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A systematic review on *Marma Sharira* with special reference to *Urdhavajatrugata Marma*

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ABSTRACT

Marma Sthanas are the point of junction of the *Mansa*, *Sira*, *Asthi*, *Dhamni* and *Sandhi* where the *Prana* resides. *Ayurvedic Acharyas* have classified the *Marma Sthanas* on the basis of location, number, composition, effects of injury etc. There are total 107 *Marma Sthanas* mentioned in the *Sushruta Samhita* present in the *Shakha* and *Skandha*. There are total 37 *Marma Sthanas* which are present in the head and neck region termed as *Urdhavajatrugata Marma*. Any trauma to the *Marma Sthanas* produces pain and can be fatal to the life. Therefore the knowledge of *Marma* is very essential for the surgeon to protect the patient from any harm during the surgery.

Key words: *Asthi*, *Junction*, *Marma*, *Prana*, *Sandhi*, *Sira*.

INTRODUCTION

Marma Sthana are considered as the site of the *Prana* which are spread all over the body (head, neck, extremities and trunk). These areas are formed at the junction of five important structures i.e. *Mamsa* (muscle), *Sira* (vessels), *Snayu* (ligaments, tendon), *Asthi* (bones) and *Sandhi* (joints). According to the *Acharya Sushruta*, *Marma Sthanas* are the points where *Vatta*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*, *Sattva*, *Rajas*, *Tama* are present along with *Chetana Dhatu* and *Atma*. When any trauma occurs to such points then it results in pain and imbalance in *Doshas* which can be fatal for the life. Therefore such points are considered as crucial during the surgical procedures.

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Marma Chikitsa is a method of treatment prescribed by great *Ayurvedic Acharyas*. According to this *Chikitsa*, application of slight pressure on specific points on body induces the flow of *Prana*^[1] (vital energy) into the inner body which stimulates the flow of positive energy in the body and also provides nourishment to the organs associated with that *Marma Sthana*.^[2] *Marma Sthanas* are mentioned in detail in the *Rigveda*, *Atharva Veda*, *Shushruta Samhita* etc. *Ayurvedic Acharyas* have given prime importance to the *Marmasharira* in the *Shalya Chikitsa*.^[3]

Classification of *Marmas*

Ayurvedic Acharyas have classified *Marma* into various types on the basis of their location, anatomy, size etc. There are 107 *Marma Sthanas* in the body including *Shakha* (limbs) and *Skandha* (trunk and neck).^[4]

According to location in the body

- In upper limbs (*Bahu*) – 22
- In lower limbs (*Sakthi*) - 22
- In abdomen (*Udara Pradesh*) and chest (*Ura Pradesh*) - 12
- At the back (*Prustha*) - 14

- In head and neck (*Urdhavajatrugat*) - 37

According to *Panchabhautika Guna*

- *Sadyah Pranahara Marma* - 19
- *Rujakara Marma* - 8
- *Vaikalyakara Marma* - 44
- *Kalantara Pranahara Marma* - 33
- *Vishalyaghna Marma* - 3

Urdhavajatrugata Marma

According to *Ashtang Ayurveda*, there are 37 *Marma Sthanas* present in the head and neck region constituting *Urdhavajatrugata Marma*. According to scholars, *Marmasthanas* have different *Siras* for carrying *Rakta, Pitta, Vata* and *Kapha Dosha*. These *Siras* serve the function of nourishing the body. Our universe is made up of *Panchamahabhuta* elements which are balanced by *Snigdha* and *Shita Guna*. *Ayurveda* has considered *Tridosha* as main factor responsible for any change in our body. The *Kapha Dosha* helps in maintaining the basic functioning of the body while *Vata and Pitta Doshas* helps in carrying the transforming processes occurring inside the body. *Marma Sthanas* are the points in the body which are rich in *Agni* and *Vayu* components.^[5] Due to the present of *Vayu* and *Siras*, *Marma Sthanas* become the areas which are prone to the injuries. Any damage to such areas can be fatal due to the excessive loss of *Rakta Dhatu* from the body and *Vayu* can increase the *Pitta Dosha* which can result in intense pain.^[7]

Any damage to such points can produce symptoms of weakness, thirst, lack of concentration, severe pain, fainting, delusion, loss of activity of body parts giddiness, delirium, semi-consciousness, increase of body temperature, cessation of activity of all the sense organ, numbness, hallucination, coma, vomiting, restlessness and burning sensation in the heart.^[5]

There are total 37 *Marma Sthanas* which are present in the head and neck region.^[6] They are classified under the heading of *Greeva Marma* (neck area) which are 14 in number depicted in table 1 and

Siragata Marma (head area) which are 23 in number depicted in table 1.

