

A LITERARY REVIEW ON MARMA AND ITS THERAPEUTIC VALUE

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ABSTRACT

The Seat Of Life Is Marma. Marma Science is an important part of Ayurvedic knowledge, as it protects the vital parts of the body from injury and can be used for therapeutic purposes. The science of specific essential locations in the body (Marmas), which are the "seats of life" (Prana - the vital life energy), is known as Marma Science. It is a remarkable gem in the great collection of Ayurvedic knowledge. They play a significant role in the science of surgery since any injury to these areas can result in excruciating pain, incapacity, loss of function, loss of feeling, or even death. The Marmas must not be harmed in any way, according to the ancient texts. However, subsequent studies have employed Marma stimulation for therapeutic advantages, with positive results. The present review study was conducted in order to provide an in-depth review of these significant applications of Marma Science. This study was conducted to obtain a comprehensive review of the

Marma Science, taking into account the relevance of Marma Science to surgeries, as well as their recent application as an effective therapeutic technique. So in this present article we will study and discover more about marma and its therapeutic uses.

KEYWORDS: Marma, therapeutic therapy, prana, Ayurveda, vital parts.

INTRODUCTION

Marma is a very significant subject discussed in Ayurveda. Muscles, veins, ligaments, bones, and joints all come together at the marma point, according to the Sushruta Samhita.^[1] The word Marma is of Sanskrit origin, “Mrin Maranae”. The Sanskrit phrase, “Maryatae Asminiti Marma” means there is possibility of death or serious damage to health when these points get injured.^[2] The human body contains 107 marmas, according to Acharya Sushruta.^[1] As the "seats of life" (Prana, the fundamental life force), these locations are extremely significant and vital.^[3] Any lesion to these areas has the potential to cause death, excruciating pain, incapacity, loss of function, and loss of sensation. It is known as "Shalya Vishayardha" (fifty percent of the complete knowledge of surgery), due to its significance in surgery.^[1] According to Acharya Sushruta, Marma sthana is a vital points for the surgery. Hence, a surgeon or shalya chikitsak should have proper knowledge of these marma's, so as to avoid harm to the patient during the healing process. One of the most important healing secrets in ancient Ayurveda is the art of treating specific vital points on our bodies. It may be used for cleansing, strengthening and regenerating the body, for rejuvenation and relaxation, or for the release of blocked energy.

MARMA IN Samhitas'

Samhitas' Marma

Almost all of the classical writings produced during Samhita kala include a full account of the number of marmas, their position, the structures involved, as well as the detailed explanation of marmaghata or viddha lakshanas and disorders. The total number of marmas was acknowledged by all of the Acharyas to be 107.

1. Charaka Samhita

Acharya Charaka gave the Trimarmas, or Basti, Hridaya, and Shirah, a lot of prominence. He also agreed that there were 107 marmas.^[4,5]

Acharya Charaka mentioned 10 seats for prana and regarded the first six of these as marmas.^[6]

Additionally, he claimed that the vital life force, or prana, only occupies 10 seats, including two temples (shankha), three marmas (the heart, bladder, and head), the throat (kantha), blood (rakta), and semen (shukra).^[7]

2. Sushruta Samhita

Acharya Sushrut is regarded as The 'Father of Indian Surgery'. Regarding Shalya Chikitsa (surgery), he placed a high value on Marmas. He provided a thorough explanation of Marmas, including their types, quantities, locations, measurements, anatomical structures, relationships to panchamahabhutas, symptoms of injury and how to treat them, etc. In Sharira Sthana as 'Pratyeka Marma Nirdesham Shaariram', he has devoted a whole chapter on Marmas.[1(d)]

3. Ashtanga Hridaya

Ashtanga Hridaya contains a full reference on Marma. Acharya Laghu Vagbhatta has described Marma under the chapter “MARMA VIBHAGAM SHARIRM”.[8]

4. Ashtanga Sangraha

In Chapter 7 of Ashtanga Sangraha, Vriddha Vagbhatta explains Marma. He presented the same perspective as of Acharya Sushrut.[9]

THEORY AND PRACTISE OF MARMA THERAPY

The basic Ayurvedic principles of Tridosha, Panchamahabhuta, and chakra are also connected to this Marma Therapy. These things together make up the body's physical, physiological, and psychological manifestations. Marma Chikitsa can therefore heal both physical and mental illnesses. The psycho-neuro-endocrino-immunological pathways are made up of the Tridosha, Panchamahabhuta, Chakra, and nadis, and they all have an impact on a person's physical, mental, social, and spiritual wellbeing. Without an awareness of these concepts, it is impossible to attain the desired outcomes; instead, unfavourable adverse effects could occur, increasing the patient's suffering.[10]

Marma encompasses, among other things, the employment of pulling techniques, panchkarma, and massage.

