

MARMA CHIKITSA – A REJUVINATIVE THERAPY IN POST TRAUMATIC CARE

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ABSTRACT

Marma are the pivot of vital forces which holds the *Prana* in it; confining whole body to an axis of multidimensional field. *Acharya Sushruta* has considered it as site of *Tridosha* element & has enumerated strongly about *marmaabhighata* (assault of vital points), as these withhold *soma*, *vayu*, *manoguna*'s & *atma*. Anatomically, these are juncture points of *mamsa* (muscle), *snayu* (tendon), *sira* (blood vessels), *asthi* (bone) & *sandhi* (joints). So, any injury to these points may lead to severe Disability, Deformity & Death. According to the classification of 107 *marma*s stated by *Acharya*'s, only *Vaikalyakara* & *Rujakaramarma* are considerable for Chikitsa. *Marma Chikitsa* is a traditional therapy for the management of vital points by the means of *Abhyanga* (massage) & *Mardana* (acupressure) etc. It is much related

to musculoskeletal & nervous systemic disorders. It dwells the process of rejuvenation & strengthening of every *dooshikaradhatu* due to *abhighata* of *marma* & helps to achieve an ideal health with longevity. This study is an endeavor to analyze the different aspects of *Marma Chikitsa* especially for *Vaikalyakara* & *Rujakaramarma* and deprivation of 3 D's as *Abhigatopachara*.

KEYWORDS: *Abhighata*, *Marma Chikitsa*, *Prana*, Rejuvenation.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda has always been criticized for non-availability of emergency management. One of the most common conditions availing this emergency management is the state of *Abhighata* (either external or internal). *Abhighata* clearly implies a single word meaning “Trauma” which is defined as any disintegration caused to any part of the body that may lead to 3D as Disability, Deformity and Death. So, the concept of *abhighata* has been dealt with great concern in Ayurveda. Trauma starts with the transfer of energy to the body from an outside force. The transfer of kinetic energy may be blunt or sharp in nature.^[1]

Prana comprises all cosmic energy of life and sustains itself along with *tridosha*, *panchamahabhuta* etc basic fundamentals of life process. *Prana* is dispersed through entire material world (here relating to human body) and encompasses energy out for the process of breathing and whole life cycle. This energy when gets disrupted by any of the external force causing *abhighata* thus disproportionation of further transfer of energy occurs.

Trauma remains the leading cause of death in individuals aged 1 to 44 years, with the majority of injuries preventable.^[2] Motor vehicle collisions are the leading cause of trauma death in all age groups between 1 to 65 years. For individuals over 65 years, falls become the leading cause of death.

Marma - ‘*Marayanti Iti Marmani*’^[3] which means the point of infliction which may cause death or serious damage. It is also known as *Jeevasthan* & *Pranayatana*.^[4] *Marma* comprises of *vayu*, *tridosha*, *triguna* & *panchamahabhuta*. These are energy wells connected by a meridian system of *nadi* with organ and other parts of body. The balance of this energy equates health. These are unique structures explained in Ayurvedic literature and very first described in sixth *Adhyaya* of *Sharirsthana Sushruta Samhita*.^[5] Acharya *vagbhatas* says that, those places where any injury may lead to different kinds of pain & tremors are *Marma*. These are the most vulnerable spots in our body^[6] and so more susceptible for injury. In ancient *Vedic* times, *Marmapoints* were called *Bindu* – a secret dot or mystic point.^[7] Hence, this also signifies utility of *marmachikitsa* for “*swasthasya swastharaskhanam*” by rejuvenation. *Marma Chikitsa* is a significant aspect of the *Ayurvedic* treatments which specifies application of pressure on specific points (*marma*) thus inducing the flow of vital energy (*Prana*) along a complex system of subtle channels called *Nadi*’s. *Marma* are deep seated important physio-anatomical structures. The concept of *marma* is the basis of all martial arts, acupuncture & acupressure.

