

## MARMA CHIKITSA IN PAIN MANAGEMENT OF SCIATICA (VATAJ GRIDHRASI) - A CASE STUDY

Dr. Bharti Pandey<sup>1\*</sup>, Dr. Rita Marwaha<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Nisha Bhalerao<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>\*Pt. Khushilal Sharma Govt. (Auto.) Ayurveda College and Institute Bhopal (M.P.) India.

<sup>2</sup>Professor & HOD, PG Department of Rachna Sharir, Pt. Khushilal Sharma Govt. (Auto.) Ayurveda College and Institute Bhopal (M.P.) India.

<sup>3</sup>Professor, PG Department of Rachna Sharir, Pt. Khushilal Sharma Govt. (Auto.) Ayurveda College and Institute Bhopal (M.P.) India.

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\*Corresponding Author

Dr. Bharti Pandey

Pt. Khushilal Sharma Govt.  
(Auto.) Ayurveda College  
and Institute Bhopal (M.P.)  
India.

### ABSTRACT

In the present era, 75% to 80% of people suffer from lower back pain, making it one of the most prevalent conditions. Sciatica (Gridhrasi) is often regarded as one of the most prevalent causes of lower back pain. *Gridhrasi* (Sciatica) is one out of eighty types of *Vata Vyadhi*. It is a Nanatmaj Vata vyadhi having vitiation of vata and sometimes vata kapha doshas. In gridhrasi intense shooting pain characteristically radiates from sphika (Gluteal region) to pada (Foot), *Gridhrasi* compares to sciatica in modern science. It happens when the protruding disc near the inter vertebral foramen compresses the spinal root, irritating it. Marma Chikitsa involves stimulating specific vital points to restore and balance the flow of Prana, the life force, by stimulate biochemical changes that promote healing and balance in the body and mind. So to get rid of these problem it is needed to adopt

Ayurvedic approach of Management. A 39 year old women with a complain of low back pain which radiate to right lower limb since last 6 months. In this case study, the efficacy of *Marma Chikitsa* in the treatment of *Gridhrasi* (Sciatica) is assessed. After 15 days, the patient symptoms were evaluated, and the encouraging result was obtained, about 85% of the pain was relieved and her quality of life was increased. Thus, *Vataj Gridhrasi* (Sciatica) pain management benefit greatly from non- Pharmaceutical treatment with Marma Chikitsa.

**KEYWORDS:** *Gridhrasi, Marma, Marmachikitsa, Neuromodulationtherapy.*

## INTRODUCTION

The modern world's lifestyle changes have altered work patterns, putting extra strain on the lower back. Sciatica is characterized by radiating leg pain along the course of the sciatic nerve sometimes accompanied by back pain and neurological deficits.<sup>[1]</sup> The prevalence of sciatica worldwide ranges from 1.2% to 43%.<sup>[2]</sup> Lifetime incidence of sciatica varies from 13-40%, while annual incidence of a sciatica episode ranges from 1% to 5%.<sup>[3]</sup> The sciatic nerve, the body's largest nerve, extends from ventral rami of L4 to S3 nerve roots and can reach 2 cm in diameter. The sciatic nerve plays a crucial role in motor functions, directly affecting the hamstrings and lower extremity adductors, and indirectly impacting the calf muscles, anterior lower leg muscles, and some intrinsic foot muscles. Its branches also contribute to sensation in the lower leg's back and sides, and the foot's bottom. Sciatica is a condition characterized by pain or unusual sensations along the sciatic nerve or associated lumbosacral nerve roots. It is often misdiagnosed as general low back or leg pain, but true sciatica specifically involves issues with the sciatic nerve or its roots. Sciatic pain intensifies with activities like lumbar spine flexion, twisting, bending, or coughing. Sciatica primarily results from nerve irritation due to inflammation. Direct nerve compression, which causes more severe motor dysfunction, requires urgent and thorough diagnostic evaluation.<sup>[4,5,6]</sup> According to Ayurveda, Gridhrasi is classified as one of the 80 types of Nanatmaja Vatavyadhi, highlighting its complex nature.