Due to its connection to Prana (a component of Vata dosh), marma primarily addresses that dosha. Depending on how much Vata is involved, different Marma points, associated with Prana Vata, Udana Vata, Vyana Vata, Samana Vata, and Apana Vata, are taken into consideration.[10]

Along with cleaning the body's channels (strotas) and improving circulation, marma therapy aids in Vata Vyadhi. It enhances both physical and mental flexibility, eliminates

contaminants, and is used in medicine to treat a wide range of illnesses, including cardiac issues.

The strotas are cleared of obstructions through marma therapy, which also encourages physical and mental rest.

Abhyanga (massage), Yoga (anatomical postures), Mardana (acupressure), Lepa (external application of herbal medications), Aromatherapy, Pranic healing, Raktamokshana (scientific bloodletting to cure a sickness), Kshara karma, and Agni karma are all methods that can activate the Marma points. Some of them can be done without tools, while others need them. The hand is the Pradhanatam yantra, or the most practical instrument out of all the tools, according to Acharya Sushruta.

Yogic asanas, which are widely practised and have a similar premise, are used to both treat and prevent sickness as well as to improve the balance of the body.

Applying Marma Science as a Therapeutic Method

Some old Indian traditions and practices have been seen to apply Marma Science as a healing method. Yogasanas, Pranayama, Yogic kriyas', etc. activate the body's Marma points, producing the desired therapeutic effects. One of the greatest types of Pratyahara^[11,12] is performed by concentrating on eighteen particular Marma points on the body. Ayurvedic Abhyanga (massage) for therapeutic purposes and Kalaripayat of Kerala are just a few examples of old Indian traditional practices that use Marma knowledge. As a result, Marma Science might be regarded as a significant ancient healing system. In light of these and other cases involving the therapeutic potential of marma points, Marma Science has been referred to as a therapeutic technique in recent studies and books. The work of several such research in this regard is reviewed in the current paper.

Marma points are anatomical locations on the physical body where muscles, veins, ligaments, bones, and joints converge[1(e)]

In addition to representing the physical structure, Marma points also stand for the intersection of the mind, body, and awareness. As a result, the Marma points may contain important knowledge about thoughts, emotions, and sentiments as well as their relationship to general health.^[13]

Marma Therapy can be used to cleanse, revitalise, and strengthen the body. It can also affect how internal organs function and how well the mind and body work together. It can also lead to healing in terms of better digestion, headaches, stress, and other conditions.^[13]

The Kalaripayat (old Indian Martial Art tradition of Kerala) practitioners use the Marma knowledge as a health-promoting practice.^[14]

In Tamil Nadu, a traditional medical practice known as "Varma-kalai" (a form of Siddha medicine) focuses on the stimulation of the body's "Varmam," or "vital spots," for therapeutic purposes. Abhyanga (massage) stimulates marma points either by exerting pressure in various ways or by using particular movements of the hands or other body parts for therapeutic purposes.

Marma Science is one of the oldest medical sciences for disease prevention and treatment, promoting health and mental peace, as well as the growth of self-healing powers. Although it is very efficient and works quickly, its use as a therapeutic procedure that directly stimulates or affects the Marma points was uncommon and was only permitted in a small number of traditions and practices because improper intervention at the Marma sites can even be fatal.^[15]

Marma Therapy can be described as a natural, non-invasive, fast-acting, and long-lasting form of healing. It is a straightforward approach for activating the Marma points, which are utilised to treat chronic conditions like scoliosis, cervical spondylosis, muscular dystrophy, prolapsed intervertebral discs, etc.^[15]

This method was employed by Pathak (20) to treat cervical spondylosis, and considerable therapeutic results were noted. This streamlined version of Marma Therapy has been given to numerous patients with osteoarthritis, lumbar and cervical spondylosis, sciatica, prolapsed intervertebral discs, leucodystrophy, etc. for more than five years at Dev Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya (DSVV), Haridwar, with encouraging results.^[16]

