

## GURAH AND TRADITIONAL MEDICINE IN HADITH: Challenges and Potential in Modern Era

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### ***Abstract***

*Gurah, a traditional Islamic medical practice, faces a critical juncture marked by conflicting interpretations of hadith and the dominance of evidence-based biomedicine. This study investigates the epistemological position of gurah within hadith literature, its reception among contemporary scholars and practitioners, and its potential role in modern integrative healthcare. Employing a descriptive-analytical method, the research draws on primary hadith sources referencing medical practices and in-depth interviews with gurah practitioners affiliated with Jam'iyah Ruqyah Aswaja (JRA) in North Sumatra. Thematic analysis reveals two primary scholarly perspectives: one affirms gurah as part of prophetic medicine, emphasizing its preventive and therapeutic values in line with Islamic health ethics; the other maintains a more critical stance, underscoring the need for empirical validation through modern clinical studies. The study highlights a pressing challenge: gurah must establish scientific credibility without losing its Islamic identity. Nevertheless, it continues to serve communities committed to traditional healing methods. The persistence of gurah in grassroots healthcare illustrates the resilience of Islamic medical traditions amid global medical homogenization. Moreover, its practice reflects a living dialogue between faith-based healing and modern science. The findings propose an interdisciplinary model that integrates gurah into contemporary medical discourse through collaboration between Islamic scholars and biomedical experts. Such a framework not only preserves religious authenticity, but also aligns with global standards of healthcare efficacy and safety. By foregrounding a rarely examined intersection of hadith studies,*

*traditional healing, and medical science, this study contributes to a more inclusive and culturally rooted understanding of healthcare, urging further exploration of Islamic medical heritage within modern scientific paradigms.*

**Keywords:** *gurah; hadith; traditional medicine*

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## Introduction

The increasing necessity to incorporate *gurah* into contemporary medical frameworks using a standardized scientific methodology has become a more pressing concern in the current healthcare landscape. Traditional medicine, which holds significant value in the health culture of numerous societies, is frequently based on practices transmitted across generations (Rupani & Chavez 2018, 306). Within the Islamic framework, the hadith is pivotal in various life aspects, including health (Wendry et al. 2020, 215). The Prophet Muhammad provided several medical guidelines through his actions and sayings, which were subsequently interpreted as medical insights. Elements of prophetic medicine, such as *ruqyah*, cupping, honey consumption, and black cumin, are regarded as components of the Islamic medical tradition (Adnir & Harahap 2024, 649).

Traditional medicine was the primary choice for a large population in the past, particularly due to the limited availability of modern healthcare facilities. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2023 indicates that approximately 30% of the Indonesian population continues to utilize traditional medicine as a supplementary or alternative option to contemporary medicine (Nugrahanti et al. 2024, 471). This trend illustrates that despite advancements in technology and medical science, traditional practices like *gurah* remain significant, especially in developing nations such as Indonesia (Ibeneme et al. 2017, 16).

Nonetheless, the current age poses considerable challenges for traditional medicine. Many individuals now prefer modern treatments, which are more systematic and grounded in scientific evidence, as they are deemed more trustworthy and effective (Zhang et al. 2025). This situation often leads to skepticism regarding the relevance of traditional practices, such as *gurah*, in today's healthcare landscape. A significant hurdle is the

insufficient scientific research validating the efficacy and safety of practices like *gurah*. For instance, robust scientific studies frequently fail to substantiate claims that *gurah* successfully clears the respiratory tract and alleviates respiratory issues (Yuslem et al. 2024, 55). In an era where modern medicine operates under strictly regulated evidence-based medical criteria, this represents a major challenge for the broader acceptance of traditional medicine (Choudhury et al. 2023).

On the other hand, *gurah* holds significant social and cultural importance within Indonesian society. This practice is not merely seen as a part of cultural heritage but is also frequently linked to Islamic teachings. Nonetheless, some scholars question whether *gurah* is genuinely rooted in authentic Islamic doctrines or is merely a local tradition lacking a solid religious foundation (Yuslem et al. 2024, 53). One of the challenges modern society faces is the limited availability of health services, particularly in rural regions. According to data from the Indonesian Ministry of Health, about 40% of the rural population struggles to access healthcare facilities (Presty & Situmorang 2023, 141). In this scenario, traditional medicine practices like *gurah* can temporarily fulfill the community's health needs. However, to boost public confidence and ensure safety, additional research is necessary to provide empirical evidence concerning the efficacy and safety of this practice.

