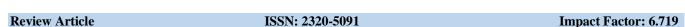


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HARNESSING ANCIENT WISDOM: PAIN MANAGEMENT IN KATIGRAHA THROUGH MARMA CHIKITSA

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ABSTRACT

Background: The Ayurvedic treatment known as *Marma Chikitsa* stimulates *Marma* points to treat pain and enhance general health. The effectiveness of *Marma Chikitsa* in treating *Katigraha*, a disorder marked by stiffness, limited mobility, and low back discomfort, is investigated in this study. Methods: Traditional Ayurvedic texts, PubMed, and Google Scholar were searched for relevant material. Results: To reduce pain and promote healing, *Marma Chikitsa* concentrates on stimulating particular spots, especially *Katikataruna* and *Kukundara Marma*. These locations line up with important anatomical features related to low back discomfort. Natural analgesia is thought to be produced by the therapy's release of endogenous opioids and anti-inflammatory chemicals. Comparative research suggests that *Marma Chikitsa* provides a non-invasive, side-effect-free substitute for traditional anti-inflammatory and analgesic medications, which frequently have limits on their effectiveness and possible negative effects. Discussion: *Marma Chikitsa*'s holistic method, which emphasizes the equilibrium of *Prana* (life force), works very well for treating *Katigraha*. This therapy treats the underlying imbalances that lead to chronic pain disorders in addition to providing instant pain relief. *Marma Chikitsa* may improve pain management techniques and provide patients with low back pain with a full remedy if it is included into contemporary medical methods. Conclusion: *Marma Chikitsa* offers a viable substitute for treating *Katigraha*, integrating both short-

term analgesia and long-term recovery. To confirm its effectiveness and make it easier for conventional medical practices to incorporate it, further empirical research and clinical trials are required. This might lead to better patient outcomes in pain treatment.

Keywords: Marma Chikitsa, Katigraha, Low back pain, Ayurvedic therapy, Pain management

INTRODUCTION

Theories of traditional medicine are always constructed by ancients' cognition of the universe and human body as well as their general life experience. In the process of building and developing medical system, various regions and periods creating a cultural relation or gap, sometimes led to the same or different paths respectively. (1)

Ayurvedic pain management includes pharmacological and nonpharmacological approaches like Marma Chikitsa, Yoga, and meditation which help in releasing the pain effects without any adverse effects on the body. Marma combined with an ability to perceive and direct the flow of Prana; Marma Chikitsa becomes a powerful tool in influencing the healing of almost every known ill condition like pain. The most common problem in today's busy and exhausting life is pain, and because of its high prevalence and fifth vital sign, pain is one of the grievous problems present throughout the world. Fast acting and quick relief is the preferred way in today's hectic schedule. (2) One such Ayurvedic theory that parallels several important and sensitive bodily areas is the notion of Marma. Ayurveda describes Marma as the confluence of several elements such as Mamsa, Sira, Snayu, Asthi, and Sandhi. According to the literature, this point represents the meeting of the Vata, Pitta, and Kapha components; so, Marma points are accountable for both physiological and pathological occurrences. The physio-anatomical structures known as the deepseated Marma have particular dimensions, depths, and therapeutic uses. Numerous sporadic allusions to Marma can be found in vedic and epic literature, confirming that early South Asian combatants were proficient in the technique of Kalaripayattu, the oldest martial art in South India, which is used to assault and defend key areas. (3)

Katigraha is one of the eighty varieties of Vataja Nanatmaj Vyadhis described in our classics. (4),(5),(6) The term "Katigraha" refers to discomfort, stiffness, and limited mobility. (7) The main reason for disability is low back pain. As a result, the rheumatologist and physician continue to face challenges in diagnosing and treating this illness. (8) The most common musculoskeletal condition among Indian IT workers that is connected to their line of work is low back pain. (9) The cause of the pain, or Doshika predominance, determines how it should be managed.

In Modern science several analgesics, antiinflammatory, antipyretic medications, chemo trypsin and serratiopeptidase - like compounds, and opioids are utilized in contemporary medicine to manage pain, but as of yet, there is no one medication that works for all types of pain. (10)

An essential component of *Ayurveda*, *Marma Chikitsa* concentrates on activating *Marmas*, or key places in the body, to support overall health. Its goals include bringing *Prana* into balance, easing pain, and hastening the healing process by focusing on certain spots. *Marma Chikitsa* also provides non-invasive, natural, preventative therapies, balances the nerve and endocrine systems, and restores emotional and physical equilibrium. By addressing both physical illnesses and emotional discomfort, it seeks to improve overall quality of life and empower people to lead satisfying lives. This traditional therapy uses natural techniques to effectively treat patients and bring their body and mind back into equilibrium. It is a holistic approach to health.

