



AYURVEDA VIEW ON MARMA AND THEIR CLINICAL SIGNIFICANCE: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The word *Marma* is derived from 'Marman' which means the vital areas of body. These are *Sthana* in human body where *Mamsa*, *Snayu*, *Sira* and *Asthi* meet. The human body has an energetic aura nourishing the cells and every organ of the body. *Chakras* help in circulation of this energy. If *Chakras* get blocked then disruption in the flow of energy occurs. This results in production of disease, as well as, emotional and mental disorders in the body. *Marma* stimulate the flow of *Prana* (energy). *Ayurveda* believes in complete normal state of health hence *Marma* is given an important place in the *Ayurvedic* texts. *Marma Chikitsa* helps in maintaining equilibrium between *Tridosha* and *Trigunas* thus balancing physical as well as mental level. *Marma* points are seat of *Prana* as any injury on these may lead to disease, disability and fatal conditions. Knowledge of *Marma* has been used since long time in surgery also.

KEYWORDS: Marma, Sira, Tridosha, Injury.

INTRODUCTION

The ancient ayurveda scholars presented significance of various vital points inside the body these 'points' are referred as *Marma* points in *Ayurveda*. *Ayurveda* is a science of medicine which believes in treating mind, body and soul together to achieve a complete state of health and *Marma Chikitsa* helps to achieve this. *Ayurveda* consider *Samprapti Ghatakas* i.e. *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, *Mala*, *Agni*, and *Srotas* as important factor in treatment of a disease and *Marma* has got the prognostic importance.

Marmasthanas (*Marma* points) were called *Bindu* in ancient times. It is a path which leads to the inner pharmacy of the body. *Marmas* are the vital points in the body where the energy of life is concentrated. These are located on the junction of veins, arteries, tendons, bones and joints. *Marma* points are considered as the *Sthana* or anatomical landmarks where *Tridosha* (*Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*) are present with their minute forms *Prana*, *Ojusa* (*Soma*) and *Tejas* (*Agni*). They also contain *Gunas* like *Sattwa*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. Our body is a laboratory where transformation is occurring continuously and silently with every moment. By touching a *Marma* point body's biochemistry can be changed.

Classification of Marma

There are '107' *Marma* areas in the body. Some *Ayurvedic* scholars classified *Marma* on different basis as depicted in the **Figure 1**. *Ayurveda* described *Marma*

according to the six major parts of the body: the four extremities, the trunk, the head and the neck. *Ayurveda* described how injuries at these *Marmasthanas* (*Marma* points), whether superficial or deep, can disrupt the flow of *Prana*, decreasing vitality and even causing life-threatening damage. These *Sthanas* (points) are known as the *Sadyah pranahara marmani* i.e. *Murdhani*, *Brahmarandhara*, *Shivarandhra*, *Ajna* (third eye), *Shanka* (right and left temple), *Hridayam* (heart), *Nabhi* (umbilicus), and *Uda* (anus).

They also described the *Marma* points in relation to the five principal components of the body's physical structures:

- (1) *Mansamarma* (*Marma* located in the flesh or muscle);
- (2) *Siramarma* (located in vessels);
- (3) *Snayumarma* (located in muscles);
- (4) *Asthimarma* (located in bones) and
- (5) *Sandhimarma* (located in joints).