Previous studies on *gurah* and traditional medicine in hadith have been conducted using various approaches. Khaliim analyzed the hadith narrated by al-Tirmidzî regarding *gurah* by assessing the quality of the *sanad* and *matan* and connecting it with modern medical views. As a result, the hadith was considered *sahih lidzâtihi* (Khaliim 2022, 78). However, there are differences in opinions between the teachings of the hadith and the medical perspective on the safety of *gurah*. Huda examined the practice of *gurah* at the BHC Semarang based on *tibb al-nabawî*, finding that patients viewed it as an affordable hadith-based treatment using natural ingredients (Huda 2019, 58). Park & Canaway discussed the importance of traditional medicine in ASEAN, which is more culturally accepted than conventional medicine, and its potential to improve access to health care (Park & Canaway 2019). Nurochmah et al. (2024) explored the Kampung Naga community that combines traditional medicine and modern services, adopting a holistic approach for optimal healing. Haque et al. (2018) examined the integration of religion in traditional medicine in

rural communities in Bangladesh, revealing the role of religion and magical elements as part of the therapeutic function.

Even though some research has explored *gurah* through the lenses of hadith and medicine, as well as the fusion of traditional and contemporary medical practices, there remains a lack of in-depth studies that connect *gurah* with hadith. Most investigations tend to emphasize the health-related aspects or the practice of *gurah* without establishing a direct relationship with hadith texts. Furthermore, research that combines modern medical perspectives with hadith interpretations concerning *gurah* is still scarce. The importance and innovation of this research are found in its endeavor to explicitly connect *gurah* with hadith as both a theological and scientific foundation. *Gurah* shows significant promise if subjected to scientific evaluation, particularly in otolaryngology. Preliminary studies indicate that *gurah* may assist in cleansing the respiratory system and enhancing vocal quality, though these assertions require additional confirmation. For instance, research into the herbal components utilized in *gurah* has revealed anti-inflammatory and antiseptic characteristics pertinent to treating respiratory issues. This strategy not only creates prospects for *gurah* as a complementary treatment approach but also reinforces its role within the realm of modern medicine.

This study centers on examining how relevant hadiths can be applied to validate and comprehend *gurah* as a traditional therapy. It aims to analyze hadiths associated with conventional healing, assess *gurah*'s compliance with sharia framework, and investigate its potential incorporation into contemporary medical practice through scientific lens. By merging textual examination of hadith with scientific validation, this study addresses a previously overlooked gap in the literature. The foundational argument is that if *gurah* is substantiated by hadith principles and exhibits scientific support for its effectiveness, it could become an integral component of a holistic treatment model in today's healthcare landscape. Consequently, the study has practical implications for integrating *gurah* into modern medicine through scientific methodologies to enhance its credibility and societal acceptance.

### Research Method

A descriptive-analytical approach is deemed appropriate to apply in this study for analyzing hadith texts and scientific literature to explore the position of *gurah* within Islamic tradition and its challenges and opportunities in the modern era. This approach allows an in-depth analysis of relevant hadith sources and compares them with contemporary scientific literature to gain a holistic understanding of *gurah* as a form of traditional medical practice. The primary sources include classical collections of hadith, such as *Sunan al-Tirmidzî* (published in 1987 by al-Tirmidzî) and *Musnad Ahmad* (published in 1995 by Ahmad ibn Hanbal) as well as commentaries such as *Tuḥfat al-Ahwadzî* (published in 1993 by al-Mubârukfurî) and *al-Ṭibb al-Nabawî* (published in 1999 by Ibn al-Jauzî). This study also refers to modern scientific literature discussing the efficacy of *gurah* in contemporary medicine, including articles by Taur and Patil, Maulana, Triatmoko, Nugraha, and others.

Data collection was carried out systematically in several stages. Relevant hadiths were identified through the *takhrîj al-hadîs* method, using the book *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras li Alfâdz al-Nabawî* (1936 by A.J. Wensinck). Modern literature was selected based on thematic relevance, the source's credibility, and its impact on the discussion of traditional medicine. In addition, data were also obtained through in-depth interviews with *gurah* practitioners at Jam'iyah Ruqyah Aswaja (JRA) North Sumatra, including Dr. Habib Rahmansyah, S.Pd.I., M.Hum. (a religious figure at JRA), Joko Wahyono and Purwanto (experts in herbal treatments and *ṭibb al-nabawî*), three patients undergoing *gurah* therapy, and Dr. Muzdalifah (a medical expert at JRA). These interviews aimed to understand the practical experiences and perspectives related to *gurah* therapy.

