

MARMA CHIKITSA – A CONVENTIONAL THERAPY IN AYURVEDA: A REVIEW

**Dr. Subhash Saini^{*1}, Dr. Tanu Shri², Dr. Komal Sharma³, Dr. Purushottama Das
Sharma⁴, Dr. Jitendra Kumar Sharma⁵, Dr. D. K. Sharma⁶**

¹P.G. Scholar, P.G. Department of Rachana Sharira, M.M.M. Government Ayurveda College,
Udaipur, Rajasthan, India.

²P.G. Scholar, P. G. Department of Stri Evum Prasuti Tantra, Major S.D. Singh P.G.
Ayurvedic Medical College, Farrukhabad, Uttar Pradesh, India.

³P.G. Scholar, P. G. Department of Rachana Sharira, M.M.M. Government Ayurveda
College, Udaipur, Rajasthan, India.

⁴Associate Professor, P.G. Department of Rachana Sharira, M.M.M. Government Ayurveda
College, Udaipur, Rajasthan, India.

⁵Professor & H.O.D., P.G. Department of Rachana Sharira, M.M.M. Government Ayurveda
College, Udaipur, Rajasthan, India.

⁶Lecturer, P.G. Department of Rachana Sharira, M.M.M. Government Ayurveda College,
Udaipur, Rajasthan.

Article Received on
12 October 2020,

Revised on 01 Nov. 2020,
Accepted on 22 Nov. 2020

DOI: 10.20959/wjpr202015-19267

***Corresponding Author**

Dr. Subhash Saini

P.G. Scholar, P.G.

Department of Rachana

Sharira, M.M.M.

Government Ayurveda

College, Udaipur, Rajasthan,

India.

ABSTRACT

In each era, there was always a science which was dealing the management of the diseases with or without its essential tools. As we know that without some special tools it is very difficult to manage any work specially in medical science. But a science was there since the Vedic period, which used the special vital points of the body, known as Marma points, for the protection of body and life. It was very commonly used by physicians of that time. In present era, Medical science has developed to a great extent but still it has some limitations which are restricting the benefits not only today but since ancient time. All the drugs, general health and emergency management procedure tools are not always available everywhere, therefore some technique have to be discovered to overcome the unavailability of the medical

tools. This leads to the discovery of tool free technique known as the Marma Therapy. This therapy is practiced in present era too but not as a famous and main therapy. The knowledge of this wonderful therapy has lost to a great extent, which forced this therapy to be a suspected and subsidiary therapy and not a main therapy. Current study is aiming to discover the hidden facts related to the Marma therapy, which could be very beneficial for achieving the goals of the Ayurveda i.e. maintaining the healthy state and to cure the diseases.

KEYWORDS: Medical science, vital points, Marma points, drugs, health, emergency, medical tools, Marma therapy.

INTRODUCTION

Everybody wants to finish the work instantly with the help of minimum tools. Everybody wants to use some tricks to avoid the as much hard work as done normally, which is not only hard but sometimes also a long-time taking process. In the present era, there is no place of such a magic or trick at least in medical field. Medical fields only accept the evidence-based knowledge. Tricks do not work in the medical science but tricky results may be possible with a well-known but unnoticed science i.e. Marma Chikitsa, which is being practiced since ancient time. Actually, it was not practiced as a main therapy but it was used as a subsidiary therapy and as a helping tool in the treatment procedures to save the life of patients. Initially the Marma points were used for the protection of life of the patient during the surgical procedures and also for the protection of life by external injuries during accidents and in battlefield. In ancient time, a mechanism was developed for the emergency condition in the battlefields. Along with the Vaidyas, the king, soldiers, and other fighters have the knowledge of these Marma points, which are essential for the life. The knowledge of the Marma points was essential not only to protect self from the enemy but also to attack the enemy. Use of the Marma points to temporarily disable, permanently disable, making unconscious, to give pain, or to kill the enemy, was very common in that time period. This was practiced with the help of Indian Martial Art, named as *Kalari payatu*, which was developed for the soldiers to be practiced in the battlefield. Later on, some Indian Buddhist Monks migrated to china, Korea, japan and other countries, where this Indian Martial Art developed in present form. Not only to harm the enemy but also to recover and reverse the harmful effect of the Marma injury, for own soldiers, Vaidyas of that time developed a sophisticated mechanism to reactivate the Marma point, known as the Marma Chikitsa. But after a long time period, this excellent therapy suffered from the sting of ignorance due to the