The goal of *Marma Chikitsa* is to provide immediate pain relief. By secreting several prostaglandin inhibitors, endorphins, interferon, and other opioid-like chemicals that are 100 times more effective than opium, *Marma* stimulation can cause analgesia. *Marma*

treatment might provide immediate pain relief in a short amount of time. (11)

Aims and Objectives

To review the theoretical framework and principles underlying *Marma Chikitsa* as a holistic approach to treating *Katigraha*, focusing on its philosophical foundations and anatomical considerations.

Material and Methods:

A systematic search of databases including PubMed, Google Scholar, and traditional *Ayurved*ic texts was conducted to gather relevant literature. Studies, clinical trials, case reports, and scholarly articles from peer-reviewed journals were analyzed for insights into the therapeutic application and outcomes of these modalities.

Review of Literature

Marma:

Ayurveda is a traditional Indian alternative medicine system with a rich history. It believes that the five elements significantly impact a person's health. Marma points are anatomical locations where these elements flow, and Marma points therapy is the practice of stimulating these points through gentle massage therapy. (11)

Ayurveda classical texts like Susruta Samhita and Astanga hrdayam described 107 Marma points in human body, and regarded them as fatal spots or vital points, due to their anatomical sites where muscles, veins, ligaments, bones and joints meet together and their natural feature as seats of vital life force. (12),(13)

Origine of word Marma -

According to etymology, the term *Marma* comes from the Sanskrit seat of life or meeting place root "*Mri*" with the suffix "*Manin*". (14)

Its translation into English suggests that *Marma* has structural qualities and that it is seen more important than other bodily parts. It is also referred to as a type of fatal spot, crucial point, and vulnerable point. (15)(16)

Marma was first understood during the Vedic period, when India was always at war. The *Vedas* and other previous ancient Indian texts provide us with a basic understanding of the original meaning of *Marma*.

"For battle, with which he found the mortal spot of that very *Vrtra*, as, gaining mastery, he thrust with the thrusting mace, while conferring who knows how much," the *Rigveda*, a book that records Vedic hymns or sacrifice formulae, once said. (17)

It mentioned *Prana* (*Life*), which is Sanskrit for life or breath. Since *Marma* is said to be the seat of *Prana*, harm to it will cause a loss of life force. But just a few sites were mentioned in the *Vedas*, and not even in its offshoot *Upanishads* or *Puranas*, which had more data. It was only in the publication of S. *Samhita*, one of the three *Ayurved*ic classics, that systematic understandings of *Marma* became evident. This book established a distinct chapter on *Marma*, standardized the positions of the 107 *Marma* points in the human body, and determined the various categories for each one. (18)

The former is derived from a battlefield culture, which consequently defined *Marma* as an existence that needs careful protection and blessing as well as absolutely prohibition of injuries even the slightest one. Yet the latter is directly related to medical activities, encouraging people through moderate stimulations to avoid pain feelings and achieve a balanced state of maintaining health. Murthy, the translator and annotator of *S. Samhita*, once concluded, "Though recognition of special spots on the body is common to both, the aim of approach of each one is thoroughly opposite of one another." But overall, medical properties of these special points have been revealed in the origin process, and constantly influenced the evolution of respective medical behaviors. (19)

In Ashtanga Hridaya Acharya Vagbhatt has described Marma as the meeting place of the Mamsa, Sira, Snayu, Asthi, Sandhi, and Dhamani. The term "Marma" refers to the area of the body that experiences intense pain and unusual pulsation after being injured. (20)

In the Sushruta Samhita, Sushruta listed 107 Marmas; Ashtanga Sangraha and Ashtanga Hridaya also included the same number. Marmas are categorized based on where they are.

Koshthagata - 26 Shakhagata - 44, and Shiro-grivagata Marma - 37 in no.

SadyoPranahara Marma, Kalantar Pranahara Marma, Vishalyaghna Marma, Vaikalyakara Marma, and Rujakar Marma are listed in Parinama. (21) The severity of damage caused to Marma depends upon the force of injury and type of Marma injured.

