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## Pain management through *Marma Chikitsa*

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### ABSTRACT

Pain is an extraordinary sensation that could range from slight to intense ache. Ache has both physical and emotional components. The physical part of ache effects from nerve stimulation In *Ayurveda* pain is correlated with *Vedana / Shula*. Said feeling is maximally expressed by *Vedana* in *Ayurveda* literature.<sup>[1]</sup> Different texts of *Ayurveda* mentioned 107 *Marma* points based on anatomical positions and different structures around them. *Marma* are those places in the body where *Prana* exist, they have various effects on individual such as physical, mental and social health. *Marma* point or *Prana* essential energy in the body continues exclusive physiological, mental and if the waft of *Prana* or essential energy gets obstructed or blocked, the body structure is disturbed and pathology start growing. *Marma* points are stimulated via unique strategies or methods, so via stimulations, *Marma* may be directed to eliminate blockages and stimulate *Prana* or electricity drift for this reason ensuing in a country of healthy body, mind and spirit. *Marma* points are stimulated by different techniques or methods, so by stimulations, *Marma* may be directed to remove blockages and stimulate *Prana* or energy flow thus resulting in a state of healthy body, mind and spirit. In present scenario *Marma Chikitsa* is very popular in various part of india for its instant, permanent, natural and non-invasive way of treatment. *Marma Chikitsa* had emerged as new dimensions in non-pharmacological treatment of *Ayurveda*. If properly stimulate, *Marma Chikitsa* help in maintaining the vitality of the body and treatment of disease/pain by *Prana* or natural healing agents such as prostaglandin.

**Key words:** *Marma, Pain, Shula, Vedna, Shula, Marma Chikitsa, Ayurveda*

### INTRODUCTION

The word “*Marma*” comes from Sanskrit starting place “*Mra*” manner area of *Prana* (vital power).<sup>[1]</sup> Any trauma to these sites may be fatal or can result in disability of the person. These *Marmas* point harmonize the apprehensive and endocrine glands and

normalize exclusive pathology in the frame through crucial energy itself, with right stimulations/Manipulation. This approach is called *Marma Chikitsa*.

*Marma Chikitsa* is an ancient Indian exercise whose purpose is stimulations / manipulation of crucial strength (*Prana*) in the body for enhancing the restoration procedure. *Marma Chikitsa* is based on the movement of 107 *Marma* points inside the body to get admission to the frame and mind. *Marma*’s knowledge allows the clinicians to regulate the glide of *Prana* through the coarse and diffused bodies in order to restore the patient’s health and serenity.

*Marma Chikitsa* is the oldest treasure of Indian surgical treatment from the Vedic duration. For the duration of the Vedic generation the expertise of *Marma* was regarded to the emperors and warriors. The concept and practice of *Marma* was very famous in those days

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to reap the maximum effect when contending with the enemies.<sup>[1]</sup>

### Classification of Marma

In *Ayurveda* there are total 107 Marma in the body. These are divided into different groups according to the physical matrices and also on the basis of their special features. The classification according to *Sushruta* is only five types but according to *Vagabhata* are six with inclusion of *Dhamani Marma*. *Acharya Sushruta* categorizes

1. According to anatomical structure (*Rachna Bheda*)
2. According to region (*Sadanga Bheda*)
3. According to injury result (*Parinaama Bheda*)
4. According to measurement (*Pramana Bheda*)

**Table 1: According to anatomical structure (*Rachana Bheda*)<sup>[1-2]</sup>**

Types of Marma	As per Sushrut	As per Vagbhata
Mamsa Marma	11	10
Sira Marma	41	37
Snayu Marma	27	23
Asthi Marma	08	08
Sandhi Marma	20	20
Dhamani Marma	-	09
Total	107	107

**Table 2: Marma classification according to region (*Shadang Bheda*)<sup>[1-2]</sup>**

Types of Marma	Number of Marma
Shakha ( <i>Bahu and Sakthi</i> )	44
Udara	03
Urha	09
Prishtha	14
Jatroordhva	37