influence of the foreign invaders. The other countries like china, Korea, and japan also developed techniques which are antagonist to the harmful effect of Marma injury, now the technique is known as the Acupressure and Acupuncture. So, in this way, the Indian Marma chikitsa can be considered as the base of the Chinese Acupressure, and Acupuncture therapies.

The Acupressure and Acupuncture also work on the similar principles, in which the specific point on body is pressed and punctured by a needle respectively to stimulate corresponding body part or organ, so that the disease related to that organ or body part is cured. Although the points of body involved in these therapies are not vital points or Marma points because these points when injured could never cause death, but these points can be helpful in treating the diseases. The points involved in Acupressure and Acupuncture are not exactly same as that of the Marma Points described in Ayurveda. This proves that, not only these two Chinese therapies but all the sciences are germinated from the seeds of Vedas and Ayurveda.

Everyone in this world don't know about the Marma Therapy but everyone in this world use this therapy many times in a single day. Not only human, but each and every animal in this world uses this therapy for his wellness, without knowing that it's a therapy. Nature has provided some basic postural characteristics to each and every organism, which are actually lifesaving. When someone is about to collide from something then folding of the body is the posture to protect self and it act like a reflex so that more vital parts or delicate and important Marma points can be protected. When the blood supply of brain decreases the person fall down on earth, this causes the lowering down of the head position to compensate the gravitational resistance to the blood flow to the brain. These events are natural to protect the lives of organisms.

AIMS: -1. The main aim of the study is to discover the scientific aspect of the Marma chikitsa and to find out the effectiveness of Marma Chikitsa.

OBJECTIVES

1. To find out the effect of Marma chikitsa in emergency health conditions.
2. To find out the effect of Marma chikitsa in Acute and chronic diseases.
3. To know the contraindications and indications of Marma chikitsa.
4. To know the adverse effects of Marma chikitsa.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

1. Classical texts of *Ayurveda* and *Siddha* viz. *Sushruta Samhita* and *Astanga Hridaya*, *Astanga Samgrah* and their *teekas* are used to clear the concept of Marma.
2. Supportive texts of contemporary science, different websites and journals were also utilized to understand the concept *Marma Chikitsa*.
3. All these concepts are properly collected, analyzed and arranged in a sequential manner for the proper understanding of it in context of *Marma Chikitsa*.

LITERARY REVIEW

The concept of *Marma* is well known in Ayurvedic literature, but the concept of *Marma chikitsa* is not directly described in the Ayurvedic literature. The concept of Marma chikitsa is directly described in *Siddha*, another stream of ancient medical science closely associated with the Ayurveda.

Before knowing the *Marma* therapy, it very important to know about the *Marma*. *Marmas* are described as *Maryantiti marmani* that means *Marmas* are those which cause death. There are 107 *Marmas* described in Ayurvedic text. Acharya Vagbhata mentioned the Marma as the site of Vishama Spandana (unusual pulsations) along with the non-uniform pain on compression.^[1] In Ayurvedic text, *Marmas* are described as the common place where muscles, ligaments, bones, nerves, arteries and veins are forming an anastomose.^[2] That's the main cause of the pain, permanent deformity or the death of the injured person. This is also the base of the *Marma* therapy.

Acharya Charak has described body of living as miniature of the universe. The universe is consisting of many stars, solar systems, galaxies along with the black whole. These all acts as the body systems and organs of the body.^[3] The importance of black hole cannot be ignored. Black hole is not only responsible for the destruction of the universal entities but also responsible for the maintenance and generation of the new universal entities. Same as the black hole, the Marma points in the body are not only responsible for the destruction or deformity, disability, and death but also responsible for the maintenance and rejuvenation of the vitiated body. It's all about the knowledge how to treat the Marma point.

