

Health Conditions in Al-Khidr Sub-District Until 1968

Abrar Hamed Thamer¹, Miteb Khalaf Jaber Al-Rishawi²

Abstract

Throughout the Ottoman rule, the residents of Al-Khidr sub-district suffered from the deterioration of health conditions in the sub-district and the weakness of the health services provided due to the lack of financial allocations, as well as the exacerbation of social dilemmas, especially ignorance and poverty, which prompted the majority of the children of Al-Khidr to resort to folk medicine to treat the diseases they were suffering from. This led to the spread of many diseases among the population, and as a result of the continuous demand by the officials and the people of the sub-district to improve the health reality, a remarkable development occurred, especially during the royal era as a result of the government's interest in establishing a clinic in the sub-district to provide the best medical and treatment services to the people of Al- Khidr community, as well as to Filling with ponds and swamps that transmit diseases.

Keywords: *Health conditions, al-khidr sub-district, folk medicine.*

¹ Supervisor, College of Education for Human Sciences, Al-Muthanna University, Iraq.

² Professor, College of Education for Human Sciences, Al-Muthanna University, Iraq, abrar876fgh@gmail.com

Introduction

Al-Khidr sub-district was subjected to a dark historical era, its people suffered for a long period of deprivation as a result of the deteriorating general conditions, especially health conditions, which led to the spread of diseases, as well as ignorance and a low standard of living, and despite the large number of academic studies in Iraqi universities that were concerned with the study of local history and the study of social aspects. However, it did not shed light on the Al-Khidr sub-district, so we chose to study the health conditions in the Al-Khidr sub-district until 1968, because of the importance of this aspect in giving a picture of what the children of Al-Khidr were suffering at that stage from the deterioration of health services.

The nature of the study required dividing it into an introduction, three axes, and a conclusion. The first axis studied folk medicine in the Al-Khidr sub-district, focusing on the deteriorating health conditions in the Ottoman era and the accompanying shortage of health institutions, which prompted the population to turn to folk medicine. The British occupation, and then the royal era, and research on the extent to which the sons of Al-Khidr depend on folk medicine and its impact on treating diseases, and the second axis included

The development of health institutions in the Al-Khidr sub-district, as the construction aspect of the health centers in the sub-district, was clarified in terms of location, construction, allocated amounts, and their impact on providing treatment services. The conclusions reached by the research.

The First Axis: The Folk Medicine in Al-Khidr Sub-district

The health conditions in Iraq in general and al-Khidr in particular during the Ottoman era were deteriorating and low. The reason for the deterioration of these conditions is due to several factors, foremost of which are poverty and ignorance, the lack of doctors, the lack of health institutions, and the accompanying bad climatic conditions ⁽¹⁾, and the spread of these Epidemics and diseases among people as a result of their poverty and ignorance, which made them neglect the treatment of their patients⁽²⁾, especially in villages and rural areas that were far away from the city center, as well as the inadequacy of the roads linking them, which is a major obstacle between the countryside and the city in all aspects of life, including

transportation Patients to cities where health institutions are located ⁽³⁾, that is why charlatans and sorcery spread to treat diseases, and the spread of waste and lack of attention to the cleanliness of workplaces caused the spread of diseases and the death of many of them ⁽⁴⁾.

Health conditions began to improve after the British occupation of Samawah, so the occupation authorities realized the need to pay attention to the health aspect due to the bad climatic and health conditions faced by its forces. Therefore, it is necessary to develop health services to maintain the safety of its forces and keep them away from infectious diseases⁽⁵⁾. In addition to the occurrence of Samawah on the path of military movements, so the occupation authorities started to establish a hospital in December 1918, which was opened in the British camp in Samawah, and it was run by a doctor with the rank of officer assisted by one medical employee⁽⁶⁾, and despite this, there were no means of transportation between Samawah and Khidr only commercial boats.

In general, the health situation in Al-Khidr sub-district before the establishment of the monarchy was very bad, there was no care for the health aspect or the establishment of a dispensary in the sub-district whose presence was limited to Samawah.