Total	107
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**Table 3: Marma classification according to injury result (*Parinaama Bheda*)<sup>[1]</sup>**

Types of Marma	Number of Marma	Mahabhootadhikya
Sadhyapranahara	19	Agni
Kalantarapranahara	33	Agni-soma
Vishalyaghna	04	Vayu
Vaikalyakara	44	Soma
Rujakara	08	Agni- vayu
Total	107	

**Table 4: Marma classification according to measurement (*Pramana Bheda*)<sup>[1]</sup>**

Types of Marma	Number of Marma
One Angula	12
Two Angula	06
Three Angula	04
Four Angula( <i>Swapanitala</i> )	29
Half Angula	56
Total	107

### Marmabhighata Lakshana

**Table 5: Shakhmarma (11 x 4 = 44)<sup>[2]</sup>**

Number	Marma	Location of Marma	Marmabhighat Lakshan
1.	Kshipra	First intermetacarpal ligament	Loss of function
2.	Talhritya	Palmer apponeurosis	Severe Pain

3.	<i>Kurcha</i>	Carpometacarpal and intercarpal ligament	Disfigurement of hand
4.	<i>Kurchasira</i>	Lateral ligament of the wrist joint	Pain with inflammation of wrist
5.	<i>Gulfa (Manibandha upper limb)</i>	Ankle joint	Impairment of function with swelling, difficulty in walking
6.	<i>Inderavasti</i>	Calf muscles	Death due to severe bleeding
7.	<i>Janu (Kurpar)</i>	Knee joint	Gait deformity at knee
8.	<i>Aani</i>	Tendon of biceps muscles	Swelling and paralysis of forearm
9.	<i>Urvi</i>	Brachial artery and brachial vein	Paralysis due to excessive bleeding
10.	<i>Lohitaksha</i>	Axillary vessels	Paralysis due to excessive bleeding and nerve damage
11.	<i>Vitap (Kakshadhar)</i>	Inguinal canal / ligament	Infertility and oligospermia

Table 6: *Udara Urha Marma (12)*<sup>[3]</sup>

1.	<i>Guda</i>	Anal canal and Anus	Sudden death
2.	<i>Vasti</i>	Urinary bladder	Sudden death
3.	<i>Nabhi</i>	Umbilicus	Sudden death
4.	<i>Hridaya</i>	Heart	Sudden death
5.	<i>Stanamool (2)</i>	Internal mammary vessels	Death due to pneumothorax after some time

6.	<i>Stanarohit (2)</i>	Lower portion of pectoralis major muscles	Death due to haemothorax after some time
7.	<i>Aplapa (2)</i>	Lateral thoracic and subscapular vessels	Severe haemorrhage in thorax region and death
8.	<i>Apstambha (2)</i>	Two bronchii	Death due to haemorrhage

Table 7: *Prishta Marma (14)*

1.	<i>Kukunde r</i>	Sacroiliac joint	Loss of sensation and paralysis of lower limb
2.	<i>Nitamba</i>	Ala of the ileum / ischial tuberosity	Loss of function due to Wasting of muscles of lower limb
3.	<i>Parshava sandhi</i>	Common iliac vessels / renal angle	Severe hemorrhage
4.	<i>Katikaturuna</i>	Sciatica notch	Haemorrhage and anaemia.
5.	<i>Vrihati</i>	Subscapular and transverse cervical arteries	Death due to excessive bleeding
6.	<i>Ansaphalaka</i>	Spine of the scapula	Deformity due to muscle wasting
7.	<i>Amsa</i>	Coraco-humoral Gleno-humoral ligaments and Trapezius muscle	Loss of function of shoulder joint or frozen shoulder

Table 8: *Urdhva Jatrugat Marma (37)*<sup>[4]</sup>

1.	<i>Dhamani Neela, Manya - 4</i>	Blood vessels of the neck	Aphakia, disturbed voice due injury of blood vessels
2.	<i>Siramatrika - 8</i>	Blood vessels of the neck	Sudden death
3.	<i>Krikatika - 2</i>	Atlanto occipital articulation	Uncontrolled head movement