Gridhrasi is classified among the 80 types of Nanatmaja Vyadhi,<sup>[7]</sup> which involve Vata Dosha. The term "Gridhrasi" describes a gait resembling that of a vulture. Acharya Charaka classifies Gridhrasi into two categories: Vataj and Vatakaphaja. The main symptoms of Vataj Gridhrasi include pain with a pricking sensation (Toda), stiffness (Stambha), and recurrent twitching (Spandana) in areas such as the buttocks, lower back, thigh, back of the knee, calf, and foot respectively.<sup>[8]</sup> Additionally, patients may experience restricted lifting of the leg, further limiting their mobility.

The causes of sciatica are varied, but compression of a nerve root due to damage to the discs between the vertebrae is a common factor. In some cases, sciatic pain can radiate from other nerves in the body, known as referred pain. Sciatica is a relatively common condition, affecting approximately 5% of the population, particularly those between 30 and 50 years old. Despite its prevalence, modern medicine offers limited effective treatment options, often relying on analgesics that provide temporary relief. Marma Chikitsa is a technique that

involves manipulating specific vital points to redirect Prana, the normal body state. Activating these internal pharmaceutical pathways prompts the body to generate certain neurochemicals that promote healing of both body and mind.<sup>[9]</sup>

## CASE REPORT

A Female patient of 39 years old, reported to marma opd of pandit khushilal hospital, with the complaint of low back pain which radiate to right lower limb since last 6 months.

### Chief complaints

Low back pain which radiate to Right lower limb from 6 months, difficulty in walking from 15 days.

### History of present illness

According to the patient, she was reportedly healthy before 6 months, then she suffer from low back pain which gradually radiate to right lower limb then she have problem in walking since 15 days. So, she come to hospital for further management.

### History of past illness

No any relevant past history of illness and no history of trauma.

### Past treatment history

She went to a couple of local house doctors for the same issue and was taking an over-the-counter medicine but don't get satisfactory relief.

### Personal history

1. Appetite - Normal
2. Bowel - Clear
3. Sleep - Sound
4. Micturition - Normal

### General Examination of patient

1. Weight - 62 kg
2. Height – 5 feet 2 inch
3. Heart rate - 76/min
4. Respiration rate - 20/min

5. Blood pressure - 110/80 mm Hg

### Systemic Examination of patient

The results of the per abdominal, cardiovascular, respiratory and CNS examinations were all normal.

### Local examination

**Inspection** - No swelling or scarring

**Palpation** – Normal curvature maintained.

**SLR Test** – Right leg – 40 degree.

Left leg – 90 degree.

**Xray LS spine AP / Oblique** – S/o degenerative changes in spine specially at L4-L5 level.

### DIAGNOSIS

Vataj Gridhrasi (Sciatica).

### TREATMENT PROTOCOL

The treatment included the administration of Marma Chikitsa. The current study includes stimulation of six Marma points: Kshipra Marma, Gulpha Marma, Indrabasti Marma, Ani Marma, Nitamb Marma, Katiktaran Marma, Kukundar Marma of each extremities of lower limb will be stimulated for 15-18 times on an average in single sitting by pulp of thumb<sup>(10)</sup>. The administrative details are as follows.

**Duration of study** - 15 days

**Follow-up** - 7th day

S.no.	MARMA	Stimulation Time	Frequency	Duration
1	Kshipra Marma	0.8 sec	15-18 Times	Once a day
2	Gulpha Marma	0.8 sec	15-18 Times	Once a day
3	Indrabasti Marma	0.8 sec	15-18 Times	Once a day
4	Ani Marma	0.8 sec	15-18 Times	Once a day
5	Nitambh Marma	0.8 sec	15-18 Times	Once a day
6	Katiktaran Marma	0.8 sec	15-18 Times	Once a day
7	Kukundar Marma	0.8 sec	15-18 Times	Once a day

- A steady and moderate pressure will be applied slowly and gently.
- Pressure will be increased gradually depending upon patient strength.