The health reality in the sub-district continued by relying on folk medicine⁽⁷⁾, and as a result of the large number of diseases, some classes that did not have enough money to review the health center, such as farmers, some employees, workers, craftsmen and others, resorted to folk medicine, which represented the first attempts in treating diseases and was evidence of the human relationship nature and the extent to which it is affected by its customs and traditions to which illusions and superstitions have spread ⁽⁸⁾, rather they refer them to evil spirits and jinn, so they go to religious sheikhs and shrines or to charlatans, and these used to treat the sick in two ways, either by beating or burning with fire to expel those evil spirits, or giving some herbs and drugs whose harmful effects on the patient they do not know ⁽⁹⁾, and some of them write in order to earn a living, bearing symbols and words in a special language that people do not understand, so they write to the woman who has been abandoned by her husband or they write for a woman whose husband married another woman in addition to her, and for those who followed by jinn, for the sake of fail the magic, and the writing of mascot for children ⁽¹⁰⁾.

Folk medicine included many treatments, the most important of which is the treatment of various herbs and plants, in which roots, stems, twigs, and roses are used, as well as fruits ⁽¹¹⁾, and there appeared in the Al-Khidr sub-district some healers who inherited the profession of folk medicine from parents and grandparents on ancient popular foundations, and they had great credit for providing what they could do for the good of the people of the sub-district, as they used their homes as a place of work, and the most important of them were (Salbukh Abd al-Nabi) and (Haj Raddad) in the village of al-Dhahirah, where they treated children, because of their faces that turned yellow, which is called (Al-Khasasah).

He uses the sickle and cauterizes the patient with it after being heated over the fire and placing it over the patient's ear. This method is also used to treat patients who suffer from headaches and back pain (sciatica), whose symptoms are pain in the lower vertebra, hip, and leg. A thread in the patient's leg facilitates the exit of pus and healing ⁽¹²⁾, but in the village of Al Burisha, Hassoun Obaid became famous, which he practiced by Arab medicine. Through cauterization (weathering) in certain places of the head, as well as Treating navel disease (inflammation of the intestine), which causes muscle tension, general deformity, and intestinal disorders, by narrowing the belt on the patient's abdomen and pulling the hand, which is a successful treatment that has no alternative, and also treats some skin diseases as burn which called (mstachioia) and treatment through cauterization ⁽¹³⁾, as well as for their wages, most of them are free so that they seek God's pleasure, or they are satisfied with what the patient offers or who accompanies him ⁽¹⁴⁾.

Most of the barbers practiced the profession of folk medicine, and they used to circumcise boys, extract teeth, treat wounds, fix fractures, and explode boils⁽¹⁵⁾, while perfumers had an important impact in treating diseases due to the long experience and dealing with the aromatic materials they brought to prescribe folk medicines to treat some diseases⁽¹⁶⁾, Each perfumer in his shop contains all kinds of herbs and wild plants, and these quantities are taken from the seeds, roots of plants or herbs and prepared, either crushed finely and mixed with other foodstuffs eaten by the patient, or boiled by fire and then cooled, and the patient takes them on a medicinal drink ⁽¹⁷⁾, as well as Some elders treat the sick by reading some supplications, Quranic verses, and talismans ⁽¹⁸⁾.

As for the women in the sub-district, in case of childbirth, they go to the midwife called (Al-Houbeh) who specializes in childbirth, and a special bed is prepared for her, and she is

offered a drink that consists of a group of mixed liquids called (Arakat himself) that she drinks before giving birth, and the room evaporates with the ram, and when the baby descends, she receives it The midwife cuts the navel, washes his body with warm water and soap, wraps his head and swaddles him, and delivers him to his family ⁽¹⁹⁾. In addition to this work, she enjoys a respectable social position among the people of the sub-district, both men and women, and in most cases, this profession is inherited by women from their mothers ⁽²⁰⁾, and the midwife treats diseases that affect children after birth, such as diseases (anemia, diarrhea, and others). By giving the mother some herbs to be eaten, and some of them treat the child who suffers from dysphagia as a result of continuous breastfeeding, and also treat the convulsion that affects children due to an incorrectly carrying ⁽²¹⁾.