4.	<i>Vidura</i> – 2	Posterior auricular vessels or ligament	Deafness
5.	<i>Phana</i> – 2	Olfactory region of the nose	Loss of smell
6.	<i>Apanga</i> – 2	Zygomatocotemporal vessels	Blindness and disturbed vision
7.	<i>Aavarta</i> – 2	Junction of the frontal, molar and sphenoid bone	Blindness and disturbed vision
8.	<i>Shankha</i> – 2	Temporal region	Sudden death
9.	<i>Utkshap</i> - 2	Temporal muscles and facial revival	Severe bleeding
10.	<i>Sthapani</i> - 1	Nasal arch of the frontal vein	Like above
11.	<i>Simanta</i> -5	Cranial sutures	Loss of consciousness
12.	<i>Shringataka</i> - 4	Cavernous and intracavernous sinus	Sudden death
13.	<i>Adhipati</i> – 1	Torcular herophilia	Sudden death

Table 9: *Marmabhighata* (According to *Vagbhata*)<sup>[5]</sup>

SN	Marma Name	Marmabhighata Lakshan
1.	<i>Mamsa Marma</i>	When <i>Mamsa Marma</i> is injured, there will be continuous bleeding, viscosity of blood is reduced, blood resembles like fleshy dilute water, pallor of the skin, loss of function of sense organs and quick death of the person.
2.	<i>Snayu Marma</i>	When <i>Snayu Marma</i> , are injured, there will be bending of the body, convulsions, very severe pain, inability for riding, sitting etc. distortions of <i>Anga</i> or even death of a person.
3.	<i>Sira Marma</i>	When <i>Sira Marma</i> are injured, blood which is thick flows out of <i>Sira</i> continuously in large quantity, due to blood loss symptoms like thirst, giddiness, dyspnoea, delusion, unconsciousness and hiccup arise and proceed to death of a person.

4.	<i>Asthi Marma</i>	When <i>Asthi Marma</i> is injured, there is discharge of thin fluid mixed with bone marrow intermittently and severe pain continuously.
5.	<i>Sandhi Marma</i>	When <i>Sandhi Marma</i> are injured, the site of injury feels as full of spicules, even after healing of the wound there is shortening of the arm, lameness, loss of strength and movement of joint, emaciation of body and swelling of joints occurs.
6.	<i>Dhamani Marma</i>	When <i>Dhamani Marma</i> is injured, the frothy and warm blood flows out with sound and the person becomes unconscious.

### Pain

Pain is indispensable for survival. It serves a protective function by signaling the presence of noxious, tissue-damaging conditions. From a medical standpoint, the subjective description and indication of the location of pain may help pinpoint the underlying cause of the disease.<sup>[6]</sup>

### Nociceptors

The receptors for pain are free nerve ending which are present in all parts of body except mind. Intense thermal, mechanical, or chemical stimuli can activate the receptors. Irritation or damage at tissue or cellular level releases chemical compounds which consist of prostaglandins and potassium ions (k+) that stimulate nociceptors. Pain may also persist even after absence of stimulus, due to this fact ache-mediating chemical substances linger and due to this effect nociceptors show-off very small amount of adaptation. Conditions that elicit the ache include excessive distention (stretching) of a structure, prolonged muscular contractions, muscle spasms or ischemia (insufficient blood flow to an organ).<sup>[7]</sup>

### Role of Vayu in Marma

The entire galaxy is made up of *Panchamahabhuta*, the general sustenance is maintained by *Shita* and, *Snigdha Guna*. The basic nature of the body is *Kapha*, the transformation process is mainly due to *Pitta* and *Vata*, *Vayu* is held in *Agni*, which in turn is supported by *Shitatva* of *Jala*. The bodies, even though

*Panchabhautika* in nature, has in it certain vital points where *Agni* and *Vayu* are predominant.

