- 2 cc of blood from the baby.

How this small amount of blood draw, can cause bilirubin to be filtered from the circulation?

We did not find the history of this treatment even in traditional medicine texts.

Finally, this treatment (wet cupping or ear cupping) may be investigated and its usefulness proven or rejected. But before proving a treatment method, morally and legally, its use must be obtained with informed consent in the framework of licensed research.

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