Qualitative data analysis was conducted using a thematic method to identify key patterns and themes in the hadith texts, scholarly interpretations, and modern literature. The analysis procedure involved coding data into thematic categories, narrative interpretation to contextualize the hadith, and synthesis between traditional and modern findings to evaluate the potential integration of *gurah* in a holistic treatment approach. This approach is expected to reveal the challenges faced by the practice of *gurah* in the modern era, the debate among scholars regarding its legal status, and the impact of modern medical advances on the relevance of *gurah* in Islamic tradition.

Results and Discussion  
Gurah in Hadith

When examining hadith, the suggested treatment, or *tibb al-nabawī* are primarily grounded in hadiths outlining techniques such as *hijamah* (cupping), *habbatus sauda* (black cumin), honey, and the utilization of *zam-zam* water (Adnir & Harahap 2024, 650). These hadiths highlight the significance of natural remedies derived from God’s creations as healers. Regarding *gurah*, in the realm of traditional medicine, it refers to a method for cleansing the nasal cavity and respiratory tract using specific liquids, commonly used for various health issues, including sinusitis, colds, and other respiratory complications (Yuslem et al. 2024, 55). In Arabic, *gurah* may be referred to as *al-saūt* and is present in multiple versions of *sahih* (authentic) hadith compilations such as *Sunan al-Tirmidzī* and *Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal* (Wensinck 1936, 1:464). Table 1 summarized these sources.

Table 1  
Primary Hadith References on Gurah

Mukharrij (Compiler)	Gurah Hadith Collection	
	Rawi (Narrator)	Hadith Number
al-Tirmidzī	Ibn ‘Abbās	2047, 2048, 2053
Ahmad ibn Hanbal	‘Aishah	25371

Al-Tirmidzī records three versions of the hadith narrated by Ibn ‘Abbās. The first is found in the *Abwāb al-Tibb*, in the chapter titled *Mā Jā’a fī al-saūt wa Ghairih*, where the Prophet said, *Muhammad ibn Madduwaih told us that ‘Abdurahman ibn Hammād ash-Shu’aishī narrated from ‘Abbād ibn Mansur, from ‘Ikrimah, from Ibn ‘Abbās, who said that the Messenger of Allah stated, “The best medicine you can use are al-saūt (gurah), ladūd (medicine dripped into the patient’s mouth), al-hijāmah (cupping), and al-mashī (a medicine for emptying the stomach).” When the Prophet Muhammad was ill, his companions gave him ladūd. After they had done so, he said, “Give them ladūd as well, no one should take ladūd except ‘Abbās”* (al-Tirmidzī 1975, 4:388).

The second version is also mentioned in the book *Abwāb al-Tibb*, in the same chapter. The Prophet said,

"Muhammad ibn Yahya has told us, Yazîd ibn Harun narrated to us, 'Abbâd ibn Mansur from 'Ikrimah from Ibn 'Abbâs reported, Allah's Messenger said, "Indeed, the best medicine for you to are *al-ladûd* and *al-saût*, cupping and *al-mashî*. And the best substance you can use for your eyes is *al-ismid* (a type of eyeliner stone/kohl), because it will sharpen your vision and grow your hair" (al-Tirmidzî 1975, 4:388).

Next, the third version is found in *Abwâb al-Tibb*, in the chapter *Mâ Jâ'a fi al-Hijamah*, where the Prophet said,

"Abdu ibn Humaid has told us, reporting from al-Nadr ibn Shumail, who narrated from 'Abbâd ibn Mansur. He said, "I heard 'Ikrimah said: Ibn Abbâs had three children, all of whom practiced cupping. Two of them earned wages from their cupping and gave him part of their earnings." Ibn Abbâs said that The Prophet said, "The best among people is the cupper, who draws out blood, relieves the spine, and sharpens vision." He continued, "Verily when the Prophet was taken on the *mi'râj* (the ascension to the heavens), he did not pass by any group of angels without them advising him, "You should perform cupping." The Prophet also said, "In fact, the best days for cupping are the 17th, 19th, and 21st of the month." He further said, "The best medicine you can use are *al-saût*, *ladûd*, *al-hijamah*, and *al-mashî*." Truly Rasulullah was treated by Ibn Abbâs and another companion. The Prophet instructed that everyone else remain silent. And no one treated him except his uncle Ibn 'Abbâs" (al-Tirmidzî 1975, 4:391).