Such *Vata* points on body that are *Agneya* in nature are called *Marmas*. This predominance of *Agni* and *Vayu* over these area marks them vital and more prone to injuries that leads to diseases or death. *Marma Chikitsa* is basically *Vatapittahara Chikitsa*, it comes under *Madhyama Rogamarga*.

### Marma and Shula

Pain is one of the most common features of traumatic lesions and understanding its nature and properties is important for the successful management of pain. In *Ayurvedic* medicinal therapy, this is the only lacuna, that is, the immediate management of pain. *Marma* Science and *Chikitsa* have an answer to this and hence, if we incorporate *Marma* science in the broad field of *Ayurvedic* therapy, we can overcome this lacuna. *Marma* science also draws its basic premises from the same body of texts as the other disciplines of *Ayurvedic* practice.<sup>[8]</sup> *Marmas* are considered as half of the surgery subject as any injury to *Marmas* Can proves to be fatal so if the patient is promptly treated by the skilled doctor even though the patient will suffer from excessive pain.<sup>[9]</sup> In *Susruta Samhita*, *Maharshi Susruta* has mentioned that the commonest cause of pain is *Vata*.<sup>[10]</sup> Wound and pain are both coexisting features of trauma. Pain is a feeling of uneasiness. In *Ayurveda*, *Vedana* (pain), *Dukha* (unhappy), *Pida* (ache), *Sula* (pain), *Ruk* (pain), *Ruja* (mental pain), *Bheda* (cutting pain), *Sadana* (unhappy), *Avasada* (depressed)), are words used for pain. According to *Susruta Samhita*, the main causative factor of pain is *Vata*. The seat of pain is *Mana*(psyche) and *Sharira*(body).<sup>[11]</sup> In all cases of *Vatika* pre dominance, the chances of pain are quite common along with other clinical presentations of *Vatika* anomalies. In a normal state, the *Vata* is responsible for the activation of several functions of different systems.<sup>[12]</sup> According to the *Astanga Hridaya*, *Sutrasthana* 12/49-50, derangement, displacement, dilatation, piercing pain, anaesthesia, lethargy, pricking and incising pain, constricting pain, breaking pain, twisting pain, excitation of the hair follicle and thirst due to severe

pain, tremor, hardening, porosity, dryness, stimulation, spasm, distaste of mouth, black and reddish black discolouration are due to the *Vata*.

### Types of Pain in Wound<sup>[13],[14]</sup>

#### Vatika Vedana

*Todana* (pricking pain), *Bhedana* (cutting/ incising pain), *Tadana* (pain due to blunt in-jury), *Chedana* (cutting/ excising pain), *Ayamana* (stretching pain), *Manthana* (gripping pain), *Viksepana* (pulling pain), *Chumcumayana* (tingling sensation), *Nirdahana* (burning pain), *Avabhanjana* (breaking pain), *Sphotana* (bursting pain), *Vidarana* (perforating pain), *Utpatana* (tearing pain), *Kampana* (tremoring pain), *Vislesana* (dislocating pain), *Vikirana* (radiating pain), *Purana* (distending pain), *Stambhana* (stiffness/ ankylosing pain), *Swapana / Swapa* (anaesthesia), *Akuncana* (spasmodic pain), *Ankusika* (anchoring/ hanging pain), *Atimatra Vedana* (sudden excessive pain), *Vividha Shoola* (different pain).

#### Paittika Vedana

*Osa* (burning pain), *Chosa* (scalding pain), *Paridaha* (burning sensation all around), *Dhumayana* (sensation of hot smoke), *Gatrangarava-kirnamivapacyate* (sensation of touch by burning coal), *Usmabhivridhi* (increased temperature), *Kshateksharavasiktavaccha Vedana* (caustic application overwound like pain).

#### Kaphaja Vedana

*Alpavedanama* (mild pain), *Suptatvama* (numbness), *Avedanam /Aruja* (analgesia), *Parsvasubheda* (pain in flanks)

#### Tridosaja / Sannipataja Vedana

*Vividha Vedana* (different kinds of pain), *Sarva Vedana* (all kinds of pain).