Katigraha

In "Amara Kosha" the definition of the term "Kati" is "Katau Vastra Varanau," or the bodily portion that is clothed. "Graha" signifies grasping. It comes from the dhatu "Graha Upadane," which is supportive. (22) Katigraha is a Vataja Nanatmaja Vyadhi described by Sharangadhara. (23) According to his explanation, it is known as "Katisthambhana Vedana Vishesha," a disorder characterized by stiffness and discomfort in the Kati Pradesha (pelvic area). In Gadanigraha Vatavyadhiadhikara, Acharya Sodhala defines Katigraha as a state in which vata becomes vitiated, either as Shuddha or with Ama, taking Ashraya in the Katipradesha and resulting in Ruja and Graham in the vicinity. (24) Additionally, Bhayaprakasha Amvatadhikara provides a brief account of Katigraha as an illness, including its etiological aspects, symptoms, and therapy. (25)

Shula (pain)

According to *Acharya Charaka*, pain is felt more acutely in *Marma* than in other places of the body since here is where *Chetana* is located. (26)

*Marma*s are regarded as half of the surgical subject as any damage to them has the potential to be lethal; thus, even though the patient will be in excruciating agony, they should receive early medical attention from a qualified physician. (27)

Maharshi Susruta states in the *Susruta Samhita* that Vata is the most prevalent cause of discomfort. (28)

Pain is a prevalent occurrence in all *Vatika* predominance instances, along with other clinical symptoms of *Vatika* abnormalities. In a healthy condition, the *Vata* is in charge of activating several system processes. (29)

This explains it as a Shula-causing disease with limited *Kati* motions brought on by *Vata*. None of the *Brihatries* have identified *Katigraha* as a distinct illness; instead, they have identified it as a symptom of

a number of other illnesses, including *Vatajwara*, *Ashmari* (*Stone*), *Bhagandara* (*Fistula*), *Ajeerna*, *Kshataksheena*, *and Arshas* (*Piles*).

What is Marma Chikitsa?

Marma Chikitsa, an essential aspect of *Ayurveda*, lies in its holistic approach to promoting health and wellbeing through the manipulation and stimulation of vital points, known as *Marmas*, in the body. This therapy aims to achieve several key objectives:

- **1. Balancing** *Prana* (Life Energy): ⁽³⁰⁾ Since *Marmas* are said to be the seats of this essential life energy, *Marma Chikitsa* aims to maintain equilibrium in the flow of *Prana* throughout the body. Keeping this equilibrium is essential to preserving general health and vigor.
- **2. Alleviating Pain:** (31) *Marma Chikitsa* is widely used in pain management, especially for ailments like low back pain for which conventional analgesics may not be effective. Pain relief is achieved by practitioners by focusing on particular *Marma* points.
- **3. Enhancing Healing Processes:** ⁽³²⁾ By activating *Marma* points, *Marma Chikitsa* speeds up the body's natural healing processes. This stimulation facilitates the healing process from wounds and long-term illnesses by improving circulation, lowering inflammation, and encouraging tissue regeneration.
- **4. Harmonizing the Nervous and Endocrine Systems:** (33) *Marma Chikitsa* is essential for balancing the body's neurotransmitter and endocrine systems, which is necessary for many physiological functions like metabolism, hormone balance, and stress tolerance.
- **5. Restoring Physical and Emotional Equilibrium:** (34) *Marma Chikitsa* helps to restore general equilibrium by eliminating physical blockages and emotional

um by eliminating physical blockages and emotional tension. This promotes mental clarity, emotional stability, and physical relaxation.

6. Non-Invasive and Natural Treatment: (35) *Marma Chikitsa*, being a non-pharmacological technique, provides a natural and non-invasive therapy alternative, which appeals to those looking for allencompassing and non-side-effect answers for their health problems.

- **7. Preventing Disease:** (36) Regular *Marma Chikitsa* sessions can help delay the onset of disease and increase resilience against it by preserving *Prana* equilibrium and bolstering the body's inherent defences.
- **8. Improving Quality of Life:** ⁽³⁷⁾ In the end, *Marma Chikitsa* seeks to improve people's entire quality of life by treating mental and physical disorders, allowing them to enjoy more active and satisfying lives.

Marma Chikitsa is essentially a holistic approach to health and wellbeing, utilizing traditional knowledge to provide those seeking balance and well-being natural, effective care.

