

MARMA CHIKITSA IN MUSCULO-SKELETAL DISORDERS**Dr. Shivam Shukla*¹ and Dr. Sangita Jagotra²**

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ABSTRACT

The research in the field of Ayurveda give us a new emerging therapy called as ***Marma Chikista***. *Mamas* are the seat of the *Pranas* of a person. *Acharya Sushruta* had given detailed description of the numbers and site of *Marmas* in a human body. *Marmas* are the site having conglomeration of *Mamsa*, *Sira*, *Snayu*, *Asthi*, and *Sandhi*. While stimulating these *Marma* points the *pranas* got activated and flows through the complex channels of *Nadis*. Although *Marmas* were explained by all the *Acharya* including *Charaka*, *Sushruta*, *Vagbhatta* but their manipulation was not mentioned by them. Even *Acharya Sushruta* had warned that these point must be protected during any surgical intervention, any injury to these point may prove fatal for

patient. A similar points *Varmam* are mentioned in *Sidha* system of medicine whose manipulation causes proper functioning of the body. Hence the manipulation of the *Marma* point was taken from the *Sidha* system and *Marma chikitsa* got evolved for the pain management in various musculo-skeletal disorders as per National Health Portal Government. According to Neuro-endocrine theory the probable mode of action of *Marma* therapy is that it releases Endorphin and enkephalin proteins which acts as pain reducing agent. The Gate control theory is also explains the pain management action of *Marma* therapy.

KEYWORDS: *Marma Chikista*, *Pranas*, *Nadis*, *Varmam*, Musculo-skeletal, neuro-endocrine theory, Endorphin, enkephalin and Gate control theory.

INTRODUCTION

All the *Acharyas* had mentioned the anatomy of the human body according to their knowledge and the available resources during that time. While detailing about the *Rachna Sharir* (anatomy), one thing commonly said by all the *Acharyas* i.e *Marmas*. All the *Acharyas* said *Marmas* as the vital points^[1] of the human body and were explained in details about them. *Acharya Sushruta* the great surgeon of his time wrote down the details of *Marmas* including its location, number, composition etc. There are 107 *marma*^[2] point in a human body, anatomically these points are the junction where *Mamsa*, *Sira*, *Snayu*, *Asthi*, and *Sandhi* combines. *Acharya* stated that these are the points where *Pranas* are situated. Any direct or indirect injury to these point may prove fatal for as it may cause disability or death. Therefore the concept of *marmas* were explained by *Acharyas* to gain maximum effect of attack to the enemy.^[3] This means that *marma* point harmonizes nervous, circulatory and endocrinal system of the body. When these point are manipulated in appropriate manner they results the flow of *Pranas* into the body through a definite channel called *Nadi*. A similar term is mentioned in Siddha system of medicine named as Varmam. According to Siddha system varmam are the points whose manipulation enhance normal physiology of an individual. Thus it can be said that manipulation of *Marmas* was taken from siddha system and researches were done. These researches in the field of *Ayurveda* gives us a new treatment approach for various musculo-skeletal disorders which is *Marma Chikitsa*.^[4]

Musculo-skeletal disorders (MSD) are group of disease usually involve muscles, tendons, nerves, joints and their cartilages etc. Some names of musculo-skeletal disorder are Tendinitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis (RA), fibromyalgia, frozen shoulder etc. Different musculo-skeletal disorders have different risk factors depending upon the age, occupation, activity and lifestyle. Some disorder are due to the wear and tear cause by overuse of muscles and some are having unknown etiology like Tennis Elbow. The *Marma Chikitsa* proven beneficial in these disorders because the main aim of *Marma Chikitsa* is to stimulation of the *Pranas* by manipulation of *Marmas* to regulate their flow and enhance the healing process.

Classical Description of *Marmas*

Acharya Sushruta had given detailed description of *Marmas*. He stated that there are total 107 *Marmas* in a human body and they should be carefully protected from the injury while performing *Shalya karma*. *Acharya* had also classified *Marmas* according to;

A. The anatomical composition^[5] as

Table 1 Showing anatomical composition wise distribution of *marmas*.

S. No.	<i>Marma</i>	Number
1.	<i>Mansa-Marma</i>	11
2.	<i>Siramarma</i>	41
3.	<i>Snayu-Marma</i>	27
4.	<i>Sandhi-Marma</i>	20
5.	<i>Asthi-Marma</i>	8

B. The classification of *Marmas* according to location in the body.^[6]

Table 2 Showing location wise distribution of *marmas*.

S. No.	<i>Marma</i>	Number
1.	<i>Urdhvajatru</i> region (Neck & Head)	37
2.	<i>Udara</i> (Thorax and abdomen)	12
3.	<i>Prishtha</i> (Back)	14
4.	<i>Shakha</i> (Extremities)	44

C. On the basis of the consequences of *Abhighaat*^[7] on *Marmas*

Table 3 Showing *Abhighaat* wise distribution of *marmas*.

