

**MARMA CHIKITSA: A BOON AS DRUGLESS THERAPY (A REVIEW ARTICLE)**Tripathi Abhilasha<sup>1</sup>, Marwaha Rita<sup>2</sup>, Bhalerao Nisha<sup>3</sup>, Parihar Sheelam<sup>4</sup>

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*Ayurveda* is a *Upveda* of *Atharvaveda* and knowledge of *Sharir* is described lucidly in it. In *Atharvaveda*, *Marmas* are described for therapeutic and surgical purposes. Among all the body structures described in *Ayurveda* classics, *Marma* has special importance. *Marma Sthana* is a specific area on the body that has relation thorough Pranic channels to various internal organs, *Doshas* and *Srotas*, these are the Seat of *Prana*. *Acharya Charak* has mentioned 10 *Pranayatana* in which *Marma Sthana* is also included. *Prana* is nothing but a source of *Urja* (energy). *Acharya Sushrut* has mentioned that *Marma* knowledge is *Shalyavishayardha*, so during surgical procedures, these *Marma Sthana* should be avoided to get injured and if these *Marma Sthana* get injured then the person cannot survive, or it will cause some deformity or disability. *Marma Chikitsa* contributes to increasing or recharging physical, mental, and spiritual energies. If this *Marma Sthan* is properly stimulated then many diseases can be treated, especially the diseases which cause excruciating pain and could not be relieved by analgesics such as osteoarthritis, frozen shoulder, migraine, sciatica, dysmenorrhoea, etc. Instant pain relief is the motive of *Marma Chikitsa*. Pain management through *Marma Chikitsa* aims at minimizing distress, and feelings of unrest and improving the quality of life. Lifestyle disorders such as hypertension, diabetes, obesity, and stress can also be managed. *Marma Chikitsa* is a non-invasive, non-pharmacological easy to apply with maximum benefits if applied properly. It can be a milestone in the field of medical science.

**Key words:** *Marma*, *Shalyavishayardha*, *Pranayatana*

## INTRODUCTION

*Ayurveda* is India's traditional healing system it's a profound system of mind-body medicine and natural living. *Ayurveda*, which means “the science of life,” has become recognized today for its wonderful dietary, herbal, lifestyle, and yogic therapies that help us live longer, happier, wiser, and more in harmony with the greater universe of life and consciousness. *Ayurveda* is a part of the older spiritual heritage of humanity that contains secret knowledge and profound wisdom<sup>1</sup>. *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 illness and to keep the body healthy and fit<sup>2</sup>. The branch dealing with the anatomical or structural aspect of the body is dealt under the heading *Sharir*. The *Marma* has been included as one of the important chapters in *Sharir Sthan* of *Sushrut Samhita*. Besides, the immense advancement in western medicine, the mystery in relation to the structural as well as functional integrity of the human body, remains unsolved even today. The correlation between the structure and function of the body is still a subject of interest to the biologist. Scientist finds great difficulty even today, in establishing the link between certain ultra-microscopic structures of the body and their response in terms of neurohormonal secretions. The concept of *Marmas* as advocated by *Maharshi Sushrut* grossly speaks about the juncture of various cross structures, which when injured are liable to precipitate various types of complications<sup>3</sup>.

### **Marma**

*Marmas* are not superficial landmarks on the body surface, but these are deep-seated important physio-anatomical structures. *Marma* has been considered a very delicate part, having agglomeration of a number of tissues and other body structures accounted to be vital points in the human body. Any injury at these vital parts or *Marmas* of the body makes the organ senseless or functionless or causes deformity or severe haemorrhage or even collapse and death instantaneously or late<sup>4</sup>.

### **Chikitsa**

The measures by which the bodily *Dhatus* are brought back to equilibrium constitute the therapeutics (treatment of disorders). In other words, “By any method, by any means, by any techniques or system *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, *Mala* and *Agni*, between *Prakruti* and *Vikriti*, between *Oja*, *Teja*, and *Prana* and re-establishes harmony between body, mind, and consciousness, that is called *Chikitsa*.”

*Chikitsa* means therapy, treatment, or management. It comes into play after a thorough investigation and diagnosis of the condition of the patient. *Ayurvedic Chikitsa* is a broad umbrella that encompasses many branches and methods of treatment. Among them, *Marma Chikitsa* is the understanding and therapeutic use of *Marmani*- The energy points - to balance the body, mind, and spirit. *Marma Chikitsa* is a complete and highly sophisticated science that has been refined over many centuries<sup>5</sup>.

### **Marma Chikitsa**

*Marma Chikitsa* can contribute a great deal to enhance vitality and promote health. *Marma* stimulation performed with pressure nourishes *Oja*, *Teja*, and *Prana* at a subtle level and revitalizes the body, mind, and spirit. *Marma Chikitsa* alleviates pain by stimulating the flow of *Prana*, thus pacifying the *Doshas*. *Marma Chikitsa* can significantly calm the mind and reduce stress through their ability to influence the nervous system and the most effective spiritual function is to access consciousness at the deep level. *Marma* is the doorway to processing the unprocessed thoughts, feeling, and emotions stored in the nervous system and *Manovaha Srotas*, unblocking the flow of *Prana*. *Marma Chikitsa* balances the subtle *Doshic* essences<sup>6</sup>.

