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[Saudi Medical Journal](#) [01 Sep 2005, 26(9):1333-1339]

Type: Historical Article, Biography, Journal Article

Abstract

This study of the original Arabic edition of the book *Al-Taisir Fil-Mudawat Wal-Tadbeer* (Book of Simplification Concerning Therapeutics and Diet) written by the Muslim physician Abu-Marwan Abdel-Malik Ibn Zuhr (Avenzoar, 1093-1162 AD) aimed at evaluating his contributions to the progress of surgery and providing English translations of relevant excerpts. Ibn Zuhr's unique experiment performing a tracheotomy on a goat, proved the safety of this operation in humans and represented a further step in the development of the experimental school started by Al-Razi (Rhazes) of Baghdad in the ninth century who is known to have given monkeys doses of mercury to test it as a drug for human use. Ibn Zuhr also performed post mortems on sheep in the course of his clinical research on treatment of ulcerating diseases of the lungs. Same as all his predecessors in the Islamic Era, he stressed the importance of a practical and sound knowledge of anatomy for surgical trainees. Furthermore, Ibn Zuhr insisted on a well supervised and structured training program for the surgeon-to-be, before allowing him to operate independently. He also drew the red lines at which a physician should stop, during his general management of a surgical condition; a step forward in the evolution of general surgery as a specialty of its own. He believed in prophylaxis against urinary stone disease and reported the importance of dietary management for that purpose. Furthermore, Ibn Zuhr enriched surgical and medical knowledge by describing many diseases and treatment innovations not ever described before him.



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