S. No.	<i>Marma</i>	Number
1.	<i>Sadhyopranhar</i>	19
2.	<i>Kalantarpranhar</i>	33
3.	<i>Vaikalyakar</i>	44
4.	<i>Vishalyaghna</i>	8
5.	<i>Rujakar</i>	3

D. Table 4 showing another 8 classification *Marmas* given by Acharya was

<i>Marmas</i>	
<i>Sevani</i>	<i>Mushaksrotasa</i>
<i>Mutravaha</i>	<i>Yoni</i>
<i>Shukrvaha</i>	<i>Guda</i>
<i>Mutraprasek</i>	<i>Vasti</i>

Marma Chikitsa

Ayurveda emphasis on keeping the individual healthy and prevent the body from disease. Due to the over utilization of muscles, body got tired and weak. This results into affecting the normal physiology of the body. In such conditions *Marma* therapy shows its magical effects. It revitalize the *pranas* and make their flow to the affected site. It also helps in boosting physical, mental and spiritual energies. *Marma* therapy is a traditional skill and the scientific background is still unknown. But it is observed that *Marma* therapy emphasis the normal physiology of the body. Pain is one of the most annoying symptom of musculo-skeletal disorders and *Marma Chikitsa* can conquer it very efficiently.

Some *Marmas* and their respective efficacy^[8]

- a. *Kshipra Marma* and *Kurpara Marma* relieves shoulder pain
- b. *Kshipra*, *Kurpara*, and *Ani Marma* relieves Neck pain caused by cervical spondylitis.
- c. *Kshipra*, *Gulpha maram* relieves pain in the legs, knee joint and Sciatica pain.
- d. *Talahridaya Marma* regulates the normal functioning of respiration and circulation of the body.
- e. *Sthapani Marma* regulates the functioning of mind and other sense organs.
- f. *Shankha Marma* nullifies vitiated *Vaata dosha* and relieves headache.

Thus all the 107 *Marmas* have their respective effects on the body therefore *marma* are manipulated for getting the desired results in a disease. Here are the list of disorders where *marma chikitsa* can be proven beneficial:-

1. Diseases of nerves and brain.
2. Traumatic disorders including paraplegia, hemiplegia and monoplegia.
3. Orthopedic lesions, especially prolapsed inter vertebral disc (PVID).
4. Pain of nerves, muscles, ligaments, bones and joints.
5. Prevents the lifestyle disorders ex- diabetes mellitus, hypertension, thyroid dysfunction etc.

Marma Chikitsa Procedure

Poorvakarma

- ✓ Patient must have *Laghu Ahara* before the *Marma Chikitsa*.
- ✓ Vital of the patient must be checked before the procedure.
- ✓ The patient must be told about the procedure and the consent must be taken from him/her.

Pradhan Karma

Posture- Patient must lie in *Sukhasana*, *Padmasana*, *Ardha Padmasana* or *Vajrasana*.

Type of Stimulation :- Pressure application, rubbing, vibration etc.

- Pressure should be applied according to the underlying structures of that *Marmas*.
- Stimulation should be done 15-20 time per sitting and it should be done three times a day.

Some *marma* points and their actions

- a. *Kurcha Marma* regulates the flow of *Prana Vayu* (body energy).
- b. *Kurchashira Marma* help to controls muscular system of body and boost digestive power.

c. **Kshipra Marma** associated with normal functioning of heart and lungs.

d. **Gulpha Marma** responsible for normal joints movements.

Note:- Location of *Marmas* differs from person to person therefore exact site should be carefully examined and then *marma* should be manipulated.

Paschaat karma

- a. Allow the patient to relax down after the therapy.
- b. Ask the patient to deep breathing after therapy.
- c. Inspect the site of *marma* site for any bruising.
- d. Gently massage with hand over the site of *marma* after pressing them.

Marma Points





Probable Mode of action of *Marma Chikitsa*

Ayurvedic aspect:- In musculo-skeletal disorders the main cause of *vyadhi* is *srotasang* or *vayuvimargamana*. Due to this etiology the pain occurs as *Vaata* is mainly responsible for pain. On manipulating *Marmas* it stimulates the flow of *pranas*. This action is carried out by removing blockage of channels. Thus if the blockage is removed there will be no specific cause of obstruction of *Vaata* in *Srotsa* thus pain will be subsides.

Modern aspect:- *Marmas* are considered as the points where *Mamsa*, *Sira*, *Snayu*, *Asthi*, and *Sandhi* unites.^[9] When we manipulate *marma* point its effect can be seen locally as well as at the higher center. There are 2 theories which explains the probable action of *Marma Chikitsa* by suppressing the pain.

- a. Neuro-Endocrine Theory, which states that on pressing/massaging *Marmas* some neurotransmitters and some chemical agent are released. One such agent is endorphin¹⁰ which have pain suppressor properties.
- b. Gate control Theory; The nervous system is arranged like a bundle of cables having two sizes thick and thin. Thick nerve carries touch response to the brain while the thin carries pain response to the brain. Gate control theory states that if the impulse transmission increased on thick fibers it causes closure of the receptor gate of nerves thus results into blockage to the conduction to the thin fibers.

CONCLUSION

Classically *Marmas* are those points which should be taken care while performing procedures but researches tells us the diagnostic and therapeutic benefits of *Marma Chikitsa* especially in Musculo-skeletal disorders. Therefore *Marma Chikitsa* is proven as a treatment to the disease, promotes general health and provides longevity to the individuals. *Marma Chikitsa* is one of the integral part of *Ayurveda* along with other therapies who act as the pillar for modern day Ayurvedic practice.

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