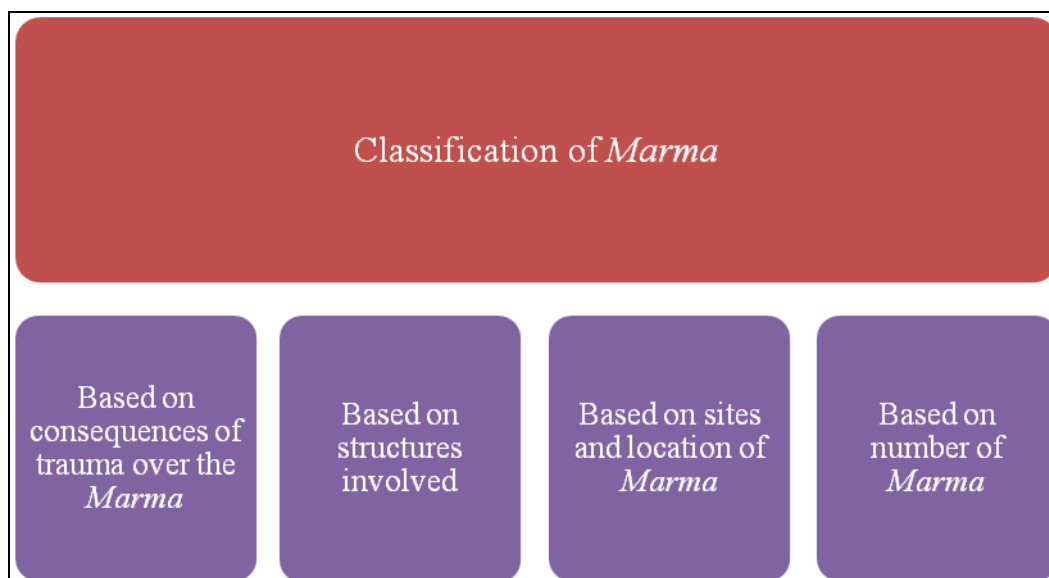


Figure 1: Different basis of classification of Marma.

The *Marmasthanas* present on the scalp are connected to the brain and to some other parts also. Points present on the chest and upper back are connected with the heart and lungs. The points on the lower back are connected with the kidneys, stomach, and digestive organs. Each area where *Marmaṇi* is present is associated with one of the five constituent elements of the body (space, air, fire, water, and earth). And this *Marma* point activates the energy of the element associated with their location.

Physiology related to Marma

According to some texts, there are thousands of circulating life forces flowing in our body which are known as *Nadis*. These points are called *Marma* points where the *Prana* exits the *Nadis* and enters the physical body. Each *Marma* is related to a specific *Dhatu* (body tissue), *Srota* (channels), *Dosha* and *Vayu* (function of *Prana*). *Ayurvedic* medicine use the pathway of energy channels i.e. *Nadis* to promote communication between the cells, body, and mind. This *Marma* points help in maintaining and coordinating the functional activities and transmitting healing energy to organs and tissues of the body.

When *Marmasthanas* are damaged, they cause imbalance of *Doshas* and basic constituents of the body i.e. *Agni*, *Vayu*, *Satwa*, and *Tama*. All these elements are responsible for the sound condition of *Mana* (Body). The dissociation of the *Jnanedrias*, disturb their activity, causing unconsciousness. All this leads to physiological imbalance in the body and trauma. Human body when exposed to trauma shows various sign and symptoms depending on severity and types of trauma.

Stimulation of a *Marmasthana* related to a particular tissue not only help to maintain the normal functioning of that tissue but also help in identifying *Vikruti* in the elemental makeup. It adjusts particular *Dosha*, thus restoring the basic constitution (*Prakruti*) to its natural

state. The language of the *Doshas* is absolute key to understand the therapeutic viewpoint on health and diseases; like chest *Marmasthana* stimulate *Kapha*, umbilical points affect *Pitta*, and colon points influences *Vata*. The activation of *Marmasthanas* calms the mind and help in producing the strong response in the mind by increasing the perception power.

Marma is also used to relieve pain. Pain is generated in the body when there is tension and stagnation, blocking the flow of *Prana* to a particular part of the body. This disturbs the equilibrium of the *Doshas* of that area. *Marma Chikitsa* stimulates the flow of *Prana* of the affected area, removing the accumulated *Dosha*, thus reducing the pain. Some practices disturbing the flow of *Prana* are mentioned in the **Figure 2**.

