MARMA CHIKITSA: A NON-INVASIVE HEALING THERAPY IN AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT
Marma is the vital areas of the body. The word Marma comes from Sanskrit origin word ‘Mṛi’ meaning death. The Sanskrit phrase, ‘Marayanti Iti Marmani’, also means death or serious damage to body or health after infliction to the point of their situation. Hence these areas are called Marma. Due to foreign rule in India for plenty of time, the medical science of the level could not progress therefore development of Marma Vigyan also suffered. There was discriminative treatment to Indian medical science so far as the development is concerned. However it can be pleased that Marma Vigyan is collection of fundamental of knowledge of Marma. Marma therapy focuses on energizing the body to relieve occupational illness and stress related diseases. Hence the complete knowledge of the basic principles of Marma and its clinical application can play a important role in treatment modalities.

KEYWORDS: Marma, Fundamentals, Illness.

INTRODUCTION
Marma is very important and unique concept of Ayurvedic Sharir. First & foremost literature of Marma is seen in Brihatrayee which is described in the sixth Adhyaya of Sharirshana Sushruta Samhita.¹ Marma means the most vulnerable spots in our body.² In ancient Vedic times, Marma points were called Bindu – a dot, secret dot or mystic point.³ By definition, a Marma point is a junction on body where two or more types of tissue meet, such as muscles, veins, ligaments, bones or joints. During ancient times, knowledge of Marma was known to kings and warriors. It was applied in battle fields to hit and achieve maximum lethal effect on enemies. This science was used both in warfare and surgery. From common ailments to serious neuromuscular diseases, all can be treated by Marma therapy. Common ailments like headache, bodyache, faulty spinal alignment, pain in the joints can be rejuvenated through Marma Chikitsa.⁴ There are 108 Marma points in our body. Energy and intelligence are generated from Marma points. Application of pressure to these Marmas induces the flow of energy through a complex of systems called Nadis.²

Newer techniques of investigations and management have changed the scenario of acutely injured patients but the anatomical importance of the structure and tissues still holds the importance. Marma of Sushruta and even before that period is in very precise form.⁵ Marma Chikitsa is a significant aspect of the Ayurvedic treatments where specific points are present on the body where the application of pressure induces the flow of vital energy (Prana) along a complex system of subtle channels called (Nadis). Ayurveda recognizes about 107 therapeutic Marma points. The injury to some of these lethal Marma points can lead to instant death. The word Marma literally means a tender full vital point, which is a conjugation of muscle, nerve, joint, bone, tendon, artery and vein either in combination of two, three etc. or all the above structures. The healing through Marma Abhyanga affects the Cakras, Physical health and the Doshas. The purpose of a Marma Abhyanga is to stimulate the various body organs and systems. The actions of Marma are controlled by the Pranic Vayu (cosmic energy principle in human body). This Prana Vayu is essential to maintain the life or longevity of a person. Marma therapy focuses on energizing the body to relieve occupational illness and stress related diseases.

Marma
In Susruta Samhita it is apparent that the knowledge of anatomy and physiology is essential for the exact study of surgical problems by Ayurvedic surgeons.⁶ It is important to know that injuries on certain parts of the human body need more consideration. Such parts are known as Marmasthana. It is also important to note that those Vaidyas who are expert in the anatomy and physiology of the different human organs will never
commit mistakes in the management of diseases due to ignorance. Susruta mentioned the condition of attaining the position of Visharada only after one attains thorough knowledge of the human body anatomy. According to Dalhana the vulnerable point are those points on the human body surface on which any kind of trauma or injury may lead to death or symptoms like death. The term Marma means Prana, Jiva or Life. Acharya Sushruta has described 107 numbers of Marma and described their Anatomical classification. According to Acharya Sushruta the five anatomical structures are basically and essentially involved on Marma point.9 These structures are: 1. Mamsa 2. Sira 3. Snayu 4. Asthi 5. Sandhi

Acharya Sushruta has also classified Marma points in to five types depending upon the ultimate results (prognosis) after the trauma inflicted upon these points. These types are: 1. Sadyha Pranharra Marma 2. Kalantarara Pranahara Marma 3. Vishalyghna Marma 4. Vaikalyakara Marma 5. Rujakara Marma

