



PHYSIOLOGICAL AND CLINICAL ROLE OF MARMA: AN AYURVEDA PERSPECTIVE

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Article Received on 15/06/2020

Article Revised on 05/07/2020

Article Accepted on 26/07/2020

ABSTRACT

Ayurveda mentioned some vital parts of body as *Prana sthana* which also considered as *Marma Sthanas*. *Marma Sthana* reveals the qualities of region of the body where they reside and are associated with *Doshas*. *Marma Chikitsa* (therapy) helps in clearing the *Srotas* and thus improves the circulation of body. *Marma Sthana* helps in developing physical and mental flexibility, stimulation of vital points and removes *Ama*. *Marma Chikitsa* helps in flowing positive *Prana* through the various *Srotas* by putting pressure on *Marma sthanas*. This *Prana* helps in treating diseases such as headache, joint pain, *Hridaya Roga* and mental stress etc. *Marma sthana* stimulate various systems like neuromuscular, nervous, locomotory and circulatory system. *Marma* points are considered as the physiological junction of *Mamsa*, *Sira*, *Snayu*, *Asthi* and *Sandhi*. Some *Ayurveda* scholars have mentioned importance of *Marma* in surgery. It is believed that if pressure is applied on specific *Prana sthana* it can create the anesthetic as well as analgesic effect.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda*, *Prana*, *Marma*, *Chikitsa*, *Srotas*.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is a science of life which treats mind, body and soul to ensure a complete state of well being and *Marma* is a concept which helps in achieving this. *Marma* are the sites where *Tridosha* (*Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*) are present with their subtle forms; *Prana*, *Oja* and *Tejas*. They also contain three *Gunas* like *Sattva*, *Rajasi*, *Tamas* and soul. Stimulation of *Marma* points for the management of various diseases is called *Marma Chikitsa*. Stimulating *Marma Sthanas* by various methods results state of healthy body, mind and spirit. *Marmas* are generally related with specific *Mahabhutas* as depicted in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Marmas related with specific Mahabhuta.

S. No.	Marma	Related Mahabhuta
1	Sadyo Pranahara Marma	Agni
2	Kalantara Pranahara Marma	Agni + Soma
3	Vishalyaghna Marma	Vayu
4	Vaikalyakara Marma	Soma
5	Rujakara Marma	Agni and Vayu

Historical aspect

According to the ancient Indian medical science the *Prana* encompasses *Sharir*, *Atma*, *Mana* and senses. The Human body has energy in a multidimensional field

around which nourishes all the cells and organs of our body. This energy is collected and supplied through *Chakra's*. Any blockage in the field results in the disruption of flow of energy. This results in emotional, mental and physical disorders. During a healing session, blockage of the field is cleared, the *Chakra's* are restructured and energy flow is again maintained.

In ancient *Vedic* literature, *Marma sthanas* were called *Bindu*, activating a *Marma* point one can enter into the inner pharmacy of the body, stimulating *Marma sthanas* we can enhance the secretion of neurochemicals, biochemicals and hormones etc. This helps in healing the mind, body and spirits.

Anatomically the positioning and size of *Marma* is also mentioned in *Ayurvedic* literature such as *Janu Marma* is three *Angula* in dimension while *Urvi* and *Vitap* are one *Angula*, *Aani* and *Lohitaksh* are half *Angula* in dimension. These *Marma* points are measured in finger units (*Angula*) to detect their correct location.

CLASSIFICATION OF MARMA

There are various types of *Marma sthanas* on the basis of following factors:

- ❖ Consequences of trauma over the *Marma*
- ❖ Based on structures involved
- ❖ Based on sites and location of *Marma*
- ❖ Based on number of *Marma*

Marma sthanas on the basis of location of *Marma* are classified as following.

- ❖ There are 37 *Marma sthanas* present in the head and neck.
- ❖ There are 26 *Marma sthanas* present in the thorax and abdomen region.
- ❖ There are 22 *Marma sthanas* present in upper limbs (11 in each).
- ❖ There are 22 *Marma sthanas* present in lower limbs (11 in each).

Physiology of *Marma sthanas*

According to *Ayurveda*, *Samprapati Ghatakas* (*Dosha*, *Dhatu*, *Mala*, *Agni* and *Srota*) are important for the treatment of any disease while *Marma* are important for the prognostic evaluation of a disease. *Prana* are located in the *Nadis*. *Marma* points by enhancing the functional activities, transmitting the healing energy, promote the communication between the cells, organs, body and mind.