Human skill is mostly the ability to use his hands to accomplish a variety of tasks. "Hastameva pradhaana-tamam yantranam," or "the human hand is the most important instrument," is a statement made by Acharya Susruta. (38) the real therapy, which consists of pressing on the Marma points with the thumb or fingers. (39)

The treatment of pain in *Katigraha* is attributed to the following *Marma* points: (40)

- 1. Katikataruna
- 2. Kukundara

Acharya Sushruta has mentioned these two Marmas under Prushthagata Marma. (41)

Katikataruna Marma:

The Pristha Marma known as Katikataruna Marma is located in the shroni (sacrum) area on both sides of

the spinal column. Its damage results in profuse bleeding, which causes pallor, staining, and disfigurement of the body before dying. (42) Kalantara Pranahara and Asthi Marma, which measure half angula, are the Katikataruna Marma. Both somya and agniya guna are prevalent in Kalantara Pranahara Marmas. The death is not sudden; rather, it happens gradually over the course of a week or two.

According to modern anatomy this is the point of sacroiliac (43) *Marma* joint where internal iliac vessels pass down. Trauma such as sacroiliac joint dislocation and fractures can alter a person's typical pelvic shape and burst blood vessels, which can result in bleeding and even death. The posterior portion of the ilium bone, the anterior and posterior sacroiliac ligaments, the interosseous sacroiliac ligament, the external iliac artery and vein, and the hypogastric artery are among the structures that are in close contact with. The spinal cord is a long, tubular bundle of nerve tissue, as is well known. The primary informational channel between the brain and peripheral nervous system is the spinal cord. There are *Katikataruna Marma* on either side of the spinal column. (44)

It is commonly known that damage to the spinal column or other structures can result in loss of feeling, strength in the muscles, and ability to operate the bowels, bladder, and sexual organs.

Table: 1 (Detailed overview Katikataruna Marma)

Name	Katikataruna Marma
Sthana	On either side of vertebral column, on the earlike bones of pelvis i.e. Sciatic notch.
In reference to Shadang	Pristhagata Marma
According to Parinaam	Kalantar pranhar Marma
According to Rachana	Asthi Marma
Sankhya	2
Parimaan	Half Anguli
Viddha Lakshana	leads to severe bleeding, which subsequently causes pallor, discoloration, and physical
	disfigurement before dying.
Modern correlation	Sciatic notch
Anatomical Structures	Posterior aspect of ilum,
	Anterior- Posterior- interosseous sacroiliac ligament,
	External iliac artery and veins,
	Hypogastric artery,

Sacral plexus of nerves.

Kukundara Marma: (45) According to classical reference *KukundaraMarma* are located one on either side of lower part of the *Prushtavamsha* (spine and back bone) positioned over the outer part of *the Jaghanaparshwa* (lateral part of Ilium bone or gluteal muscles) but not much inferior. They represent the body part on which we sit, and this corresponds with the ischial bone or ischial tuberosity.

Table 2: (Detailed overview of *Kukundara Marma*)

Name	Kukundara Marma
Sthana	either side of lower part of the prushtavamsha (spine and back bone) positioned over
	the outer part of the jaghanaparshwa (lateral part of Ilium bone or gluteal muscles) but
	not much inferior.
In reference to Shadang	Pristhagata Marma
According to Parinaam	Vaikalyakara Marma
According to Rachana	Sandhi Marma
Sankhya	2
Parimaan	1/2 Anguli
Viddha Lakshana	leads to severe bleeding, which subsequently causes pallor, discoloration, and physical
	disfigurement before dying.
Modern correlation	Sacroiliac joint.
Anatomical Structures	Gluteal muscles (gluteus maximus, glutesmedius gluteus minimus) Gamellusinferior,
	Quadratus femoris etc.
	Ischium, Ilium, Sacrum
	Sacro tuberous ligament, Sacrospinous ligament
	Superior and inferior gluteal artery
	Sciatic nerve

Technique of Marma Chikitsa: (46)

A simple and effective method of recovering vital vitality is the *Marma* treatment.

Posture-

Posture is crucial for good self-*Marma* treatment practice. For practitioners, a seated position is most practical. Keep your neck and spine straight, whether standing or sitting, without becoming rigid or leaning in any way.

It comprises of the following steps-

- 1. Complete physical relaxation
- 2. Practice deep breathing
- 3. Whole-body perception
- 4. The perception of psychic centres
- 5. Understanding of Marma's points
- 6. Gently press the *Marma* points with your thumb and fingertips.

The treatment is applying pressure to the *Marma* points with the thumb or fingers.

Pressure- depends upon the nature of *Marma*

Stimulation time- 0.8 sec/stimuli

Repetition- 15 to 18 times in a single sitting.

The patient was seated with its spine straight, and the doctor stood behind it.

Amsa Marma is located between the Bahumurdha (arm's tip) and Greeva (neck); therefore, pressure should be applied using the abovementioned technique.