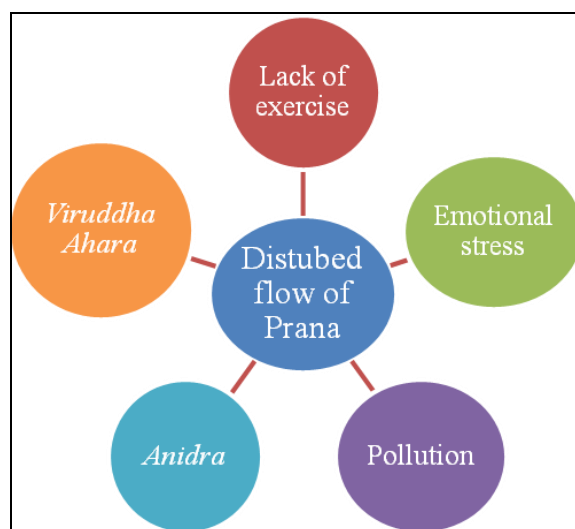


Figure 2: Different causes which can disturb the flow of Prana.

Importance of *Marma Chikitsa*

Marma Chikitsa is the power of humans to heal through management of vital points of body. It is a way of treatment where pressure is applied on the *Marmasthanas*. It can create dramatic shifts in the body by working at many levels like physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. This will stimulate the flow of *Prana* along the *Nadis*. Some useful therapies of *Marma* under *Panchkarma* are *Abhayanga*, *Dharachikitsa*, *Shirodhara*, *Pindasveda*, *Urobasti*, *Pichudharana* and *Kati Basti*. It releases neuro-chemicals like serotonin, melatonin for improved cognitive function and good sleep.

Marma Chikitsa can be used to treat paralysis, migraine, tremors, diabetic neuropathy, muscular twitching, some

traumatic neurological lesions like trigeminal neuralgia, Bell's palsy, spondilitis, some respiratory problems; to reduce the pain of nerves, muscles, ligaments, bones and joints. It helps in improvement of immunity, digestive, respiratory, neural and psychological system of body. *Marma Chikitsa* promotes the healing effect which revitalizes the injured part and this result in Rejuvenation of the body.

While *Marmasthanas* are the most vulnerable areas of our body, they also hold great potential to improve our health and well-being. Each of the following *Marmasthana* provides access to specific health benefits described in the **Figure 3**.

<i>Anja</i>	•benefits the eyes and nose,improves function of pituitary gland and regulation of hormones
<i>Shivarandhra</i>	•improves memory and balance of emotions; makes mind stable
<i>Hridayam</i>	•directs the healing energy to the heart
<i>Nabhi</i>	•improves gastrointestinal <i>Agni</i> (digestive fire)
<i>Murdhani</i>	•stimulates the flow of cerebrospinal fluid and blood in brain
<i>Brahmarandhara</i>	•improves the function of pituitary gland and provide relief in headache
<i>Shankha</i>	•reduces pitta, relieves stomach pain and excess acidity.
<i>Griva</i>	•stimulates circulation of plasma and lymphatic fluid, benefits the throat and thyroid gland
<i>Guda</i>	•improves strength, stability.

Figure 3: Benefits of different *Marmasthanas*

Therapeutic correlation of *Marma Chakra/Points*

❖ *Sthapni marma*

It controls various *Chakra* including *Ajna*, *Prana* and *Manas*.

❖ *Neel marma*

It controls *Brajaka pitta*, speech and thyroid circulation.

❖ *Hridaya marma*

It control blood tissues and air *Chakra*.

❖ *Nabhi marma*

It controls digestion and exertion.

❖ *Basti marma*

It controls muscular system and water *Chakra*.

❖ *Guda marma*

It governs earth *Chakra*, channels of urination and menstruation.

CONCLUSION

Marma are energy points in the body used for healing in Ayurveda. They are also known as neuro-lymphatic points, as they stimulate the removal of lymph and enhance the efficiency of the body's organs. Specific points on the body surface are used in treatment in acupressure therapy. Likewise *Marma Chikitsa* is also one of the emerging applied aspects of *Ayurveda*. While doing *Marma Chikitsa* the focus is to manipulate the energy or *Prana*. This causes improvement in tone and circulation in that particular area relieving stiff muscles and boosting circulation, removing anxiety, stress hormones; improving digestive, endocrine, cardiac effects, increases parasympathetic activities. This whole

process regulates the actual process of revitalization thus rejuvenating the body.

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