Ahmad also included this hadith in *Musnad al-Nisâ*, chapter *Musnad al-Ṣadiqah 'Aishah bint al-Ṣiddiq*. The Prophet said:

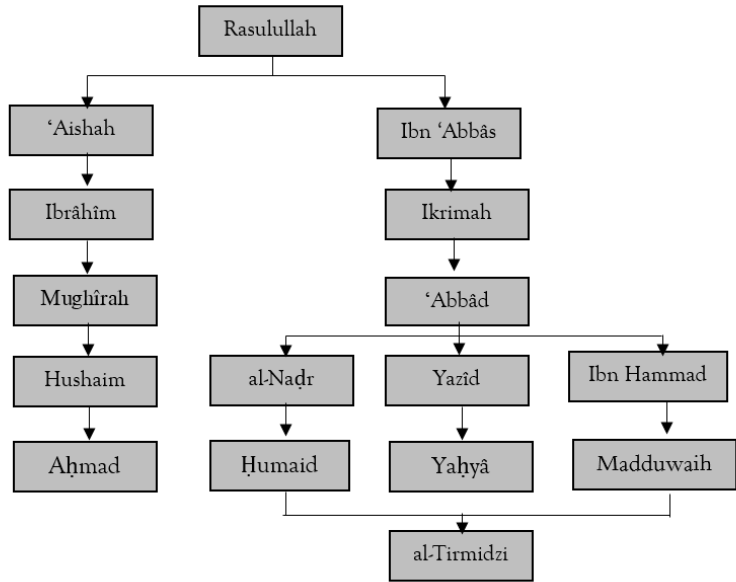
"Hushaim narrated to us from Mughîrah, who reported from Ibrâhîm, from 'Aishah who said, the Prophet said, "The appropriate treatment with a hot iron (*kay*) is applied to the area of bodily pain; for throat ailments, the remedy is *gurah* administered through the nose; and for respiratory discomfort, the medicine should be placed into the mouth" (Ḥanbal 1995, 42: 229).

The visual scheme in Figure 1 helps readers understand the path of each hadith *sanad* in al-Tirmidzî and Ahmad Ibn Ḥanbal's narrations.

This hadith is considered *sahih* as explained by al-Syâkir in his study of *Sunan al-Tirmidzî*. Al-Mubârafûrî describes *al-saût* or *gurah* as a treatment to remove mucus or fluid from the body, especially through the nasal passages or throat. He emphasized that it is one of the effective ways to cleanse the body of excess elements to improve health. Although *gurah* is mentioned in hadith as one recommended treatment, al-Mubârafûrî

stressed that this method must be mindful of patient’s health condition and the relevance of current medical practices. He also reminded the importance of caution so as not to cause negative impacts on the patient (al-Mubarakfûrî 1993, 6: 170).

Figure 1  
Scheme of Hadith *Sanad* in al-Tirmidzî and Ahmad Ibn Ḥanbal



Ibn ‘Arâbî (1997, 3: 213-214) and al-Suyutî (1997, 1: 485) support this view, asserting that *gurah* can cleanse the body of excess mucus or fluids, which often disrupt respiratory system. However, they also mentioned that its effectiveness is not universal and must be adjusted to the patient’s physical condition and the type of disease being treated. They further emphasized that performing *gurah* requires expertise to maximize its effectiveness and prevent unwanted side effects. This view is strengthened by Ibn Ḥajar, who stated that although *gurah* is referred to as “the best medicine” in some narrations, this cannot be applied for all cases. According to Ibn Ḥajar, the mention of *gurah* in the hadith indicates that the Prophet did not limit the treatment method, but rather recommended selecting therapies appropriate to individual condition and the type of disease (al-Asqalânî 1981, 30).

On the other hand, Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jauziyyah in *Zâd al-Ma’âd* has a more cautious view on *gurah*. He states that while it has benefits in certain



conditions, it can also be risky if done carelessly or without a clear medical justification. Ibn al-Qayyim emphasized that the best treatment is one aligned with the body's natural needs, and *gurah* is often considered too invasive for individuals whose health conditions are weak (al-Jauziyyah 2019, 4: 59).

Abû Nu‘aim al-Aṣbahânî in *al-Ṭibb al-Nabawî* also showed a critical attitude towards the generalization of certain medical practices, including *gurah*. He argued that the treatments mentioned in the hadith are closely related to local traditions or health conditions during the time of the Prophet. Therefore, al-Aṣbahânî suggested that methods such as *gurah* should not always be viewed as a medical obligation, but rather considered in light of modern medical advancements (al-Aṣbahânî 2006, 1: 371).

The scholars such as al-Mubârafî, Ibn Arâbî, al-Suyûṭî Ibn Ḥajar, Ibn Qayyim, and al-Aṣbahânî convey various perspectives on *gurah* as a therapeutic method recommended in hadith. Although most of them agree that *gurah* is beneficial for clearing the respiratory passages and reducing excess mucus, they also emphasize the importance of caution in its application. However, both Ibn Qayyim and al-Aṣbahânî warn against treating *gurah* as a universal treatment, considering the differences in individual conditions and the development of modern medical science.