### The Sites of Pain<sup>[15]</sup>

The sites of pain are the precordial region, flanks, back, sacral and suprapubic regions.

- The *Vatika Sula* is characterized by being spasmodic having periods of exacerbations and remissions repeatedly with the retention of urine,

flatus and faeces. It can be identified as a pricking or tearing type of pain.

- The **Paittika Sula** is very severe and sudden in onset. The colicky pain is associated with thirst, fainting, burning sensation and pain in the umbilical region. Excessive perspiration, vertigo is also accompanied by the *Paittika Sula*.
- The **Kaphaja Sula** is low-intensity colicky pain in the abdomen. It is associated with nausea, cough, malaise, anorexia, excessive salivation, and heaviness of the abdomen. The colicky pain is aggravated after meals and in the early morning. In *Sannipataja Sula* all three *Dosas* get vitiated. The clinical presentation may be varied accordingly. All the symptoms may be in an aggravated state.

#### Management of Pain

The management of pain comprises a multifold approach. It can be categorized into local management and systemic management. The pain caused by traumatic lesions can be managed by local fomentation, irrigation, application of local medicament and bandaging. In Ayurveda, the term *Vedana* is more or less used for the feeling. It may be the feeling of wellbeing or the feeling of illness (*Sukhatamaka* and *Dukhatmaka*).<sup>[16]</sup> In *Ayurveda*, there is no particular uniform medicine for any kind of pain. Management of pain depends upon the causative factor or *Doshika* predominance responsible for the pain. In conventional (allopathic) pain treatment several analgesics, anti-inflammatory, antipyretic drugs, chemo trypsin and serratiopeptidase like chemicals and opioids are used, but there is no universal drug for all kinds of pain to date.<sup>[17]</sup> Every individual response to pain in a different way. In the same way, every analgesic chemical acts pharmacologically in a different way. Only one analgesic preparation cannot solve the problem of pain. So, the management of pain is not so simple and satisfactory with the aforesaid drugs. Instant pain relief is the motive of *Marma* therapy. Stimulation of *Marma* cans produce analgesia by secreting several prostaglandin inhibitors, endorphins, interferon and other opioid like substances which are a hundred times

more potent than opium. Instant pain relief by *Marma* therapy is possible within no time.<sup>[18]</sup>

Following *Marma* points are responsible for the relief of pain in different organs.

1. Shoulder pain - *Kshipra Marma* and *Kurpara Marma*.
2. Pain in abdomen – *Kurpara* and *Urvi Marma*.
3. Chest Pain - *Kurpara*, *Urvi* and *Ani*.
4. Cervical (neck) pain - *Kshipra*, *Kurpara*, *Ani Marma*
5. Leg and knee pain - *Kshipra*, *Gulpha*
6. Sciatic pain - *Kshipra*, *Gulpha*

Pain management aims at minimizing distress, feeling of unrest, and improving the quality of life. A cardinal point in the management of pain is that it should be holistic and patient centered in its application. This can be fulfilled in the *Ayurvedic* approach only in terms of *Marma Chikitsa*.<sup>[19]</sup>

#### Technique of Marma Therapy

*Marma* therapy is an uncomplicated and easy-to-learn technique of regaining the vital energy.

#### Posture

For successful practice of self-*Marma* therapy, posture is important. The practitioner must remain steady, quiet and mentally alert during this practice. A sitting posture is most convenient for the practitioners. Usually one should assume a posture of cross-legged position, keeping the spine erect. Keep the hands on the knees in upward position or one can adopt the *Dhyana Mudra*.

The most common postures for the practice of self-*Marma* therapy are;

1. Simple cross-legged posture (*Sukhasana*)
2. Lotus posture (*Padmasana*)
3. Half lotus posture (*Ardha Padmasana*)
4. Diamond posture (*Vajrasana*)
5. Sitting posture on chair
6. Standing posture

In exceptional circumstance, lying down position (recumbent posture) may also be adopted.

