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Marma Chikitsa- The Art of Natural Healing

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ABSTRACT

Marmas are one of the significant parts of human body as per Ayurveda which play important role in clinical practices. *Marmas* are the seat of vital forces which holds the *Prana* in it. *Marmas* are the vital points of the human body and any damage to these points leads to disability or even death also. The ancient scriptures have strictly prohibited causing any injury to the *Marma Sthana*. *Marma* play a crucial role for the surgeons particularly during the course of surgical procedure over the *Marma Sthana* of the body. *Sushrut Samhita* described 107 *Marma* points on human body. Anatomically *Marma* are the junction of *Mamsa*, *Sira*, *Snayu*, *Asthi* and *Sandhi*. A detailed description on *Marma* is available in *Sushrut Samhita* and other literatures. Stimulating or manipulating *Marma* points in various diseases is known as *Maram Chikitsa*. *Marma Chikitsa* is one of them which play important role towards the natural healing. There are various methods to stimulate the *Marma* point like vibration, applying pressure, pinching or application of cold and hot pastes, oil, ointments or others depending upon the nature of *Marma*. The article deals with the understanding the concept of *Marma Chikitsa* and its application in the field of Ayurveda.

Key Words *Maram*, *Maram chikitsa*, *Prana*

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INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is the science which deals with the health of human being. Its main objective is to maintain the optimum level of a healthy individual and treat the diseased one. The ancient texts of traditional science described *Rachna Sharir* as an important aspect of Ayurveda which plays significant role for understanding structural concept of human body. The history of surgery in India dates back to the Vedas in which transplantation of head, amputation of legs and its replacement by iron legs have been cited, as

performed by divine twins *Ashvini Kumars*, the *Sushrut Samhita* is the oldest available text on surgery in the world, dating back to a time between 300 to 3000 BC¹. *Marma* is one of the important subjects of Ayurveda. Different school of thoughts analysed this subject from different angle and developed their own thought².

Marma is defined as vital point of the body, the region in which there is a confluence of *Mamsa*, *Sira*, *Snayu*, *Asthi* and *Sandhi*. These are special points in human body and any injury to these *Marmas* leads to disability and if not properly treated even fatal condition may develop³.



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The *Marmas* are made up of *Soma*, *Maruta*, *Teja*, *Raja*, *Satwa*, *Tama*, and *Bhutatma*⁴.

Marma science is the combination of scientific attitude and religious practice by the mediation of experiential philosophy and is a part of the human beings. *Marma* science is an instant, permanent, natural, non-invasive way of healing today, because it succeeds in conserving many of the highest moral values of its adherents. It promotes calmness, self-control, self-healing, realization

and happiness and dose much to prevent suffering and sorrow⁵.

CLASSIFICATION OF MARAM POINTS

The main body organ and structures involved in the site of *Marmas* have been *Mamsa*, *Sira*, *Snayu*, *Asth* and *Sandhi*. Depending upon the structure, the body *Marma* has been designated according to anatomical structure (Table- 1), region (Table- 2), injury result (Table -3), and measurement (Table - 4).

Table 1 According to anatomical structure (*Rachana Bheda*)^{6,7}

Types of Marma	As per Sushrut	As per Vagbhata
Mamsa Marma	11	10
Sira Marma	41	37
Snayu Marma	27	23
Asthi Marma	08	08
Sandhi Marma	20	20
Dhamani Marma	-	09
Total	107	107

Table 2 Marma Classification According to region (*Shadang Bheda*)^{8,9}

Types of Marma	Number of Marma
Shakha (<i>Bahu</i> and <i>Sakthi</i>)	44
Udara	03
Urha	09
Prishtha	14
Jatroordhva	37
Total	107

Table 3 Marma Classification According to injury result (*Parinaama Bheda*)¹⁰

Types of Marma	Number of Marma	Mahabhootadhikya
Sadhyapranahara	19	Agni
Kalantarapranahara	33	Agni-soma
Vishalyaghna	04	Vayu
Vaikalyakara	44	Soma
Rujakara	08	Agni- vayu
Total	107	

Table 4 Marma Classification According to measurement (*Pramana Bheda*)¹¹

Types of Marma	Number of Marma
One Angula	12
Two Angula	06
Three Angula	04
Four Angula (<i>Swapanitala</i>)	29
Half Angula	56
Total	107



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MARMABHIGHATA

In *Ashtanga Hridaya*, symptoms of *Marmabhighata* have been described for all six types of *Marmas*.

They are- 1. *Mamsa Marma Vyadha Lakshana* - When *Mamsa Marma* is injured, there will be continuous bleeding, viscosity of blood is reduced, blood resembles like fleshy dilute water, pallor of the skin, loss of function of sense organs and quick death of the person.

2. *Snayu Marma Vyadha Lakshana* - When *Snayu Marma*, are injured, there will be bending of the body, convulsions, very severe pain, inability for riding, sitting etc. distortions of *Anga* or even death of a person.

3. *Sira Marma Vyadha Lakshana* - When *Sira Marma* are injured, blood which is thick flows out of *Sira* continuously in large quantity, due to blood loss symptoms like thirst, giddiness, dyspnoea, delusion, unconsciousness and hiccup arise and proceed to death of a person.

