



INTEGRATING MARMA CHIKITSA IN THE MANAGEMENT OF VARICOSE VEINS – A CASE STUDY

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<https://doi.org/10.46607/iamj3413032025>

(Published Online: March 2025)

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Article Received: 06/02/2025 - Peer Reviewed: 27/02/2025 - Accepted for Publication: 08/03/2025.



ABSTRACT

Background: Varicose veins are abnormally enlarged, swollen, thick and twisted veins characterised by aching pain in the leg, calf and thigh associated with cramps and itching. It can be caused by the incompetence of the valves or weakened walls of the veins of lower limbs. Varicose veins are a pervasive disorder in society; in the UK, it is estimated to affect 20-25% of women and 10-15% of men. *Marma Chikitsa* is a traditional Indian way of treatment that uses certain *marma sthana* to treat various conditions. *Marma Chikitsa* focuses primarily on manipulating subtle energy or *prana*, but they are also effective in relieving stiff muscles and boosting circulation. Modern medical science has invasive therapies for the treatment of varicose veins, which are costly and often associated with surgical complications. So, it is necessary to find some alternative therapy in the form of *Marma Chikitsa* to

get rid of the disease. Case Presentation- It is a single case study. A 65-year-old female teacher diagnosed with varicose veins has complaints of pain, heaviness, cramps, swelling and itching in the left leg for 2 years ago approached *Marma Chikitsa* OPD at Pt. Khushilal Sharma Ayurveda Govt College, Bhopal. It was planned to treat the patient with *Marma Chikitsa* by stimulating the *marmas* of the left leg once a day for 15 days. Purpose – This study aims to assess the efficacy of *Marma Chikitsa* in symptomatic managing varicose veins. Result- After treatment for 15 days, symptomatic assessment was carried out, which showed remarkable relief from the symptoms of the disease. Conclusion- *Marma Chikitsa* was highly significant in relieving pain, heaviness, swelling, itching and cramps in varicose veins.

Keywords: Varicose veins, *Marma*, *Marma Chikitsa*.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is an ancient system of natural healing that originated in India over 5,000 years ago. It is based on balance in the body's energies, known as *doshas* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*), which are thought to govern physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Ayurveda emphasises prevention, wellness, and using natural remedies such as herbs, diet, and lifestyle changes to maintain health. In Ayurveda, mental and emotional health are as important as physical health. Meditation, yoga, and breathing exercises are often recommended to help balance the mind and spirit. Ayurveda stresses the importance of self-awareness, mindfulness, and spiritual growth.

Marma Chikitsa is a form of Ayurvedic therapy that focuses on the body's vital energy points. It is known as *marma sthana*. These points are believed to be intersections of the body's physical, mental, and energetic systems. *Marma sthana* is specific site on the body where muscle, bone, tendons, and ligaments meet and where the body's vital energy, or *prana*, is concentrated. There are 107 *marmas* in total distributed throughout the body.^[1]

Varicose veins are enlarged, swollen veins that often appear blue or dark purple and commonly occur in the legs. They happen when the valves inside the veins weaken or become damaged, causing blood to flow backwards and pool in the veins, which leads to them becoming stretched and twisted. Varicose veins are a very common disorder in society; in the UK, it is estimated to affect 20-25% of women and 10-15% of men^[2]. Common causes of varicose veins include people whose work demands standing for long hours,

lifting weights, obesity, pregnancy, old age, and genetics. The symptoms of varicose veins develop gradually, which include pain, swelling, itching, night cramps, twisted visible veins in the affected limb, and discoloured, dry skin may also be visible^{[3],[4]}. The symptoms worsen when a person does not take a rest while doing standing work.

General treatment of varicose veins

General treatment includes rest, exercise, avoiding prolonged standing or sitting, and compression stockings. Medical treatment includes sclerotherapy, laser therapy, and Ayurveda therapies include *jalaaukavacharana* and *siravedha*^[5].

Case study

A female patient of 65 years of age teacher by occupation diagnosed with varicose veins approached *Marma Chikitsa* OPD of Pt. Khushilal Sharma Ayurveda Govt College, Bhopal. She complained of pain, heaviness, cramps, swelling and itching in the left leg for 2 years. She was using compression stockings and analgesics for the management of symptoms.

History of past illness

The patient was taking antihypertensive drugs for 10 years.