Results from field interviews offer a more relevant viewpoint on the practice of *gurah* therapy in modern time. Habib Rahmansyah points out that *gurah* carries not just health benefits but also spiritual significance, as referenced in the Prophet's hadith. At Jam'iyah Ruqyah Aswaja (JRA) in North Sumatra, this therapy is regarded as scientifically valid, with most patients experiencing positive effects for both medical issues and enhancing voice quality. This is further supported by Dr. Muzdalifah, a medical professional at JRA, who described how *gurah* clears the respiratory system. However, she also cautioned about the possible dangers, such as infections or allergic reactions, if the procedure is not performed by qualified practitioners. Conversely, the experiences of Joko Wahyono and Purwanto show that this therapy is generally safe, despite limited scientific medical validation. The fact that most patients return for additional treatments proves a high-level satisfaction with this practice.

The experiences of individuals like Kamaluddin, Kurnia, and Muhammad Iqbal further support the efficacy of *gurah* therapy. Kamaluddin, who frequently dealt with nasal congestion, noticed an improvement in his breathing and found that his daily activities were no

longer disrupted. Kurnia, suffered from a chronic cough, felt revitalized after *gurah*, as the therapy effectively clearing thick mucus from her airways. Muhammad Iqbal, a Quran reciter, regularly undergoes *gurah* to enhance his vocal quality, claiming that his voice became louder and more consistent while reciting the Quran. These personal accounts illustrate that *gurah* offers health advantages and caters to specific needs, such as preserving vocal performance for the Quran reciters.

Considering the opinions of scholars and the interview results, it can be concluded that *gurah* therapy has significant benefits in the context of health and spirituality. However, it is important to ensure that this practice is carried out by experts and is adjusted to individual conditions. This approach can bridge the views of classical scholars with contemporary medical practices while emphasizing the importance of caution so that the benefits of *gurah* can be felt optimally without causing unwanted risks.

### **The Potential of Gurah as an Alternative Therapy in the Modern Era**

*Gurah* is a traditional therapeutic technique using herbal mixtures to cleanse the respiratory system. The procedure involves placing herbal droplets into the patient's nostrils to stimulate the release of excess mucus, which is believed to help easier breathing and prevent recurrent infections. *Gurah* shows potential as an alternative treatment within modern healthcare, particularly for ailments like sinusitis, asthma, and allergies. From a scientific perspective, *gurah* is believed to alleviate inflammation and soothe respiratory irritation. Using herbal plants like betel leaves, known for their anti-inflammatory and antiseptic properties, is beneficial for alleviating inflammation symptoms associated with sinusitis and allergic conditions (Taur & Patil 2011, 413). Preliminary studies also find that *gurah* may enhance respiratory function, particularly in those experiencing chronic issues due to pollution or environmental irritants (Joo et al. 2025).

However, further clinical research is needed to ensure its safety and effectiveness as a standardized medical therapy. One of the main challenges is the lack of regulation and strong scientific evidence. While several studies have shown that *gurah* can help improve voice quality for singers and the Quran readers (Nasrudin et al. 2017, 337), concerns remain regarding possible complications such as nasal mucosal irritation or secondary infections if the treatment is not performed by trained professionals (Gunawan & Widjaja 2023, 192). Table 2 summarizes the

interview Dr. Muzdalifah about the effectiveness and safety of *gurah* compared to conventional medical methods in treating respiratory conditions.

Table 2  
Comparison of the Effectiveness and Safety of *Gurah* and Conventional Medical Method

Aspects	Gurah	Conventional Medical Methods
Effectiveness	Anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, and mucus-clearing potential.	Clinically proven effectiveness using pharmacological treatments.
Safety	Requires expert supervision; risk of mucosal irritation and secondary infection.	Generally safe when performed accordingly; minimal side effects.
Cost	Relatively more affordable.	Varies, depending on the type of treatment and technology used.
Accessibility	Easily accessible in certain communities.	Need access to modern healthcare facilities.
Regulation	Lack of formal regulation.	Strictly regulated by health agencies.

Furthermore, although the herbal ingredients used in *gurah* treatments are diverse, Table 3 highlights the main components.