The practitioner can adopt any one of these postures during the self-*Marma* therapy practice. If one cannot adopt some specific posture he can do practices in any posture anytime and anywhere. During the practice one should try to keep the vertebral column erect and achieve the relaxation of the body musculature. In sitting and standing postures keep the neck and spine in straight line without stiffness or tilting towards any direction. In standing posture, the feet should be parallel to each other. The arms should hang down loosely from the shoulder joints near to the body with open palms facing inwards with straightened fingers.

**Pre therapy exercises:** It comprises of the following steps

1. Total relaxation of body.
2. Deep breathing exercise.
3. Perception of body as whole.
4. Perception of psychic centers.
5. Perception of *Marma* points.
6. Gentle massage with thumb and fingers over the *Marma* points.

Then comes the actual therapy consisting of application of pressure with thumb or fingers over the *Marma* points.

**Pressure** - depend upon the nature of the *Marma*

**Stimulation time** - 0.8sec/ stimuli

**Time** - 3 times per day

**Repetition** - 15 to 18 times in single sitting.<sup>[20]</sup>

## DISCUSSION

*Marma Chikitsa* is an important aspect of *Ayurvedic* treatment where the application of pressure or stimulation on these *Marmas* points induces the flow of *Prana* (vital energy) along a complete system of subtle channels called *Nadis*. Message is widely applied in the treatment of *Marma*.

*Marma Chikitsa* is used to treat the disease of nervous system with brain. *Marma Chikitsa* is beneficial to treat traumatic neurological or neurosurgical lesion, traumatic paraplegia, hemiplegia and monoplegia etc. In orthopedic lesions especially prolapsed intervertebral disc etc. it is helpful to reduce the pain of nerves, muscles, ligaments, bones and joints. It is also useful to improve the function of body organs achieving homeostasis.

*Marma Chikitsa* works on the neuro-endocrine system. Actually, due to pressure or stimulation over these points, certain chemical substance and neurotransmitters are release like endorphins and enkephalin which send nerve impulse to brain causing the desired effect. Another theory state that the very small electrical changes that occur at *Marma* points is found to capable of producing effect for in responsible for triggering the desired effect. The gate control theory of brain is state that nerve and bear are large bundles of various of various size some of them are thick & some are thin transmit the sensation of pain while the thick carry the tactile sensation, thus if the thick impulse is increased the selectively block of the conduction of thin fibers, this is called the gate control theory.

In *Ayurveda*, the term *Vedana / Shula* is unpleasant feeling. It may be the feeling of well-being or the feeling of illness. The governance of all kinds of body sensations is the subject of the *Vata*. But during the vitiation of *Vata*, all these functions get disturbed and the excessive activity of vitiated *Vata* may cause pain sensation. From the above and according to the literature we can conclude that *Marmas* should be stimulated in every type of pain for its analgesic effect. Every *Marma* points have their measures, so *Marmas* points should be stimulated to their measures.

## CONCLUSION

*Marmas* are vital points that regulates our body functions. *Marmas* are considered as centers for the *Prana*. They can be used specifically for the diagnosis and treatment of disease or generally for promoting health and longevity. *Marmas* were applicable for all *Ayurvedic* therapies; it is applicable for simple self-



treatments to complex clinical procedures. *Marmas* were considered as main pillars of Ayurvedic clinical procedure. *Marma* therapy can be used along with all *Ayurvedic Chikitsa* like *Panchakarma* and *Yoga*. *Marma Chikitsa* is the best technique to attain the effects of *Yoga* and *Pranayama*. *Marma Chikitsa* is advance technique of Ayurveda related to diagnosis, treatment of particular disease and reduce pain. The present article shows the mode of action of *Marma Chikitsa*, as suggested in the literature, which has been discussed. The special capability of *Marma Chikitsa* in Treating any kind of pain disorders, Thus, it can be concluded that *Marma* science, which is an extremely ancient field of Facts, holds significant promise in being used to maintain the vitality of the body and treatment of diseases.

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