Clinical condition where Marma Chikitsa can be applied: Friction between bones, joint pain, less synovial fluid (decreased lubrication between joints). Swelling Oedema seen at joints, crepitation (noise) felt at joints with movements etc, these symptoms are seen in people already suffered from contagious diseases, with low immunity & Resistance power, accidental injuries, wrong & untimely medication, improper daily & seasonal regime, lack of exercises. Due to all these above reasons Vata, Pitta & Kapha the Tridoshas get imbalanced in our body later leading to improper blood circulation in every portion-joints, new cells are not produced which can supply better oxygen which further complicates the system with more swelling related muscular-joint pain, lack in flexibility numbness etc.9 Marma points, considered “doorways” or “entry points” into our body’s inner pathways, when gently pressed on the skin can stimulate a chain of positive events.9

Benefits of Marma Chikitsa2
- To provide a pathway for inner healing.
- To remove blocks from energy channels.
- To create an harmony between all vital energies.
- Removes emotional and physical toughness.
- Remove toxins from body Improves digestion.
- Balances body temperature.
- Provides healthy skin.
- Increases immunity.
- Gives us positive energy.
- Provide relief from stress, depression, anger etc.

Mode of Action of Marma therapy41 - There are four basic purposes of Marma:
1. It removes blocks in energy channels called Srotas.
2. It pacifies Vata Dosha, bringing it to its normal path especially Vyana Vayu (a sub-Dosha which controls the autonomic nervous system.).
3. It creates physical, mental and emotional flexibility. Because of Ama (toxins) and because of Vata, human beings after 35 or 40 years of age become rigid and this happens to animals and plants as well. As Vata increases in body, it leads to degeneration. This rigidity means becoming fixed in ideas, emotions and physical movements.
4. This gentle treatment creates an opportunity to experience powerful and dynamic transformation at the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual level by building a positive link with the unconscious mind.

Marma Chikitsa and Yoga- Basically Ayurveda strives to keep the body healthy and prevent illness. Illness is the condition when the body gets tired excessively or weak and this condition affects the normal physiological functions of the body. A number of suitable measures are advocated in Ayurveda to prevent the illness and to keep the body healthy and fit. As previously Yoga was the means of achieving spiritual gains, nowadays Yoga is a tool for health promotion among the masses. In the same way the implementation of Marma Chikitsa may help in different surgical lesions. One of the most significant achievements of ancient Indian surgery lies in the fact that surgery was elevated from a manual art to an academic discipline and a superior area of expertise amongst eight disciplines of Ayurveda.

Aims of Marma Chikitsa- In Charaka Samhita the aim of Ayurveda is explained as preservation of health of healthy individual and to treat the ailments of a diseased person. As we know that Maharshi Susruta has a different opinion and a little different aim of treatment in comparison to Charaka Samhita. He was concerned with the treatment of a diseased person; in another step he was concerned with the health of the person who was treated earlier by operation or other means. With the help of Marma therapy we can fulfill the aims of Charaka Samhita as well as the motives of Maharshi Susruta. As a curative treatment it can be used widely in many diseases and as a supportive treatment it can be used along with any medical science, without hindrance, along with its drugs and procedures. Marma Chikitsa is very popular in many places as a traditional skill. A number of bonesetters and Nadi vaidyas practice by this speciality. But as a traditional skill it has no scientific explanation behind it and it is limited to some traumatic lesions of muscles and bones. The scientific presentation of Marma therapy is the need of the hour. This science is still obscure. In the light of theoretical description available in the old texts and present research and knowledge, Marma Chikitsa has been further developed and practised.

CONCLUSION
Ayurveda details major (Maha) and minor Marma points.6 The major points correspond to the major Shad Chakras in the body, while the minor points are found around the torso and limbs. Thus, healing through Marma Abhyanga affects the Chakras, physical health,
and the Doshas. Although the Marmas are the junctions of all five principles (i.e., flesh, veins and arteries, tendons, bones, and joints), at each point a predominance of one principle exists. It is at these points where Marma Cikitsa can most effectively restructure or rebalance the system to function most healthily. Further, it helps develop the preventive health and longevity of the body and mind by ensuring the proper balance and flow of hormones, fluids, immune factors etc. The purpose of a Marma Cikitsa is to stimulate the various bodily organs and systems. Like acupuncture, these points are measured by finger units (Anguli or Angula) to detect their correct locations. Many Marma points are larger than acupuncture points. Thus, they can be found more easily.

REFERENCES