The Second Axis

The Development of Health Institutions in Al-Khidr sub-district

Hospitals and clinics are among the most important curative health institutions that enable the health administration to provide its services in a normal way. However, the Iraqi brigades, including AL- Diwaniyah Brigade, have been suffering since the formation of the monarchy until the end of the fourth decade of the last century from a great shortage in health formations, and perhaps among the reasons are The lack of financial allocations for the health sector and the lack of trained medical personnel to work in curative health institutions⁽²²⁾, as well as the concentration of most clinics in villages and areas with small and remote population density, and the lack of capabilities to establish hospitals ⁽²³⁾. In 1938, the first health center was opened in the Al-Khidr sub-district ⁽²⁴⁾, located on the great side on the left bank of the Euphrates River. The center consisted of a doctor's room, a room for dressing patients, needles, and a simple pharmacy. A Christian from Baghdad Governorate ⁽²⁵⁾, and it was mentioned in the report of the administrative inspector for the year 1939 about health in Al-Khidr sub-district, that the center is run by the dresser Muhammad Ismail, with a salary of (5) dinars with a service employee, and that the daily rate of patients is (30) patients per day, The building of this center is owned by the Municipality of Al-Khidr at an annual rent of (12,000) dinars, and accordingly, the inspector decided to refer the building of the center to a contractor for an amount of (649) dinars ⁽²⁶⁾, which included the work of the health center in medical and minor surgical treatments, medical examinations for school students, and conducting Health inspection of school students, combating communicable diseases and

preventing their spread, spreading health propaganda among male and female students and the educational staff, as well as equipping schools with medicines and first aid materials ⁽²⁷⁾.

The shortage of medical staff in the sub-district led to an increase in pressure on the clinic, as the doctor's role was limited to medication and dressing without having knowledge of diseases and their treatment, which increased the suffering of patients, especially in villages and rural areas, so the sons of Al-Khidr had to visit the hospital in Samawah, In most cases, the auditors return without receiving treatment due to the increase in the number of patients and the narrowness of the hospital ⁽²⁸⁾, which was managed by the doctor (Saeed Al-Najjar) ⁽²⁹⁾, who runs the unit of Samawah Hospital and its clinic at the same time, which led to neglecting the treatment of patients and taking care of their health ⁽³⁰⁾.

As for the veterinary institutions, the administration of Al- Diwanayah Brigade started between 1960-1961 to establish a veterinary clinic with a residential house for the doctor in Al-Khidr sub-district, at an amount of (4500) dinars ⁽³¹⁾, and a locality in the Great side. The first veterinarian in the clinic was Sayed Ahmed from the people of Samawah, and one of his duties was Monitoring the slaughterhouses of animals, supervising the meat and ensuring its safety from disease, as well as providing some primitive treatments to the animals ⁽³²⁾.

The lack of health institutions in Al-Khidr sub-district and the increase in the number of patients necessitated the opening of a new medical clinic in the village of Al-Budairi in 1961 ⁽³³⁾, with a home for the health employee ⁽³⁴⁾.

The Third Axis: Diseases in AL- Khidr Society

Cholera (Al-Haydha) The cholera disease (Al-Haydha) spread in the Al-Khidr sub-district, which is one of the dangerous and deadly diseases that came to Iraq in the year 1920, and the number of infections did not exceed (30), and it subsided and then appeared in 1923-1924 tremendously the first cases of cholera were confirmed in Basra on August 13, 1923, among the porters working in the port, and it was transmitted to it by travelers from Abadan (Iran), where cholera appeared on August 3, 1923 ⁽³⁵⁾. Infection is through direct contact with the patient ⁽³⁶⁾, and the Ministry of Health has taken several preventive measures to limit the spread of the disease, including compulsory vaccination against cholera in all contaminated centers, as well as compulsory and free vaccination for all school students ⁽³⁷⁾, and setting

treatment prices within clinics at three rupees, as well as providing treatment to people with limited income ⁽³⁸⁾.