Table 3  
Primary Ingredients used in *Gurah* Therapy

Herbal Plant	Active Compounds	Therapeutic Effects
Betel Leaf	Phenol, Eugenol, Tannin	Anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, antibacterial
Turmeric	Curcumin	Anti-inflammatory, antioxidant
Ginger	Gingerol	Anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial

The findings show that betel leaves, turmeric, and ginger offer numerous important therapeutic properties, including anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, antibacterial, antioxidant, and antimicrobial benefits. Askari et

al. (2020) stated that betel leaves have active components such as flavonoids, tannins, and essential oils that inhibit bacterial growth and prevent infections. Gholamnezhad et al. (2015, 911) highlighted that turmeric, featuring curcumin as its primary active constituent, serves as a natural anti-inflammatory agent that effectively reduces inflammation while also provides antioxidant to shield the body from free radicals. Moreover, Gupta et al. (2025) found that ginger contains gingerol and shogaol, which not only offer antimicrobial benefits against a variety of pathogens but also possess anti-inflammatory characteristics that aid in alleviating inflammatory disorders within the body. The combined therapeutic benefits of these three ingredients position them as promising natural options for supporting health and preventing diseases.

Based on these findings, this current study convinces that *gurah* has great potential as an alternative treatment in the modern era because it utilizes natural herbal ingredients such as betel leaves, turmeric, and ginger which are rich in active compounds. The combination of these ingredients makes *gurah* not only effective in treating respiratory problems such as sinusitis and excess mucus but also safe and has minimal side effects. With a plant-based approach, *gurah* can be integrated into modern health therapy to meet the increasingly awareness of traditional herbal-based therapies.

### **Challenges in Developing Gurah within a Modern Medical Framework**

Traditional treatments, including *gurah*, faces various challenges in regulation, health standards, scientific validity, and skepticism from the modern medical community. In many countries, there is a demand of scientific evidence and safety for every form of therapy, including traditional ones (Aydinli & Doğan 2024, 866). This is often an obstacle for traditional practice, such as *gurah*, which lack extensive standardized clinical trials. For example, Dr. Muzdalifah explained that *gurah* involves dripping fluids into the nasal passages to remove mucus from the respiratory tract. Although effective for many patients, this procedure still carries risks, including possible infections or allergic reactions, if not performed by professionals. However, practitioners such as Joko Wahyono and Purwanto noted that there have been no cases of infection or serious complications in patients undergoing this therapy. In fact, the majority of patients return for follow-up treatment, some even coming from other regions.

Apart from regulatory challenges, *gurah* also faces obstacles from modern health standards that demand consistency in practice and methods (Zhang et al. 2025). Traditionally inherited *gurah* methods often vary from one practitioner to another, raising uncertainty regarding their safety. However, according to Habib Rahmansyah from Jam'iyah Ruqyah Aswaja (JRA) North Sumatra, *gurah* therapy not only has physical benefits but also spiritual value as conveyed in the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad who called it "the best treatment." This view is supported by empirical experience, where the majority of patients feel the health improvement after the therapy, both in respiratory health and vocal clarity.

Although the scientific evidence supporting *gurah* has not fully met the standards of modern medical research, patient experiences and practitioners' views show the great potential of this therapy as a natural and effective form of alternative treatment. Another challenge, such as skepticism from the modern medical community, remain significant (Young 1983, 1206). This is reinforced by the assumption that traditional medicine often lack a strong scientific basis, even though it has been used for centuries (McFarlane 2015, 62). However, according to Dr. Muzdalifah, ensuring the safety and effectiveness of *gurah* can be obtained with formal training and certification programs for practitioners. In addition, positive comments from patients such as Kamaluddin, Kurnia, and Iqbal show that *gurah* is not only relevant as a traditional treatment but also has a great chance of being accepted more widely if combined with adequate scientific evidence.

In addition to regulatory challenges, health standards, scientific validity, and skepticism of the modern medical community, traditional treatments like *gurah* also faces various social, economic, and environmental obstacles. One significant problem is the difference in public perception and acceptance. In modern society, increasingly exposed to Western technology and science-based medicine, traditional treatment is often regarded as old-fashioned, unscientific, or irrelevant (Soebahar et al. 2015, 193). As a result, its popularity and acceptance has declined, especially among younger generations who are more influenced by the modern medical paradigm (Foster 1977, 528).

Economic factor is also a significant challenge to the continuation of traditional practices. The high costs of research and development to provide scientific evidence for traditional practices are often

overwhelming, while the resources available for this practice are very limited (Chen 2022). Many traditional medicine practitioners come from marginalized communities who has lack access to large investment or support. This imbalance can lead to stagnation or decline in the quality of traditional practices due to a lack of adequate financial support (Burke et al. 2003, 1083).