Clinical data related to marma point, supported by evidence, has been generated for various conditions such as lower back pain leg pain that radiates, knee joint discomfort, headaches and more. The author mentions that in medieval India, there are records of using medicated juices on the nabhi to address diarrhea, believing it to have hidden benefits for overall body stability and vitality. This procedure is significant and certainly warrants scientific

confirmation. The treatment for trimarmas that is shiras, hridaya, and basti were mere emphasised on shiroragas and tension headaches.^[17]

It has now been demonstrated that this not only functions but also produces miraculous effects. Adding supportive treatments, such as the internal and external application of medications, might enhance the effects. For example, several medicinal oils can be utilised for Marma activation by Abhyanga.

Marma therapy is also helpful for Vata disturbances and headache alleviation. the Kapha is balanced by **Phana marma**. The sense organ and ojas are strengthened by **Shringataka Marma**.

Stimulating the **Kshipra Marma, Talahridya, Kurcha, Kurchshira, Gulpha, Indrabasti, Janu, Urvi, and Ani marma** helps treat injuries and abnormalities of the vertebral column and spinal cord.

Matrika, Krikatika, Vidhura, Apanga, Avarta, Utakshepa, Sankha, Sthapani, Simantas, and Adhipati marma are also activated for facial paralysis.

Treatment for cerebral palsy involves activating the **shakhagata** and **shiro marmas**.

As mentioned in accupressure, **Kshipra Marma** is connected to the lymphatic system and is also known as an analgesic accupoint. It is related to the neck and part above the neck, i.e. connected with brain, hypothalamus, pituitary, pineal, thyroid, parathyroid glands. Therefore, these areas are treated by the stimulation of the Kshipra marma.^[18]

SOME OF THE MARMAS AND THEIR RELATION WITH THE ORGAN SYSTEMS:

Talahridaya Marma is linked to the respiratory and circulatory systems.

Kurcha Marma is associated with Prana Vayu (body energy).

Kurchashira Marma aids in digestive improvement and muscle control.

Kshipra Marma is associated with heart and pulmonary function.

Gulpha Marma is in charge of joint movement.

Sthapani Marma controls the mind and senses.

Avarta Marma is associated with the Vata dosha and posture.

Shringataka marma affects eyes, nose, tongue and nerves.

Phana marma affects sinuses, ears and sense of smell.

Nabhi marma affects small intestines.

Janu marma affects heart, liver and spleen.

Indravasti marma affects small intestine.

Advantages of Marma Chikitsa include.

1. Marma Chikitsa offers a natural approach of treating diseases and enhances the body's inherent recovery process.
2. It helps alleviate stress, muscle stiffness, and joint pain.
3. Marma Chikitsa rejuvenates and revitalizes the body.
4. It boosts immunity, improves the body's physiological functions, and maintains overall bodily balance (homeostasis).
5. Marma Chikitsa provides relief for issues related to body posture and sedentary jobs.
6. It reduces pain associated with nerves, ligaments, bones, and joints.
7. Marma Chikitsa provides therapeutic benefits without the need for invasive procedures or medication, minimizing the risk of adverse effects when performed carefully.
8. Specific Marma points like Kshipra Marma, Manibandha Marma, and Katikatharuna Marma offer relief for various health conditions.^[18]

CONCLUSION

Marma science is an remarkable gem in great collection of ayurvedic knowledge. It plays an important role in the practice of shalya chikitsaka and its importance can be assumed by the given shloka.

मर्माणि शल्य विषयार्थम् उदाहरन्ति ।” [1(f)]

This reference explains that marma is considered as major part of shalya tantra. Marma is a crucial issue covered in Ayurveda that is extremely significant in relation to surgeries and treatment of various diseases as already mentioned in this article. The present article provides a summary of numerous ancient and classical Indian texts that discuss various facets of the Science of Marma in order to investigate its fundamental components. Other than the classical references, the marmas have also been associated with the modern view of human body and the results of stimulation of the specific marmas of the body.

It is one of the oldest medical sciences used mainly for protection against diseases and their treatments as well as promoting health and mental peace.

Despite of the various therapeutic uses of marmas, this science is not something to be taken as for granted as its improper manifestation can be fatal.

Hence, this science needs to be known worldwide so as to provide best care and treatment to all the souls in need.

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