Some cases of cholera appeared in Al-Khidr sub-district in the early fifties of the twentieth century, and they were treated in the Al-Khidr health center by giving them a liquid called (nutritious), which is water to which salts are added due to the loss of fluids from the body, which reduced the death rate, as well as a (tetracycline) capsule. As for some cases that were not controlled due to the severity of the infection and its delay, the center took an isolation room for the injured and basins filled with formalin to embalm and sterilize the bodies of the deceased with the disease ⁽³⁹⁾.

Freckle fever (Typhus): It is one of a group of well-known diseases caused by microscopic organisms that cannot be seen with the naked eye, called (Rickettsia), which are similar to bacteria, but often behave like viruses, and these organisms damage the walls of blood vessels in the human body, which leads to Bleeding and rashes, typhus is transmitted from one person to another or from animals to humans through lice and fleas ⁽⁴⁰⁾.

The Directorate of Health Protection sent an appeal to the Presidency of Health in Al-Diwaniyah Brigade under the book No. 1487, dated 4/13/1943, that pediculosis (typhus) it spread in the sub-district and demanded to instruct the sub-district administrators to take the necessary measures to reduce the disease, and infection with petechiae occurred in Samawah received from Al-Shuaiba. located in their stores to reveal them ⁽⁴¹⁾.

The disease (typhus) spread due to the Iranian convoys that were heading from Basra to visit and pass through the sub-district of Samawah, and the request of the mayor of Samawah from the responsible authorities was asked not to allow them to pass unless they were accompanied by a passport and accompanied by a health permit that supports their safety from diseases, and Al-Diwaniyah district administrators took several measures Preventive, forbidding travel within any medium, inside and outside the district, except after examining him in the nearest health institution, obtaining a medical certificate confirming that the travel applicant is free from disease and deporting every immigrant who crosses the border illegally, and it is not permissible to arrest them except after washing their bodies with water, shaving their hair and exterminating them. The lice found on their bodies and clothed by washing them with water,

and that they are isolated for twelve days before being placed in detention or imprisonment (42).

Malaria: Malaria was at the fore in the list of endemic diseases suffered by the vegetative community, and the report of the Administrative Inspector mentioned the spread of malaria in vegetables and other diseases⁽⁴³⁾, and perhaps the main reason for the spread of the disease is the continental climate and its long summer and low land, which led to the gathering of Flood waters, in addition to the high humidity, which led to the spread of ponds and swamps⁽⁴⁴⁾, and in fact, these ponds and swamps constitute the appropriate environment for the breeding of mosquitoes that transmit malaria and other diseases, as they grow abundantly in agricultural lands flooded with water that exceeds the need and stagnates in farms, then breeds Mosquitoes in these waters ⁽⁴⁵⁾ , the cause of the disease is a type of parasite called Plasmodium (PAIasmodium), of which there are about (112) types, only four of which cause infection to humans, and the disease is transmitted from one person to another through the process of blood transfusion from the infected person to the healthy person, as well as transmission from the infected pregnant mother to her fetus ⁽⁴⁶⁾, and the seriousness of this disease lies in the fact that it leads to chronic and fatal anemia, and inflation that affects the spleen and liver and other complications that lead to death, and thus malaria is considered one of the reasons for the weak population growth in Iraq ⁽⁴⁷⁾, and the percentage of injuries in Al-Diwaniyah district reached to 19.9% from 1923-1937 ⁽⁴⁸⁾, therefore, after the revolution of July 14, 1958, the Ministry of Health paid great attention to the prevention of diseases, as it allocated an amount of (735,000) dinars to continue the fight against malaria in order to eradicate it completely, in addition to the extensive campaigns it carried out to fill swamps in Al-Diwaniyah Brigade and its sub-districts, including the sub-district Al-Khidr, an amount of (100000) dinars was allocated for this purpose ⁽⁴⁹⁾, and some cases were treated in the Al-Khidr Health Center with the treatment of chloroquine and pronoquine ⁽⁵⁰⁾.