In addition to the social and economic challenges, there are also issues related to intellectual property rights and the commercialization. In some cases, large companies or researchers from developed countries may exploit knowledge from traditional medicine for profit without acknowledging or compensating the original knowledge holders (Anugerah & Santoso 2022, 134). This not only results in unfair economic benefits, but also lack of recognition for the local communities that developed these treatments. Additionally, the commercialization of traditional medicine can lead to distortions in practice, as market pressures may lead to a reduction in quality or alterations to the original recipes in the pursuit of efficiency or financial gain (Sonjaya 2022, 41).

Environmental changes and loss of biodiversity pose a major challenge to traditional medicine. Many traditional therapies, including *gurah*, rely on natural resources. However, it is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain the ingredients due to deforestation, climate change, and environmental degradation. The loss of medicinal plants and other ingredients used in traditional medicine not only directly threatens this practice, but also endangers traditional knowledge related to their use (Kameswari 2023, 160).

Moreover, there are challenges related to education and training for a new generation of traditional medicine practitioners. In many areas, traditional knowledge is passed down orally from one generation to the next without a structured formal education system (Harahap & Utomo 2024, 133). This creates the risk that such knowledge can be lost or distorted over time. Amid the development of the modern education system, knowledge about traditional medicine is often not considered a priority. As a result, the younger generation is more interested in careers in modern medicine rather than continuing local healing traditions.

Another challenge is integrating traditional medicine into the formal healthcare system. Often, there is a wide gap between traditional and modern medicine, with both running independently and rarely interacting (Good et al. 1979, 143). The lack of collaboration and synergy

between traditional practitioners and conventional health professionals worsen this situation. The inability to bridge these two limits opportunities to incorporate traditional treatments into a more comprehensive healthcare system (Christie 1991, 550). Table 4 contains a comparison between modern medical regulations and the practice of *gurah* therapy.

Table 4

A Comparison of Modern Medical Regulations and *Gurah* Therapy Practices

Aspects	Modern Medical Regulations	Gurah Therapy Practice
Scientific Basis	Based on standardized clinical trials	Based on empirical experience
Safety	Governed through strict regulations	Depends on the practitioner's skills
Method Consistency	Standardized procedures across all facilities	Varies between practitioners
Supervision	Supervised by government health authorities	Generally lacks formal oversight
Training	Formal education and certification are mandatory	Traditional inheritance without a formal system

Despite the challenges, traditional medicine, including *gurah*, is in demand for global standardization. Modern healthcare prioritizes integration, scientific recognition, and enhanced collaboration between traditional and modern treatments. To meet this demand, efforts are being made to harmonize traditional practices with global medical standards while preserving their authenticity and cultural values.

An important first step is conducting comprehensive scientific research to validate traditional medicine claims. In modern healthcare, treatment standard is data-based scientific evidence from various structured and repeated studies (Sim 2016, 562). Some traditional medicine have been proven to gain international recognition after undergoing rigorous clinical trials, such as acupuncture (Liu et al. 2023, 352). In an interview, Habib Rahmansyah emphasized that *gurah* has spiritual value based on the Prophet's hadith, claiming it as "the best treatment." At Jam'iyah Ruqyah Aswaja (JRA) in North Sumatra, this

therapy is proven effective based on clinical experience, with many patients seeking it for treatment. However, Dr. Muzdalifah has reminded that although *gurah* has benefits, it also carries risks if performed without expertise, such as the possibility of infection or allergies. Therefore, it is important to conduct clinical research to prove the effectiveness, safety, and potential risks of this therapy. Such research can be conducted through collaboration between traditional practitioners, scientists, and academic institutions to produce credible data recognized by the global medical community.

The second requirement for standardization is the development of safe and consistent procedures. According to Dr. Muzdalifah, using appropriate materials and formal training for practitioners are important steps. A study by Carli et al. (2005, 55) found that formal training for practitioners increased diagnostic accuracy and treatment efficacy by 30%. Another study by Cacciamani et al. (2020, 517) revealed that standardization of medical materials by ensuring quality and safety contributed to a reduction in the risk of complications by 25%. For example, the *gurah* procedure at JRA abide by strict regulations, using safe natural ingredients and careful technique to minimize risks. In addition, educational institutions also play an important role in providing formal training. With accreditation from national and international health agencies, *gurah* can be recognized as a safe and consistent complementary therapy.

Third, collaboration between traditional medicine and modern health systems is an important step. The WHO has recognized the importance of integrating traditional medicine into the formal health system (Mutola et al. 2021). A real example of this collaboration can be seen from JRA patients, such as Kamaluddin, who felt the benefits of *gurah* therapy in overcoming respiratory disorders. He admitted that this therapy made his breathing easier and reduced his dependence on chemical drugs. In addition, Muhammad Iqbal, a reciter of the Quran, showed that *gurah* helps maintain his voice quality, enabling him to recite at higher tones. These experiences reflects the potential of *gurah* as a complementary therapy in maintaining vocal and respiratory health.