Surgical history: NAD

Bowel: Constipated

Appetite: Hunger

Sleep: Normal

Allergy: Nil

Clinical Findings

On physical examination, the patient's health was good; her pulse was 67/min, BP was 138/90 mm of Hg. There was mild swelling in the left ankle and visible reticular veins in the calf and ankle region, and the pain was aggravated at night when she was standing for

long hours during the day. The severity of varicosity was classified as C3 category using CEAP (clinical-etiological-anatomical-pathophysiological) classification [6].

[Table 1]

CEAP Clinical	Score	Description
C0		No visible or palpable signs of venous disease
C1		Telangiectasia or reticular veins
C2		Varicose veins
C3		Oedema
C4		Changes in skin and subcutaneous tissue
C5		Healed ulcer
C6		Active ulcer

Treatment Protocol

Marma chikitsa was administered for 15 days on the left lower limb [7][8][9].

Following *Marma sthana* were stimulated –

1. *Urvi*
2. *Ani*
3. *Janu*
4. *Indra Basti*
5. *Gulpha*
6. *Talahridaya*
7. *Kshipra*

Each *marma* was stimulated for 0.8 sec over 15-18 times.

A steady and moderate pressure was applied slowly and gently.

Assessment criteria

Assessment was done based on signs and symptoms. [10] [Table 2]

Symptom	Criteria	Grade
Pain	No pain	0
	Dragging pain in leg, reduced after rest.	1
	Pain not reduced by rest.	2
	Pain increases & is not reduced in any position	3
Itching	Itching not present	0
	Occasional or slight itching	1
	Constant or intermittent itching does not disturb sleep.	2
	Bothersome itching, which is disturbing sleep	3
Tortuosity	None	0
	Few (scattered i.e.-isolated branch varicosities or clusters)	1
	Multiple (confined to calf or thigh)	2
	Extensive (involves calf and thigh)	3

Swelling	No oedema	0
	Limited to foot and ankle	1
	Extend above the ankle but below the knee.	2
	Extends to knee above	3
Heaviness	No heaviness	0
	Episodes of heaviness after excessing daily load	1
	Regular heaviness in legs does not obligate evening rest with updrawn.	2
	Permanent heaviness in leg demanding rest with legs up drawn	3

Outcomes

After treatment was completed, there was significant relief in pain, swelling, itching, and a feeling of heaviness, helping to alleviate discomfort and promote healing. [Table 3] The patient felt more comfortable during prolonged standing, walking, and everyday tasks.

	Before treatment	7 th day	15 th day
Pain	02	01	00
Itching	02	01	01
Tortuosity	02	02	02
Swelling	01	00	00
Heaviness	02	01	00

Numerical values were used for assessment as per grading criteria.

DISCUSSION

Varicose veins are the price we pay for standing upright. They are a consequence of human evolution, as our shift from walking on all fours to walking on two legs has placed extra strain on our veins, especially in the lower body, making us more prone to this condition. It is a common disorder that affects middle-aged and older adults. There are many therapies/ treatments are available for varicose veins, such as sclerotherapy and laser therapy, which are complex procedures involving surgery and may not always be entirely practical and Ayurvedic therapies like *jalaaukavacharana* (leech therapy) and *siravedha* (bloodletting) involve interventions that may not be suitable for everyone and require careful consideration [10]. In Ayurveda, varicose veins are usually linked to an imbalance in the *Vata dosha*, particularly in its dry and mobile qualities, leading to poor circulation and weakened vein walls. Since *prana* is connected to the *vata dosha*, *marma chikitsa* can be especially

beneficial in treating *vata* disorders by helping to regulate the flow of *prana* and restore balance to *Vata* energy in the body. As per the signs and symptoms, varicose veins can be correlated with *siragata vata* and *sira granthi*, as mentioned in Ayurveda classics [11]. *Marma chikitsa* involves gently applying pressure, massage, or other forms of manipulation at *marma sthana* to release blockages, improve energy flow, and restore balance to the body. It also helps heal, improve circulation, reduce pain, and rejuvenate the body and mind.

CONCLUSION

Preventing varicose veins, treating them early, or effectively managing their symptoms is essential to minimise complications and support an improved quality of life. *Marma chikitsa* shows significant results in the symptomatic management of varicose veins and can be used as an alternative therapy for treating varicose veins. The results need to be studied in more populations for better assessment.

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Source of Support: Nil

Conflict of Interest: None Declared

How to cite this URL: Deependra Singh Rathore et al: Integrating Marma chikitsa in the management of varicose veins – a case study. International Ayurvedic Medical Journal {online} 2025 {cited March 2025}