Schistosomiasis: Schistosomiasis is considered one of the endemic and widespread diseases in the area of vegetables, and the disease is transmitted by swimming in canals and rivers, which leads the patient to blood urination ⁽⁵¹⁾, and causes coughing, high temperatures, body weakness, and a delay in physical and mental development ⁽⁵²⁾, and bilharzia is a deadly disease. From the health and economic point of view, as it is an important public health problem, especially in the countryside, as it limits the physical activity of the farmer, thus affecting him economically and reducing his production. The difficulty of the disease is that

most of the injured do not go to health institutions to receive the necessary treatment, especially since its symptoms do not appear on The infected person only after a long time has passed in which he destroys the bladder, liver, intestines and the rest of the vital organs in the human body ⁽⁵³⁾, and that this disease usually affects certain age groups determined between (21-50), and this group is the one that bears the burden of work and support, especially workers, farmers and housewives ⁽⁵⁴⁾.

Surveys and investigations were conducted in streams and rivers to search for pollen snails that transmit schistosomiasis in all areas, including Al-Khidr subdistrict in 1958, as their work included a urine survey to determine the extent of the disease's spread in the sub-district, the following table shows the investigations carried out in the sub-district to eradicate schistosomiasis:

Table 1

Year	Number of the examined rivers	Number of infected rivers	number of safe rivers
1958	9	3	6
1961	10	0	10

From the above table, we note the decrease in the number of infested rivers, and this is due to the great interest in the area to eliminate the disease and to the progress in the treatment services provided to the injured.

As for the urine test, the examination was conducted on (7385) students in AL- Diwaniyah Brigade for the year 1961, of whom (466) were infected with schistosomiasis and all of them were referred to treatment ⁽⁵⁵⁾.

Pulmonary tuberculosis: Tuberculosis posed a great danger, as it led to the death of many children of vegetables of all age groups. It affects young and old alike, and the main cause of the disease is a type of bacteria called (Koch's bacilli) ⁽⁵⁶⁾, and these bacilli live for a long period of (6 days) to several months), then it begins polycystic and resists in damp places that are not exposed to sunlight and not ventilated, and tuberculosis germs are killed by exposure to sunlight for 6 hours. As this heat kills the bacilli ⁽⁵⁷⁾, and this disease is transmitted from a sick person to a healthy person through coughing, sneezing, talking, and these microbes may be inhaled directly in the form of a spray, or they may be small and remain suspended in the

air until inhaled, or the infection may be transmitted through contaminated hands or contaminated food and eating utensils, or through drinking contaminated milk from an animal sick with tuberculosis ⁽⁵⁸⁾.

One of the most prominent factors that led to the increase in patients is nutritional deficiency, weak immunity, psychological anxiety, and the deterioration of the standard of living. Tuberculosis affects all parts of the body, but 90% of infections affect the lung, which is the most common type. It may affect the bones, lymph nodes, intestines, throat, and meninges. The brain, bladder, and other body parts ⁽⁵⁹⁾, and the patient begins his illness without symptoms, then symptoms begin with the progression of the disease, such as loss of appetite, weight, night fever, dry cough, and then sputum. He remained without treatment, and he was satisfied with isolating the patient until the discovery of the bacilli that cause the disease ⁽⁶⁰⁾.

Tuberculosis affected children in their early life more than adults due to the loss of immunity in their bodies ⁽⁶¹⁾, especially newborn children who are more predisposed to infection than others, and those who come into contact with their infected relatives, as the infection in children is effective as miliary tuberculosis, and meningitis tuberculosis, and it is transmitted quickly through the blood after the bacilli enter the body through the respiratory system ⁽⁶²⁾.

The Ministry of Health took several measures to reduce this disease, so it prepared wheels carrying x-ray devices that roamed between villages and rural areas in Al-Khidr to diagnose the disease before the appearance of its symptoms. The idea succeeded. Hundreds of infected cases were diagnosed and files were opened for them in the Green Health Center. And the center took the anti-disease treatments, such as streptomycin vial, NH pills, and Rifadin capsule ⁽⁶³⁾.