Marmas are the vital points of the body which when injured may cause the pain, permanent deformity of the injured part, delayed or sudden death of the injured person.

In Siddha, the vital points of the body have been described as the Varmam points. The total of 8000 Varmam points mentioned in all the related literatures out of them 108 are very important and serves as the basis for Varmam techniques.

Concept of treating remote organs by stimulating some other body parts are directly mentioned in Susruta Samhita in treating some diseases e.g. Yakrutdalyudara and Pleehodara can be treated by Siravedha (bloodletting) from the veins in right and left Kurpara region respectively along with the massaging of the organs to facilitate the Siravedha,^[4] Pleehodara can also be treated with the Agnikarma (cautery) at the place same as Siravedha.^[5] Apachi can be treated by Agnikarma at a place 12 Angula distant from the popliteal fossa towards the back of heel, but Indrabasti Marma must be protected during the incision to visualize the fascia for Agnikarma procedure.^[6] Antravridhi (hernia) can be treated by Agnikarma of dorso-central surface of great toe of opposite side as that of the hernia, it can also be treated by Siravedha at a place between the forehead and ear, towards upper side of the ear at the end of Shankha and Bhru pradesha.^[7] Shleepada (Elephantiasis) can also be treated by Siravedha, 4-Angula proximal to the Gulpha sandhi (Ankle joint) in Vataj Shleepada, while in Pittaja Shleepada, below the Gulpha sandhi.^[8] Kaphaja Shleepada should be treated by Siravedha at a point 4-Angula proximal to the Kshipra Marma, a place of well-known and identified Sira.^[9] The concept, mentioned above are also supported by Acharya Vagbhata & Acharya Dalhana.

PRINCIPLE AND CONDUCT OF THE MARMA THERAPY

In context of the Marma therapy this scientific stimulus is compression of Marma point for 0.8 second and the frequency of compression should be 15-20 times per minute or as that of the respiratory rate. This stimulus actually disturbs the inertia present in the toxins or blockages accumulated in the Marma Place. Continuous and repeated stimulus for a long duration, which may be from few days to years, causes the complete detoxification and dissolution of the blockage and therefore cure of the diseases.

Now this has been proved that this not only works but gives magical results. The results can be magnified by adding supportive treatment like internal and external application of medicines e.g. different medicated oil can be used for Marma stimulation by Abhyanga.

The injuries and disorders of vertebral column and spinal cord can be cured by stimulating the Kshipra Marma, Talahridya, Kurcha, Kurchshira, Gulpha, Indrabasti, Janu, Urvi and Ani

Marma. Similarly, for facial paralysis Dhamani, Sira, Matrika, Krikatika, Vidhura, Apanga, Avarta, Utakshepa, Sankha, Sthapani, Simantas and Adhipati marma should be stimulated. Torticollis and cervical spondylosis can be cured by stimulating Kshipra, Talahridya, Kurcha, Kurchashira, Manibandha, Indrabasti, Kurpara, Bahvi/Urvi, Ani, Dhamani, Matrika, Krikatika, Amsa and Amsaphalaka marma. Cerebral palsy can be treated by stimulating the Marma of all limbs along with back and head.^[10]

Kshipra Marma is related to the neck and part above the neck i.e. connected with brain, hypothalamus, pituitary, pineal, thyroid, parathyroid and throat as mentioned in Acupressure while it is connected to the lymphatic system and is also recognized as an analgesic acupoint. as mentioned in Acupuncture.^[11]

The concept of *Tridosha*, *Panchamahabhuta* and *chakra* which are main principles of Ayurveda are also associated with this Marma Therapy. These all compose physical, physiological and psychological manifestations of the body. Therefore, Marma Chikitsa can treat both the physical and psychological disorders. These Tridosha, Panchamahabhuta, Chakra, and nadis all compose the psycho-neuro-endocrino-immunological pathways and therefore influencing physical, mental, social and spiritual health of a person. Without understanding these principles, one cannot achieve the desired results, but undesirable adverse effect may occur which causes more suffering to the patient.