Table 1: Number of *Urdhavajatrugata Marma*.

<i>Marma</i>	Location on the neck	Number
<i>Matrakayan/Kantas ira</i>	Present in the neck, 4 on each side of neck	8
<i>Dhamniyan</i>	Located in the neck on each side lateral to <i>Matrika</i>	4 (<i>Nila-2, Many-2</i>)
<i>Krikatika</i>	Present on the occipital protuberance on both the side	2

Table 2: Marma of neck, their numbers and location.^[8]

<i>Marma</i>	Location on the head	Number
<i>Phana</i>	Present in the roof of nose on the olfactory tract on both side	2
<i>Apanga</i>	Present on the lateral angle of eye on both side	2
<i>Avarta</i>	present above the lateral part eyebrow on both the side	2
<i>Shankha</i>	present between ear and forehead	2
<i>Vidhura</i>	Present postero-inferiorly to the ear on each side	2
<i>Utkshepa</i>	Present at the level of hair line of scalp above temporal region on each side	2
<i>Simanta</i>	Sutural joint present over the skull	5
<i>Sthapani</i>	present between the two eye brows	1
<i>Adhipati</i>	Present at superior part of intra cranial portion	1
<i>Shringataka</i>	Present on the lateral aspect of sphenoid bone near the cavernous sinus.	4

Composition of the *Urdhavajatrugata Marma*

Urdhvarugatabhaga of the body is rich in *Marma* and these areas contains various anatomical

structures therefore any injury or trauma to such sites may be lethal for the body and sensory organs.

- **Adhipati** - It is the confluence of sagittal, occipital and transverse sinuses. Structures present are occipital, parietal bone, occipito-parietal joint, occipital artery, medulla oblongata and 2nd and 3rd cervical nerve.
- **Avarta** - It is the junction of frontal, zygomatic and sphenoid bone, frontal lobe of cerebrum where optic nerve, ophthalmic and supraorbital arteries, levator superior and superior rectus muscle, superior ophthalmic vein are present.
- **Krikatika** - It contains atlanto- occipital joint, articular capsule, anterior and posterior atlanto-occipital membrane; rectus capitis muscle, vertebral artery and vein, occipital and 1st cervical bone.^[8]
- **Neela** - Anatomical structure present predominantly is internal jugular vein, recurrent laryngeal nerve, primary rami of 4th, 5th and 6th cervical nerve.^[9]
- **Manya** - It contains external carotid artery, jugular vein, glossopharyngeal, lingual nerve and accessory nerve.^[9]
- **Matrika** - Predominant structures present are branches of common carotid artery, internal jugular vein, vagus and phrenic nerve, thyroid gland, tonsil and tongue.^[10]
- **Sthapani** - Anterior end of superior sagittal sinus attached to the crista galli, supra orbital nerve, frontal bone, supraorbital and supratrochlear artery and anterior facial vein.
- **Phana** - Sphenopalatine artery, anterior and posterior ethmoidal arteries and vein, olfactory nerve, nasal bone, cribriform plate of ethmoid bone.
- **Sringataka** - Cavernous and inter-cavernous sinuses, ophthalmic nerve, supra orbital artery are present.^[1]
- **Apanga** - Zygomatic temporal vessels and Zygomatic facial vessels, anterior ciliary arteries-

veins, optic and ciliary nerve, lacrimal nerve, sphenoid, maxillary and zygomatic joint.

- **Vidhura** - It contains facial nerve, great auricular nerve, tympanic branch and auricular branch of maxillary arter, stylomastoid artery and vein; mastoid muscle and middle ear cavity.
- **Simanta** - Sagittal, parietal, occipital and frontal suture of skull; ophthalmic and maxillary nerve; 2nd and 3rd cervical nerve; occipito-frontalis muscle, epicranial aponeurosis, anterior and posterior superficial temporal and occipital arteries, parietal artery and veins.
- **Shamkha** - It contains temporal bone, temporal muscle with fascia, superficial temporal artery and vein; middle meningeal artery and facial nerve.

CONCLUSION

Marma Chikitsa is an important concept of *Ayurveda* which is mentioned in the ancient books of *Vedas*. *Ayurvedic* scholars have given the prime importance to the knowledge of anatomy in the field of *Shalya Chikitsa*. *Marma Sthanas* are considered as the site of *Prana* where any injury can lead to the death. They are 107 in number, distributed all over the body, out of which 37 *Marmas* are present above the clavicle termed as *Urdhvajatrugata Marma*. *Urdhavajatrugata Marma* is divided into the *Greeva* and *Siragata Marma* on the basis of their location on neck and head. This article provides the detail about the classification of *Urdhavajatrugata Marma* and the anatomical structures present inside them.

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