### **Review of literature**

The word *Marma* is derived from “*Mri Dhatu*” + “*Manin*” *Prataya* which means causes death, *Jeeva Sthana*, *Sandhi Sthana*. *Marma* is the site of “*Prana*” & these areas are spread all over the body i.e., head, neck, trunk & extremities. It is the spot of the body that exhibits a peculiar pulsation and causes pain on pressure. These are formed by the confluence of five important structures *Mamsa*, *Sira*, *Snayu*, *Asthi*, and

Sandhi. Acharya Sushruta has also described that Vata, Pitta, Kapha as well as Sattva, Raja, and Tama along with Chetana Dhatu reside in Marma, that is why trauma over Marma causes severe pain. Injury to these areas causes aggravation of doshas which

destroy the mind and body. Marma is very important from a traumatological point of view, any trauma at these points can cause death or pain equivalent to the pain of death<sup>7</sup>.

### Classification of Marma

Our Acharyas enumerated 107 Marmas, on different criteria.

#### Classification on the basis of Parinam<sup>8</sup>

S. NO.	Type of Marma	Number	Predominance of Mahabhuta
1	Sadyo Pranahara Marma	19	Agni
2	Kalantara Pranahara	33	Agni+ Soma
3	Vishalyaghna Marma	3	Vayu
4	Vaikalyakara Marma	44	Soma
5	Rujakara Marma	8	Agni+ Vayu

#### Classification on the basis of Rachna<sup>9,10</sup>

S. No.	Type of Marma	Number as per Sushrut	Number as per Vagbhata
1	Mamsa	11	10
2	Sira	41	37
3	Snayu	27	23
4	Asthi	8	8
5	Sandhi	20	20
6	Dhamni	-	9

#### Classification on the basis of Pariman<sup>11</sup>

S. No.	Type of Marma	Number
1	Half Angula	56
2	One Angula	12
3	Two Angula	6
4	Three Angula	4
5	Four Angula (Swapanitala)	29

#### Classification on the basis of Shadang Sharir<sup>12</sup>

S. No.	Type of Marma	Number
1	Shakha	44
2	Udar	03
3	Urah	09
4	Prishtha	14
5	Urdhvajatrugata	37

**Protocol of Marma Chikitsa** - For the purpose of *Marma Chikitsa*, one has to sit or lie in a relaxed position and according to the anatomical location of *Marma Sthana*, *Marma* will be stimulated 15-18 times on an average in a single sitting with the help of thumb. Steady and moderate pressure will be applied slowly and gently. Pressure will be increased gradually depending on the patient's strength and tolerance.

## DISCUSSION

In history, we found many great personalities who died due to injury on *Marma Sthana*. Some examples are *Ravana* who died due to injury on *Nabhi Marma*, and Lord Krishna who died due to injury on *Pad Talahradaya Marma*. In the Vedic period, knowledge of *Marma* science was very well known. In *Samhita kaal Marma* science described in all the major treatises in the form of *Maryanti Iti Marmani*. *Acharya Charak* has given brief details of *Marma* in *Chikitsa Sthan* there is enumeration of *Marma* i. e. 107 and in these three *Marma* are Chief which are *Basti*, *Hridaya*, and *Shira* which are *Sthana* of *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* respectively<sup>13</sup>. In *Siddhi Sthan Acharya Charak* described that the sun is the origin of all the rays in the whole sky likewise body is also pervaded by *Srotas* and the *Moola* of these *Srotas* are mainly *Hridaya*, *Shira*, and *Basti*<sup>14</sup>. *Acharya Sushrut* has given detailed knowledge of *Marma* along with its anatomical location and *Aghat Lakshan*. According to *Acharya Vagbhatta*, those places where any injury may lead to a different kind of pain and tremors are known as *Marmas*. By stimulation of these special points treatment of many diseases could be done and optimal health status could be achieved. *Marma Chikitsa* chiefly depends on the correct location of a particular *Marma Sthana*. The actual location of *Marma Sthana* varies for every individual based on the dimensions of the body and its parts. The measurement of *Marma* has described in *Angula Pramana* of the individual body. It varies from half *Angula* to four *Angula*. This plays a very important role in the application of *Marma Chikitsa*.

**Probable mode of action of Marma Chikitsa**

**Gate Control theory: -**

The first pain modulatory mechanism called the Gate Control theory was proposed by Melzack and Wall in the mid 1960s. The concept of the gate control theory is that non-painful input closes the gates to painful input, which results in the prevention of the pain sensation from traveling to the CNS (i.e., non-noxious input [stimulation] suppresses pain). The gate theory was the rationale for the idea behind the production and the use of transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) for pain relief.

## Neuromodulation

Neuromodulation is a technology that acts directly upon nerves. It is the alteration or modulation of nerve activity by delivering electrical or pharmaceutical agents directly to a target area.

Based on the above discussion, it could be concluded that *Marma Chikitsa* works on the principle of gate control theory and neuromodulation.

## CONCLUSION

*Marma* are the life spot situated all over the body. *Marma Chikitsa* is a cost-effective, time-saving, and safer treatment for the management of pain. The main motive of *Marma Chikitsa* is instant pain relief. With the help of *Marma Chikitsa* analgesia could be produced because it secretes a number of prostaglandin inhibitors, interferons, and other opioid like substances. From the above information, it could be concluded that *Marma Chikitsa* is a boon in today's era because it is not only useful in pain management but also in mental disorders. It also helps to rejuvenate the body and keep a balance between the body and mind relationship. *Marma Chikitsa* is ready to cope with the challenge of present times as a non-medicinal, non-pharmacological, or non-surgical option.

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