Association of Tridosha and Panchamahabhuta with the Marma is responsible for the symptoms of Marma injury. This concept is also important for the Marma Chikitsa, which enables the Vaidya to determine the extent, intensity and mode of Marma stimulation. Incomplete knowledge about these basic principles may cause severe adverse effect of improper Marma Therapy.

Sadya Pranahara Marma are Agneya (Predominant in Agni Mahabhuta) and Pittaja in nature, therefore fast acting and causing instant death. Kalantara Marma are Agneya along with Soma (Agni and Jala Mahabhuta) and Kaphaj in nature therefore cause death in few days but not instantly due to the antagonist effect of Agni and Soma. Vishalyaghna Marma are Vayavya (Vayu Mahabhuta) and Vataja in nature and causing instant death on removal of Shalya from the Marma sthana. Vaikalyakara Marma are Somatmaka (Jala Mahabhuta) and Kaphaja in nature and cause permanent deformity of organ or body part related to the Marma but do not cause death. Rujakara Marma are Agneya and Vayavya also having Vataja and

Pittaja nature therefore causing intense pain instead of death.^[12] Results of Marma injury are interchangeable according to the extent of Marma injury and it also depends on the constituents of the Marma like Mamsa, Sira, Snayu, Asthi, and Sandhi.^[13] This concept is also important in Marma Therapy in determining the extent and threshold of pressure and stimulus to be given on Marma Point.

The basic posture for the Marma Therapy Should be a **natural posture** relevant for the Marma to be stimulated e.g. laying in supine or prone position. Nail free fingers should be used for Marma Chikitsa. Frequency of Marma Therapy depends on the suitability and availability of the patient in the clinic, it may be twice or thrice in a week for outdoor patients and may be up to 2 – 4 times for indoor patients according to need and situation. Intensity of pressure also depends on the disease condition, age and tolerance capacity of patient.

Precaution: - Therapist must touch the wooden object or wall or earth after treating one patient and just before starting therapy for next patient to avoid the transfer of vital energy of prior patient to the next patient.

Contraindication: - The cases complaining of food poisoning, snake bite, scorpion bite or any other poisoning must not be treated by Marma Therapy. No special instruction are mentioned for the diet, during the Marma Therapy, but avoiding greens, curd at night and Adhyasana (eating frequently before the digestion of previously eaten food) will be beneficial and supporting.

The Marma points can be stimulated by Abhyanga (massaging), Yoga (anatomical postures), Mardana, (acupressure), Lepa (external application of herbal drugs), Aromatherapy, Pranik healing, Raktamokshana (scientific bloodletting to cure a disease), Kshara karma, Agni karma. Some of these require tools and some of these could be practiced without tools. As Acharya Susruta told that hand is the *Pradhanatam yantra* (most useful tool among all other tools).

Widely used similar concept of Yogic Asanas is there which is used in prevention as well as treatment of the diseases and to improve the body equilibrium. Yogic Asanas are actually Anatomical Postures which are specially designed and practiced in such a manner so that it causes stimulation of the Marma points. All Marma cannot be stimulated by Yogic Asanas

and need to be stimulated separately by special stimulation. These separate and special stimulation procedures are known as Marma Therapy.

Activity of specific part or organ of the body either can be increased or decreased by stimulus of the corresponding Marma point. This includes the Knowledge of Chakra and nadis mentioned in the Yogic Literatures. The Suryaswara and Chandraswara mentioned in Yogic Literatures are relevant in this context. Without the knowledge of these Swaras in place of the desired result, adverse effect may cause suffering to the patient.

DISCUSSION

As we know the importance of the ganglia in nervous system and lymph nodes in the lymphatic system, Marmas are much more important than the ganglia and lymph nodes. These Marma control the vitality of the part where they present. Any injury at the Marma point causes the loss of the vitality of that part, which may result in form of pain, temporary or permanent deformity, sudden or delayed death. depend upon the extent of injury.

Marma points act as the check points for the parts next and before, and also for some remotely connected organs. So, if the activity of these check points or Marma points is hampered in any context then the part directly or remotely connected to the Marma point suffers in that context. Sometimes this disturbance in the activity is very little but chronic, it affects the related part slowly and causes the deformity or disease.