Classification of Marma

According to *Acharya Sushruta*, there are 107 *marma*^[8] and these are classified based on multiple dominating factors. Same opinion is also given by *Acharya Charaka*.^[9] Based on body tissue; are of 5 types as *Mamsa, Sira, Snayu, Sandhi & Asthi Marma*. Based on *guna*; 4 types as *Saumya, Vayavya, Agneya & Saumyagneya*. Based on site; 4 types as *Udara, Prishtha, Shakha & Urdhvajatru*. The most important classification done based on effect of trauma and which decides the prognosis of injury are of 5 types as *Sadhyopranahara, Kalantara, Vishalghna, Vaikalyakara & Rujakara Marma*. According to *Vagabhat* there are six types of *marma*. He has enumerated a sixth group of *marmak* known as *dhamanimarma*.^[10]

DISCUSSION

Marma therapy is basically dependent on the actual location of the specific *marma*. The exact location of *marmavaries* from every individual based on the measurement of the body and body parts. The site is described in relation to the bony prominences, joints and other body structures. The distance is described in terms of *angulipramana* (finger measurement) of the individual. The *marmapoints* vary in size from that of a pinhead to half a finger (laterally measured) to four fingers, laid laterally, or even the size of the palm.^[11] This also implies its importance in application of *marmachikitsa* considering its *pramana* and location.

All the *Sadhyopranaharamarma* are fetal in nature when injured because anatomically these are the juncture points of all body tissues. These fatal *marmas* are *agneya* in nature so injury to these points causes immediate or sudden death. *Kalantaramarma* name itself implies delayed fatal *marmas* and these are *saumya-agneyaguna*: so when this *marma* gets injured, *agneyaguna* declines immediately but there is delayed decline in *saumyaguna*. Thus delaying the fatality so coined as "*kalantara*". *Vishalyaghnamarma* are fetal after the removal of foreign body. These are *vayavya* in nature. After *abhighata* of *marma*, the *vayu* gets obstructed to the site and removal of the *shalya* leads release of the obstructed *vayu* thus causing death. But if the foreign body is not removed and the wound heals spontaneously and the foreign body falls off by itself then the effect is not fatal. *Vaikalyaka* (Disabling) & *Rujakara* (painful) *marmas* are *saumya* & combination of *agni* and *vayuguna* respectively. Any injury to these parts is not fatal but may either lead to disability or severe pain.^[12] Due to this reason, *marmachikitsa* is very applicable to treat *vaikalyakara & rujakaramarma* considering their prognosis and thus improvising life outcome.

Probable mode of action of Marmachikitsa on Abhighata

Marma & Abhighata are interlinked with each other with a strong bond of stimulus, “Touch”. The knowledge of *marma* provides information about infliction of energy source from a pivot to around its equator on the other hand *abhighata* is the cause of discontinuity of the same flow of energy through the body. A controlled pressure (massage) can give healing effect where as massive pressure lead to trauma (*abhighata*). Among all the types of *marma* it is clearly stated that *vaikalyakara* and *Rujakaramarma* are not fetal but cause deformity, disability when injured.

Rujakaramarma are 8 in number; among which 4 present in *shakha* & 4 in *Sakthi*.^[13] All these 8 *marma* are of 1-2 *angulipramana* so minimum part of exposure is attained when injured. It is *agni & vayugunapradhana*. *Vayu* is the cause for *ruja* (pain) and *agni* is always responsible for the *bala* (energy). So when *rujakaramarma* gets injured along with severe pain it also diminishes the *bala* of the person & hence restricting movements of the body parts. Injury to these *marma* causes collie’s fracture (*kuntatha*), ankle sprain (*stabdhapada*), pott’s fracture, limping gait (*khanja*), calcaneal bursitis etc. All these conditions causes severe pain and restricted movements. Based on the present therapeutic agents, these conditions are managed with analgesics, anti-inflammatory drugs both internally and locally, application of cast for stabilizing the part.

Vaikalyakaramarma are 44 in number;^[14] which are quiet deeper structures as compared to *rujakaramarma*. These are of *pramana* from 1- *anguli* to *mushtipramana*. This denotes its great diversity of size indicating its larger area of damage. These all are mostly bony prominence structures and hence cause deformity of part and disability when injured. Its anatomical consideration also supports to the fact of it being *saumya* in *guna* because these hard bony structures can withhold energy within it and also don’t get easy affected by external source. A very blunt forceful external stimulus can only cause these *marma* to be effected. Soma is the denotar of lunar properties which have their own characters like steadiness, coolness. This causes Hand drop, infertility, frozen shoulder, paralysis, instability of head (*chalagriva*) etc. These *marma* causes much disastrous deformity of the part as compared to *rujakaramarma* but are manageable to its functional extent. It has been stated that when injured if treated by a well physician in a proper way though the affected part may start functioning but deformity will persist.^[15]

Wound healing & Marma Chikitsa

Wound healing is a complex and dynamic process of replacing devitalized & missing cellular structures & tissue layers.^[16] This process includes 3 phases – inflammatory, proliferation and remodeling phase.^[17] The phase of remodeling / maturation is the prime phase where in the effected parts regains its lost functions. In the previous two phase's activation of leucocytes, re-epithelization takes place. At the last phase fibroblast starts laying down the new collagen and transformed into endoplasmic reticulum. *Abhyanga* has proven its effect on growth of new collagen.^[18] In the same way *Marmachikitsa* helps in rejuvenation of the *marma* when injured.