Fourth, inclusive and structured regulation is essential to ensure that traditional medicine not only meets global medical standards but also maintains its inherent cultural values. This is in line with the findings of Ashworth & Cloatre (2022, 481), that well-organized regulation can



expand the acceptance of traditional medicine internationally, without sacrificing distinctive cultural aspects. Meanwhile, Joko Wahyono and Purwanto stated that although supporting scientific evidence is still limited, clinical experience shows that *gurah* is both safe and effective, as proven by many patients returning for further treatment. Therefore, the government plays a strategic role by issuing policies that facilitate research and innovation in traditional medicine.

Fifth, amid global standardization efforts, it is important not to ignore the cultural roots of traditional treatments. The practices are often rooted in cultural and spiritual life of societies, so any study must include these values that accompany it (Khair 2015, 84). Habib Rahmansyah emphasized that *gurah*'s spiritual value is an integral part of its practice. Recognizing this cultural dimension is critical in the standardization process so that it not only focuses on biomedical measurements but also includes social and cultural values.

Sixth, modern technology can help traditional medicine adapt to global demands. For example, the use of technology to study the mechanism of herbal ingredients in *gurah* can provide additional evidence accepted by the global medical community. Modern diagnostic technology can also help evaluate the results of therapy more accurately (Dorsey et al. 2015, 585).

With these strategies, traditional treatments such as *gurah* can find its way to recognition within the global medical framework. This recognition requires a multidisciplinary approach involving science, policy, culture, and innovation while respecting the roots of its community. As experienced by patients like Kurnia, *gurah* therapy not only provides physical benefits but also provides a natural solution that suits the needs of modern society.

However, some of these arguments need to be further criticized. Regarding scientific research and validation, while collecting valid empirical data is essential, the main challenge lies in the methodology adopted to prove the effectiveness of *gurah* objectively and demonstrably through clinical trials that meet the standards of global medical community. Large-scale testing of *gurah* with strict controls remains unexplored by scholars. While standardization of practice and practitioner education is certainly relevant, balancing local wisdom with global medical standards can be a complex task. On the one hand, the authenticity of traditional medicine must be maintained, but on the other hand, to be

accepted internationally, *gurah* must meet strict safety and ethical standards.

Collaboration with formal health systems is a positive step, but not all health workers or institutions are ready or willing to accept *gurah* as part of the conventional medical approach. In addition, supporting regulations and policies need to be further studied in the context of differences in regulations across countries, and the challenges of creating regulations that can be implemented effectively without harming other medical practices.

Valuing local knowledge and cultural heritage is essential, but it must also be admitted that not all elements of traditional practices are grounded in scientific evidence sufficient for acceptance in the international medical field. This gap can result in bias or dismissal. Although technology and innovation present chances to modernize *gurah*, they still encounter challenges regarding acceptance and demonstrating scientific advantages. Therefore, even though these approaches are quite thorough, enacting them will necessitate interdisciplinary collaboration, solid scientific validation, and ample time to earn the trust of the global medical community.

## Conclusion

Although recognized as part of the Islamic medical tradition, *gurah* and other traditional treatments mentioned in the hadith faces various challenges in the modern era. One of the main challenges is the uncertainty of its religious and legal status, as scholars continue to differ on whether it is a recommended practice or was only relevant during the Prophet Muhammad's time. Several scholars, such as al-Mubarakfûrî, Ibn Arâbî, al-Suyûtî, and Ibn Hajar agree that *gurah* is beneficial for cleaning the respiratory tract and reducing excess mucus. However, Ibn Qayyim and al-Asbahânî warned against *gurah* being used as a universal treatment, considering the differences in individual conditions and the development of modern medical science.

In addition, advances in technology and modern medical science challenge the relevance of *gurah* among contemporary societies that prioritize a medical approach based on scientific evidence. Despite this, However, *gurah* remains potential in communities that adhere to traditional medicine. With the support of scientific research that confirms the benefits and safety of *gurah*, its existence has the potential to gain wider

acceptance. Therefore, it is important to hold a dialogue between Islamic medical tradition and modern medical science, to re-evaluate the position of *gurah* in the Islamic medicine context and as part of a holistic approach in the future medical world. In this regard, the debate on accepting *gurah* as a valid treatment method in Islam and its relevance in the modern medical world is a major issue that needs to be continuously explored.

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