As we know that each and every action of the body or a cell is due to a threshold stimulus, without a stimulus they are inactive. This threshold stimulus is the main base of the Marma therapy. Whenever there is any deformity or disease in any organ or any part of the body, a correct and scientific stimulus is needed to cure the check point or Marma point, so that the disturbance in that point is corrected and the normalcy is achieved. So that this Marma Therapy is helpful in treating the diseases of single organ as well as systemic diseases involving multiple organs.

Before starting the Marma points as a Therapy the Vaidya should be aware of the indications, contraindications and effects of the Marma Therapy associated with that particular disease.

CONCLUSION

This study enables us to conclude that the Marma therapy is wonderful therapy, which is tool free, fast acting, cost effective, consuming very less time for the procedure, noninvasive, easy

to use, and promising for the better prognosis. It can be used as a main therapy or as a subsidiary therapy. The revelation of the hidden mechanism is possible with the help of modern health tools like EEG, ECG, CT -Scan, MRI and other systemic investigations.

REFERENCES

1. Tripathi Dr. Brahmananda, 'Nirmala' Hindi Commentary Along with Special Deliberation etc. on Astanga Hrdayam, Sharir Sthana-4/37, page-394, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan, Delhi, Reprint Edition, 2019.
2. Tripathi Dr. Brahmananda, 'Nirmala' Hindi Commentary Along with Special Deliberation etc. on Astanga Hrdayam, Sharir Sthana-4/38, page-394, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan, Delhi, Reprint Edition, 2019.
3. Pandeya Pandit Kashinath, Vidyotini Hindi Commentary on Charak Samhita, Sharir Sthana-4/13, Page-871, Chaukhamba Bharatiya Academy, Varanasi, Reprint Edition, 2014.
4. Shastri Kaviraj Dr. Ambikadatta, Ayurveda Tattva Sandipika Hindi Commentary on Susruta Samhita, Chikitsa Sthana-14/13-15, page-89, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan, Varanasi, Reprint Edition, 2014.
5. Shastri Kaviraj Dr. Ambikadatta, Ayurveda Tattva Sandipika Hindi Commentary on Susruta Samhita, Chikitsa Sthana-14/16, page-89, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan, Varanasi, Reprint Edition, 2014.
6. Shastri Kaviraj Dr. Ambikadatta, Ayurveda Tattva Sandipika Hindi Commentary on Susruta Samhita, Chikitsa Sthana-18/25, page-106, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan, Varanasi, Reprint Edition, 2014.
7. Thakral Dr. Kewal Krishana, 'Nibandha Samgrah and Nyaya Chandrika' Commentary on Susruta Samhita, Part-2, Chikitsa Sthana-19/19-24, page-386-387, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan, Varanasi, Reprint Edition, 2017.
8. Shastri Kaviraj Dr. Ambikadatta, Ayurveda Tattva Sandipika Hindi Commentary on Susruta Samhita, Chikitsa Sthana-19/52-55, page-114, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan, Varanasi, Reprint Edition, 2014.
9. Thakral Dr. Kewal Krishana, 'Nibandha Samgrah and Nyaya Chandrika' Commentary on Susruta Samhita, Part-2, Chikitsa Sthana-19/56-62, page-391-392, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan, Varanasi, Reprint Edition, 2017.
10. Mishra D.P. et.al., Marma-The Multi-Dimensional Healing Points of Ayurveda, IAMJ, Vol-2, Jan-Feb-2014.

11. Negi Vineeta Kumari et.al., Marma and Marma Therapy: A Review, WJPR, Vol-7, 2018.
12. Shastri Kaviraj Dr. Ambikadatta, Ayurveda Tattva Sandipika Hindi Commentary on Susruta Samhita, Sharira Sthana-6/17, page-70, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratisthan, Varanasi, Reprint Edition, 2014.
13. Thakral Dr. Kewal Krishana, 'Nibandha Samgrah and Nyaya Chandrika' Commentary on Susruta Samhita, Part-2, Sharira Sthana-6/17, page-94-95, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratisthan, Varanasi, Reprint Edition, 2017.