Marma Chikitsa is an inherent power to humans to heal himself through management of vital points of body i.e, *MARMA*^[19] Some useful therapies of *Marma* under *panchkarma* are^[20]; *Abhyanga*, *Dharachikitsa*, *Shirodhara*, *Pindasveda*, *Urobasti*, *Pichudharana* & *Kati basti*. *Marmachikitsa* can be used as —in traumatic neurological or neuro-surgical lesions, traumatic paraplegia, hemiplegia and monoplegia, in orthopaedic lesions, especially prolapsed inter vertebral disc etc., to reduce the pain of nerves, muscles, ligaments, bones and joints, to produce anesthesia during any surgical interference, to achieve homeostasis, to activate the deformed body parts or musculature etc. this all process helps to restore body's vitality to its fullest capacity i.e, Rejuvenation. *Marmachikitsa* promotes the healing effect of *marma* which revitalizes the injured part.

Abyanga

Abyanga means massaging the body with any *sneha* as *anulomana* (towards direction of hair follicle). It is the first among *Panchakarma* and an integral part of daily regimen as recommended in Ayurveda. Based on the body parts the modality of *abyanga* is been changed for its greater utility. The massage included in *Marma Chikitsa* is a special form of circular massage to stimulate the *Marma* which influences all the body parts. Thus, the time duration in relation to the extent of effect of *abyanga* with respect to *dhatu* is an important concern specially to manage *abhighata* of *marma* points.

Effect of *Abyanga* on different *dhatu* is explained which helps to decide its clinical utility depending upon the disease condition. The time duration taken by oil to reach *roomakupa* is 300 *matras* (95 sec), then the oil reaches *tvak*, *raktadhatu*, *mamsadhatu*, *medodhatu*, *asthidhatu* is 400 (133 sec), 500 (160 sec), 600 (190 sec), 700 (228 sec), 800 (240 sec) respectively and finally if done for 900 (280 sec) then reach till *majjadhatu*.^[21] *Rujakara* &

vaikalyakara marma are dominantly made of *mamsa*, *sira*, *snayu* & *asthidhatu*, so trauma to any of respective part can be massaged for proper time duration accordingly.

Possible mechanism of abhyanga (massage)

Touch is the finest stimulus that begins at physical level but can go much deeper to transfer energy to the soul. Massage is a form of touch which gives Biomechanical, Physiological, Neurological and Psychological effect on body. This causes decrease of Tissue adhesion, passive & active stiffness, Stress hormone, neuromuscular excitability, pain, muscle spasm, Anxiety and increase of muscle blood flow, parasympathetic activity and relaxation.^[22] This whole process regulates the actual process of revitalization thus rejuvenating the body.

Benefits of marma therapy

“When we touch *Marma*, we stimulate the body’s biochemistry to produce neurochemicals & hormones that heal the body”^[23]

- All benefits of traditional *Abhyanga*
- Strengthening of organ system & tissue
- Regenerates tissue
- Helps to remove *ama*
- Improves lymph
- Relieves blocked energy to help in preventing disease

Suggested guidelines for marma therapy---Recent Trends^[24]

- Never use force on *marma* points.
- Use appropriate lubricant while massage (medicated *taila*).
- Always work on same *marma* of both sides alternatively.
- Use of thumb to massage in clockwise direction.
- Firstly start for 30 sec
- Then increase to 3 – 5 minutes daily
- Stop working on same *marma* after 3 continuous weeks.

CONCLUSION

Marma are the vital spots composed with the conglomeration of *mamsa*, *sira*, *snayu*, *asthi* & *sandhi*. Due to its vulnerability its susceptibility to injury is common hence marmachikitsa is one of the most ancient traditional modality. This includes unique form of techniques which holds the vitality of body. The very prime role of *marmachikitsa* is to stimulate various

bodily organs & systems and later on it serves as a part of a rejuvenation therapy or it could be used as preventive measure. Thus healing through *Marmaabhyanga* affects the *chakras*, physical health and *dosha*. *Abhyanga* is very important to lead a healthy life and to create a healthy society. Hence, this gives an accessible & evident mode of approach to deal with a distressing event i.e, trauma of vital points and helping in restoring vitality of human kind.

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