Marma stimulation for the above Marma is as follows:

1. Katikataruna Marma:

- » Position of the patient: Prone Position
- » Site of Stimulation: The line joining the greater trochanter of the femur with ischial tuberosity, the greater sciatic notch.

» Method of stimulation: Apply pressure with both thumbs in an ascending manner on either side simultaneously at the site of *Katikataruna Mar*ma.

2. Kukundara Marma:

- » Position of the patient: Prone Position
- » Site of Stimulation: Sacroiliac joint
- » Method of stimulation: Apply pressure with both thumbs in an ascending manner on either side simultaneously at the site of *Kukundara Marma*.

• Inclusion criteria

- ❖ The patient has loss of sensation and pain in the lower back region with stiffness
- individuals of both sexes
- ❖ Age group- 20-60 years
- Patients, irrespective of religion and socioeconomic status.

Exclusion criteria

- Pregnancy
- Nursing mothers
- Infective and Neoplastic condition of the spine
- ❖ Any surgical intervention
- Metabolic and congenital abnormalities.
- Patients with additional spinal conditions
- Lumbar stenosis

DISCUSSION

Marma Chikitsa, an essential component of Ayurve-dic therapy, provides a holistic and noninvasive approach to pain management and general health, making it a viable alternative to current pharmaceutical therapies. Its efficacy stems from its emphasis on important places (Marmas) in the body that are said to be centres of Prana (life force). This traditional technique focuses on harmonising Prana, reducing pain, improving healing processes, and restoring physical and emotional balance.

Mechanism of Action

Marma Chikitsa stimulates Marma points, anatomical areas where muscles, veins, ligaments, bones, and joints cross. The stimulation of these sites is thought to release endogenous opioids, such as endorphins, which are substantially more effective in pain alleviation than synthetic opioids. This natural analgesic

action and the release of anti-inflammatory and immunomodulatory chemicals support *Marma Chikitsa*'s therapeutic promise in treating illnesses such as *Katigraha* (low back pain).

Comparative Efficacy

Marma Chikitsa has various benefits over current pharmaceutical methods, which frequently employ analgesics, anti-inflammatory medications, and opioids. Conventional therapies, while beneficial, carry the dangers of side effects, reliance, and limited efficacy in chronic pain disorders. In contrast, Marma Chikitsa provides a noninvasive, side-effect-free therapy that treats both the physical and emotional components of pain. This comprehensive method not only relieves pain immediately but also promotes long-term healing and prevents pain from returning.

Clinical Relevance

Marma Chikitsa is of substantial therapeutic importance in the therapy of Katigraha. Low back pain is common in many demographics, especially in high-stress industries like information technology, and it presents a significant management and treatment issue. Marma Chikitsa's capacity to give immediate comfort and accelerate the healing process makes it an excellent alternative or additional therapy to traditional therapies. Furthermore, targeting Marma points like Katikataruna and Kukundara, which correlate to major anatomical regions implicated in low back pain, demonstrates the therapy's accuracy and efficacy.

Integration with Modern Medicine

Further empirical research and clinical trials are required for *Marma Chikitsa* to be broadly recognised and integrated into current medical procedures. Documenting efficacy, safety, and processes via rigorous scientific investigations will aid in bridging traditional and modern medicine. This integration might result in a more complete and holistic approach to pain treatment and overall health care, helping patients by using the capabilities of both systems.

CONCLUSION

Marma Chikitsa has emerged as a potential alternative and supplementary therapy option for Katigraha

and other pain-related disorders. Its holistic approach, which focuses on stimulating important areas to balance *Prana* and promote the body's healing processes, provides a natural, non-invasive, and effective remedy. As the frequency of low back pain increases, particularly in high-stress jobs, incorporating *Marma Chikitsa* into conventional medical procedures can considerably enhance patient outcomes.

Based on the findings of the preceding study, it is possible to assume that stimulating *Katikataruna* and *Kukundara Marma* points is very useful in treating *Katigraha*. These *Marmas* are linked by brain pathways, which aid in the spread of therapeutic effects throughout the body. As a result, *Marma Chikitsa*, which stimulates these critical spots specifically, provides a practical and holistic therapeutic technique for relieving *Katigraha*'s pain and functional restrictions.

Future Scope:

More studies are needed to confirm the therapeutic advantages of *Marma Chikitsa* and to increase its popularity in the medical community. A more holistic and successful approach to health and wellbeing may be reached by combining the benefits of ancient *Ayurved*ic techniques with current scientific approaches, offering patients safe and long-term pain treatment solutions.

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