**KSHIPRA MARMA GULPHA MARMA****INDRABASTI MARMA ANI MARMA****ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

The assessment of the effect of treatment will be based on subjective and objective parameters of disease which will be recorded before and after treatment. Subjective and objective parameters will be assessed according to grading system.

**Ruka (Pain)**

<b>Ruka (Pain)</b>	<b>Grade</b>
No Pain	0
Mild pain but no difficulty in walking	1
Moderate pain and slight difficulty in walking	2
Severe pain with severe difficulty in walking	3

**Stambha (Stiffness)**

<b>Stambha (Stiffness)</b>	<b>Grade</b>
No stiffness	0

Sometime for 5-10 minutes	1
Daily for 10-30 minutes	2
Daily for 30-60 minutes more than 1 hrs.	3

**Toda (Pricking pain)**

<b>Toda (Pricking pain)</b>	<b>Grade</b>
No pricking pain	0
Mild pricking pain	1
Moderate pricking pain	2
Severe pricking pain	3

**Spandana (Pulsation)**

<b>Spandana (Pulsation)</b>	<b>Grade</b>
No Pulsation	0
Sometimes for 5-10 minutes	1
Daily for 10-30 minutes	2
Daily for 30-60 minutes	3

**Showing Grading of Other Clinical Parameters****Straight Leg Raising Test (SLRT)**

<b>SLR Test Angle</b>	<b>Grade</b>
> 90 degree	0
71-90 degree	1
51-70 degree	2
31-50 degree/below degree <30	3

**Walking time (Time taken to cover 20 meters)**

<b>Walking Time</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Up to 20 seconds	0
21-40 seconds	1
41-60 seconds	2
Above 60 seconds	3

**OBSERVATION**

After treatment was completed, there was significant relief in pain, pricking sensation, stiffness, twitching, helping to alleviate discomfort. The patient felt more comfortable during standing, walking, and everyday tasks.

<b>Diagnostic criteria</b>	<b>Before treatment</b>	<b>After treatment</b>
Ruja (pain)	2	1
Toda (pricking sensation)	2	0
Stambha (stiffness)	2	0
Spandana (twitching)	2	0
Straight Leg Raising Test	3	1
Walking time	2	1





**SLR Test -Before Treatment -Right leg 40<sup>0</sup>**



**SLR Test -After Treatment -Right leg 80<sup>0</sup>**

## DISCUSSION

*Gridhrasi* (sciatica) is one among nanatmaja *Vata Vyadhi* caused by aggravated *Vata Doshas*. The transmission of energy between marma points is regulated by *vayu*, or air. The "Dasavayu" (ten forms of *vayu*) are seen as essential for treatment in the science of marma. *Apanavayu* and *Vyana* are two of them that are crucial to the growth of *VatajGridhrasi*. The exchange, supply, and multiplication functions of marma points are all affected when these *vayus'* functions are disrupted. Disruption of these functions also affects the functioning of the five elements (*panchamahabhuta*), *prana* (life energy), *vayu* (air), and *nadi* (channels). Marma Chikitsa is based on Ayurvedic principles, specifically the five-element doctrine (*Panchamahabhuta*), *Agni-Soma* balance, and *Vata* management.

According to modern science, the most likely mechanism of action is that stimulating or activating a marma point causes ionic exchange in the region, which in turn causes responses in sensory neurones. Steroid hormones like serotonin, endorphins, and cortisol are activated as a result of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenocortical axis receiving a signal from the network of sensory neurones. This procedure improves the joint or limb's mechanical function by promoting relaxation and starting the site's regeneration process.

## CONCLUSION

Marma chikitsa offers a promising solution for musculoskeletal disorders like Vataj Gridhrasi (Sciatica). It's cost-effective, feasible, and can be applied anytime with minimal infrastructure. With no side effects when done correctly, Marma Chikitsa provides notable relief and improves quality of life. Its efficacy in managing Vataj Gridhrasi highlights its potential for broader applications in musculoskeletal disorder. Marma Chikitsa is a sustainable and holistic solution for individuals seeking relief from musculoskeletal issues.

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