4. *Asthi Marma Vyadha Lakshana* - When *Asthi Marma* are injured, there is discharge of thin fluid mixed with bone marrow intermittently and severe pain continuously.

5. *Sandhi Marma Vyadha Lakshana* - When *Sandhi Marma* are injured, the site of injury feels as full of spicules, even after healing of the wound there is shortening of the arm, lameness, loss of strength and movement of joint, emaciation of body and swelling of joints occurs.

6. *Dhamani Marma Vyadha Lakshana* - When *Dhamani Marma* are injured, the frothy and warm blood flows out with sound and the person becomes unconscious¹².

IMPORTANCE OF MARMA CHIKITSA

Marma Chikitsa is the oldest treasure of Indian surgery from the Vedic period. During the Vedic era the knowledge of *Marma* was known to the emperors and warriors. The concept and practice of *Marma* was very popular in those days to achieve the maximum effect when contending with the enemies. During the period of the Buddha the science of *Marma* was transformed into the different martial arts¹³.

Marma Chikitsa contributes to increase or recharge physical, mental and spiritual energies. On the physical level it helps to revitalize or reenergize the body tissue, at cellular level, it improves the vital functions like digestion, respiration, blood circulation and excretion. On the psychological level it improves the mental faculty by directing it in the positive direction. It also offers a way to treat many psychosomatic ailments without any drugs. It harmonizes the functioning of the nervous and endocrine systems to control psychological disorders. On the spiritual level, reasoning of mind, regulation and transformation of thought in positive direction helps to concentrate towards the ultimate goal of life¹⁴.

TECHNIQUE OF MARMA THERAPY

Pre therapy exercise- it includes

Total relaxation of body



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Deep breathing exercise

Perception of whole body

Locate *Marma Sthana* on body

Posture- the most common posture for the practice of self *Marma* therapy are- simple cross-legged posture, lotus posture, half lotus posture, diamond posture, sitting posture, standing posture.

Pressure – depend upon the nature of the *Marma*

Stimulation time- 0.8sec/ stimuli

Time – 3 times per day

Repetition- 15-18 times in single sitting¹⁵

MECHANISM OF PAIN SUPPRESSION

There are many theories in modern science regarding pain control by various methods like acupuncture, acupressure, massage etc. Some of the theory is Psychogenic excitation of central analgesia system, Gate control theory of pain etc. In Psychogenic excitation of the central analgesia system, Electrical stimulation either in the periaqueductal grey area or raphe nucleus in addition to higher centre's that stimulate these areas can suppress many strong pain signals entering through dorsal spinal roots. Several opiates like substances found at the various level of the nervous system that is responsible for pain suppression. These substances include beta-endorphin, met-enkephalin, leu-enkephalin etc¹⁶.

DISCUSSION In history, we found many great personalities who died due to injury on *Maram Sthana*. The first example is *Ravana*. *Ram* shoots the *Ravana* with an arrow on his

Nabhi Marma. Lord Krishna died by an arrow hit on their *Talahridaya Marma*. *Shravan Kumar* died from an arrow that hit their *Sthapani marma*. In the Mahabharat battle, *Bhishma* recumbence on a bed of an arrows and died on *Uttarayan* because his *Marmas* were protected by arrows. A very famous Australian cricketer Phillip Hughes died on a cricket ground, hit by a ball in *Shankha Sthana* and many more examples are present. In Vedic time knowledge of *Marma* science was very well known and using these special points they treat many diseases and achieve health. *Marma Chikitsa* is an ancient Vedic *Marma Chikitsa* that chiefly depends on the correct location of a particular *Marma Sthana*. The actual location of *Marma Sthana* varies for every individual based on the dimensions of the body and its parts. The measurement of *Maram* has described in *Angula Pramana* of the individual body. It varies from half *Angula* to four *Angula*. This plays a very important role in the application of *Marma Chikitsa*. When we perform *Abhyanga*, *Yoga* or *Asana* we directly or indirectly press the *Marma Sthana*. For example, there are 7 positions in *Abhyanga*, in every position due to continuous pressure the *Marma Sthana* are stimulated. During *Yoga* and *Asana* performance we press directly or indirectly the *Marma Sthana*. There are some religious practices of worship which affect the *Marma Sthana* in daily routine life. Like application of the different type of paste on forehead, middle of eyebrows, behind the ear



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and many more area of the body. Keeping hair tight over the top of the head. Married women put *Sindur* in the middle of the head, in Muslim religion five times *Namaz* is done in a various position which somehow resembles Yoga. With the help of *Marma Chikitsa* along with Yoga, we can achieve the maximum level of health.

CONCLUSION

Marmas are classified on the predominant structures found in them. Although, *Marmas* are combination of *Mamsa*, *Sira*, *Snayu*, *Ashti* and *Sandhi*. But they are classified according to predominant structure in a particular region of the body. Specific points on the body surface used for treatment purpose in acupressure and acupuncture. Likewise, *Marma Chikitsa* is one of the emerging applied aspect of *Marma*. *Maram Chikitsa* is a non-invasive, easy to apply, with maximum benefits if applied properly. This is globally sustainable type of medical facility which can be used for therapeutic, non-pharmacological and preventive aspect of health. While performing *Marma Chikitsa* proper knowledge of *Marma* is mandatory. It can be a milestone in the field of medical science.



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