Stimulation of a specific *Marma Sthana* removes the *Vikruti* caused by the vitiation of a particular *Dosha*. It restores the *Prakruti* of the tissue and maintains its functioning. *Marma* mainly deal with *Vata Dosha*. Different *Marma* points are considered for *Vata Vyadhi* depending upon involvement of *Vata* such as *Prana Vata*, *Samana Vata*, *Apana Vata* and *Udana Vata*, etc. They also help in clearing the channels and improve circulation of body by removing *Ama*.

Marma therapies work at many levels; physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. Touch is the finest stimulus which begins at physical level but deeply transfer energy to the soul. Massage is a form of touch which improves the physiological, neurological, biomechanical and psychological functioning of the body. *Abhyanga* is also

a form of *Marma Chikitsa* which involves massaging the body in a circular motion with any *Sneha* as *Anulomana*. It decreases stiffness, stress hormone, pain, muscle spasm, tissue adhesion and anxiety. This whole process helps in rejuvenating the body.

Marma chikitsa is also used to relieve pain. There are many activities which disturb the flow of *Prana* such as *Viruddha Ahara*, lack of exercise, *Anidra* and stress. All these disrupt the equilibrium of the *Doshas* and *Prana* associated with that area. *Marma Chikitsa* stimulates the flow of *Prana* by pacifying the accumulated *Dosha* and thus relieves pain.

SIGNIFICANCE OF *MARMA CHIKITSA*

Marma Chikitsa is the power of humans to heal through management of vital points of body. Some useful therapies of *Marma* under *Panchkarma* are *Abhayanga*, *Dharachikitsa*, *Shirodhara*, *Pindasveda*, *Urobasti*, *Pichudharana* and *Kati basti*. *Marma Chikitsa* helps in improvement of digestive, respiratory, neural and psychological system of body. It can be used to treat paralysis, trigeminal neuralgia, Bell's palsy, spondylitis, migraine, heart diseases, muscular twitching and stress etc.

Marma Chikitsa is significant in following ways

- ❖ Provides relief from chronic or acute pain.
- ❖ Helps in balancing of *Doshas*.
- ❖ It clears the *Srotas* thus improving circulation.
- ❖ Removes *Ama* from the body.
- ❖ Helps in releasing neurochemicals and hormones etc.
- ❖ Helps in detoxification of body by improving process of transportation.
- ❖ Improves physical, mental and emotional health.

The *Marma* points should be taken care to avoid any injury since damage to such points can be life-threatening as depicted in **Figure 1**. They are the most vulnerable areas of our body, which has great potential to improve our health and well-being. These *Sthanas* are having specific function such as.

- *Nabhi* (umbilicus) helps in improving digestive fire.
- *Murdhani* stimulates circulation in brain
- *Brahmarandhara* relieves headache and optimizes pituitary gland's function
- *Shankha* pacify *Pitta*, relieves stomach pain and excess acidity
- *Griva* improves circulation of plasma and lymphatic fluid
- *Guda* maintain balance of strength, vitality and stability
- *Ajna* improves hormone regulation and eyes functioning
- *Shivarandhra* stimulates memory and helps in controlling emotions
- *Hridayam* transfer the healing energy to the heart.



Figure 1: Effects of injury to specific *Marma*.

SPECIFIC MARMA STHANAS AND CLINICAL IMPORTANCE

Sthapani Marma controls mind and senses. *Kapala Marma* relieves stress. *Phana Marma* balances *Kapha dosha* and relieves headache. *Avarta Marma* balances *Vata Dosha*. *Nasya Madhya Marma* relieves nasal congestion and also reduces anger. *Kurcha Marma* improves *Prana vayu*. *Kshipra Marma* improves the functioning of heart and lungs. *Gulpha Marma* improves joint movement. *Kurchashira Marma* helps control coordination of muscular movements. *Talahridaya Marma* improves respiratory and circulatory system.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda believes in complete normal state of health hence *Marma* is given an important place in the *Ayurvedic* texts due to its healing approaches for the management of different pathological conditions. These points are called *Marma* points where the *Prana* exits *Nadis* and enters the physical body. Each *Marma* is related to a specific *Dhatu*, *Srota*, *Dosha* and *Vayu*. *Marma Chikitsa* helps in maintaining equilibrium between *Tridosha* at physical level and *Trigunas* at mental level. While doing *Marma Chikitsa* the focus is to manipulate the energy or *Prana*. *Marma* points are seat of *Prana* as any injury on these may lead to disease, disability and fatal conditions. *Marma* are the vital areas of the body and damage to these *Marma* points may lead serious harmful effect.

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