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 Mansa, 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 Ganas 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 Mahabhutas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Marma</th>
<th>Related Mahabhuta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sadyo Pranahara Marma</td>
<td>Agni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kalantara Pranahara Marma</td>
<td>Agni + Soma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Vishalyaghna Marma</td>
<td>Vayu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Vaikalyakara Marma</td>
<td>Soma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rajakara Marma</td>
<td>Agni and Vayu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 Lohituks 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 Vyadhī 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 Snehā 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, Atiśa 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 Abhyanga, Dhara Chikitsa, Shirodharana, 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, spondilitis, 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:

- Nabhī (umbilicus) helps in improving digestive fire.
- Murdhānī stimulates circulation in brain.
- Brahmarandhara relieves headache and optimizes pituitary gland’s function.
- Shankha pacify Pitta, relieves stomach pain and excess acidity.
- Grīva improves circulation of plasma and lymphatic fluid.
- Guda maintain balance of strength, vitality and stability.
- Ajna improves hormone regulation and eyes functioning.
- Shivarandhara stimulates memory and helps in controlling emotions.
- Hridayam transfer the healing energy to the heart.
SPECIFIC MARMA STHANAS AND CLINICAL IMPORTANCE


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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