Hookworm: Hookworm spread widely in the Al-Khidr sub-district at the beginning of 1967⁽⁶⁴⁾, and it is in the form of small white worms that spread as the heat and moisture necessary for their growth are available, especially among farmers and poor classes. The reason for its spread among farmers is due to the lack of health facilities in most of their homes and they walk barefoot in their areas, which leads to anemia, poisoning the body, and weakness of the heart, which makes the patient unable to perform his work. ⁽⁶⁵⁾, although hookworm is spread throughout Iraq, it is largely concentrated in the southern and central regions of Iraq, because of the contaminated and infested drinking water, as well as the

poverty of the people and their ignorance of their walking barefoot, so they were unable to buy shoes ⁽⁶⁶⁾, and the health center in the sub-district began to treat cases the infection of this disease through the treatment of it represented by the syrup of Helmizin and piperazine ⁽⁶⁷⁾.

Pediatric diseases: Women in the sub-district refrained from visiting the health center because it was limited to a doctor only without the presence of a nurse who supervised gynecological diseases as a result of prevailing customs and traditions, and most midwives could not read and write, not even the methods of dressing and how to avoid infection, and due to the contamination of the media used by the midwife, diseases were transmitted to mothers and children, and the mother may die from these diseases, including puerperal fever, and infectious diseases such as malaria and other parasitic diseases ⁽⁶⁸⁾, the mother's ignorance of the rules of health education and the lack of attention to the diversity of foods affected children with infectious diseases such as diarrheal disease, diphtheria, measles, smallpox, dysentery, tuberculosis, mumps, tetanus, whooping cough, polio, and these diseases spread due to the weak resistance of children to diseases ⁽⁶⁹⁾, When the child begins to walk, he is left on the roads to play near the swamps filled with insects that transmit infectious diseases, so the possibility of infection increases in them, due to the wide range of their movement and contact with a larger number of children ⁽⁷⁰⁾.

Many children have fallen victim to the ignorance of mothers and their stinginess with water in the first six months of birth, and they are satisfied with breastfeeding only, which leads to withering of the eyes, high temperature, and shrinkage of the skin as a result of the child's loss of water and salts and the injury of what the public calls (child summer), which often appears in Summer, and the only way to save children are to give them water with some salt dissolved in it through the mouth, or by enema, or by injection under the skin ⁽⁷¹⁾.

Due to the lack of health institutions in the Samawa sub-district and the spread of diseases among its children, especially children's diseases, a group of Samawa notables submitted a request to the Mayor of Samawa district regarding the opening of a branch of the association for the protection of children in the district due to its need for these services of great interest, and this request was signed by each of Shaker Al-Zairi, Lotfi Rashid Rushdi, Abdul Sattar Al-Amami, Muhammad Ali Al-Sayed Hussein, Sadiq Al-Rasoul, Hassan Al-Hajj Zghair, Fakhri Al-Amami, Shaker Mahmoud, Muhammad Al-Gharib, Aziz Al-Hajj Mahmoud,

Kazem Al-Jahil, Hassan Al-Musa, Shannan Al-Rabat. Answer the request, in her letter No. 279, dated September 17, 1949 ⁽⁷²⁾.

The work of the association focused on the care of the health of pregnant women and mothers and the care of children, and the Ministry of Health in the republican era took care of it and equipped it with the necessary medical equipment and staff, which led to a decrease in the incidence of pertussis, diarrhea, malnutrition, diphtheria, tetanus, measles, and the mortality rate among children under one year decreased from Age decreased significantly, and the rate of abortion among pregnant women decreased as a result of the care they received during pregnancy, as well as saving mothers who suffered from dystocia and cases of bloody bleeding ⁽⁷³⁾. Every week, the necessary treatments and vaccinations are provided, and each pregnant mother and child has been assigned a file of their own ⁽⁷⁴⁾.

Conclusion

From the above it can be concluded:

1. Al-Khidr sub-district witnessed neglect of health conditions, as it suffered from a lack of medical staff in the clinic, and it was limited to bandages.
2. The deterioration of the economic conditions of the population, as well as the lack of health awareness and their lack of knowledge of diseases, their reliance on folk medicine, and their failure to review health institutions.
3. The environment and climate contributed to the spread of diseases in the sub-district, and despite the therapeutic services that the clinic provided to the people of the vegetables to limit the spread of the disease, these services did not prove to be effective and many diseases continued to kill the population.

Margins

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