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# Efficacy of *Marma Chikitsa* in the management of *Avabahuka* (frozen shoulder) - A Single Case Study

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## ABSTRACT

*Avabahuka* (frozen shoulder) is a type of *Vata Vyadhi* caused by vitiated *Vata Dosha* with *Anubhandha* of *Kapha Dosha*. The symptoms of *Avabahuka* can be correlated with the symptoms of adhesive capsulitis, which is commonly known as frozen shoulder. Being a disease of shoulder joint, which has the greatest range of motion, it seriously affects routine day-to-day activities. A 56-year-old female came to the OPD of Pt. Khushilal Sharma Government Ayurvedic College and Hospital, Bhopal (MP) with pain and restricted movement in the right shoulder since 6 months, having undergone conventional treatment without any significant improvement. In this case study effect of *Marma Chikitsa* in the management of *Avabahuka* (frozen shoulder) is evaluated. The patient was treated with *Marma Chikitsa* for 10 days. The range of movements improved gradually from 45 to 123° for abduction, 102° to 165° for flexion, 53 to 65 for external rotation, and 30° to 45° for extension. VAS score for pain in the right shoulder was 7 before treatment, which came down to 4 after first course of the treatment regimen and gradually to 3 after completion of the treatment. The study suggested that *Marma Chikitsa* may be used for relieving symptoms of *Avabahuka*; however, study on large population was suggested.

**Key words:** Ayurveda, *Avabahuka*, *Marma Chikitsa*, Frozen shoulder.

## INTRODUCTION

The practice of *Ayurveda* can be traced back to the *Vedic* era, where it was a part of *Atharva Veda*. The word *Ayurveda* is a combination of "Ayu," which means life or longevity, and "Veda," which means knowledge. In essence, *Ayurveda* is the knowledge of life and longevity. The *Marma Sthan* is the convergence point

of *Mamsa*, *Sira*, *Snayu*, *Asthi*, and *Sandhi*, where the *Prana*, or life force, resides.<sup>[1]</sup> Through *Marma Chikitsa*, the blockages of *Prana* are cleared, nourishing the *Marma*. Some of the benefits of *Marma Chikitsa* include instant symptomatic relief without side effects. In the fast-developing era, most of the diseases may not be life-threatening but hamper day-to-day life & human productivity. This clinical entity was first introduced by *Acharya Sushruta*<sup>[2]</sup> in "*Vata Vyadhi Nidana*. *Avabahuka* is a painful disease that can significantly affect an individual's daily life. It is a type of *Vata Vyadhi* that disrupts the normal functioning of the upper limbs, causing symptoms like *Shoola*, *Stamba*, *Shosha*, and *Bahu Praspandan*. The *Marma Sthan* that are affected by this disease are located in the *Amsa Sandhi*, specifically the *Amsa* and *Amsa Phalak Marma Sthan*. Therefore, *Marma Chikitsa* is used as a treatment for *Avabahuka*. *Avabahuka* which is closely resembles the disease frozen shoulder. (Adhesive Capsulitis) In Modern aspect frozen shoulder

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is composed of two words" Frozen + shoulder. frozen means immobile & shoulder means the upper joint of the person's arm, so constant pain, stiffness, & progressive loss of Shoulder motion is termed a frozen shoulder.

## CASE REPORT

A 56-year-old female Patient housewife by profession consulted in the outpatient department of Pt. Khushilal Sharma Government Ayurvedic College and Hospital, Bhopal (MP) with a six-month history of chronic right shoulder pain. The patient complained of night pain, increasing severity of pain, limited painful movements, and increased stiffness. Symptoms were aggravated by household work. She was diagnosed as a case of Frozen Shoulder. She was taking analgesics and anti-inflammatory medicine for pain management.

### History of Past Illness

The patient does not have a history of diabetes mellitus, hypertension, or any physical injury or trauma to the right shoulder. There is no family history of musculoskeletal illnesses.

### Personal History

- Bowel - Clear
- Appetite - Good
- Micturation - Normal
- Sleep - Disturbed due to pain

### Physical Examination

Weight: 55 kg; height: 154 cm, and BMI: 23.2 kg/m<sup>2</sup>; blood pressure = 130/90 mm Hg; pulse rate = 74 minutes; pallor, icterus, cyanosis, clubbing, and edema were absent; cardiovascular system (CVS): normal; respiratory system (RS): clear no added sound; central nervous system (CNS): consciousness, attention, orientation, memory, and speech are normal; Reflexes in both upper and lower limbs were in the normal level and *Prakriti: Vata Pradhana Kaphaja*.

### Shoulder joint examination

The right side is as follows. Left side is normal

- Stiffness - Stiffness, relived by oral medication

(grade 3)

- Tenderness - On pressing pain appears on the face of the patient (grade 2)
- Range of movements - Restricted: active ROM (AROM) abduction 45°, flexion 102°, extension 30°, external rotation 53°.
- Vas score for pain in right shoulder was 7 (grade 3)
- Sleep duration - 3-6 hours (grade 2)

### Investigation

Both hematological and biochemical investigations carried out were found within the physiological limit. One-month-old X-ray of the Shoulder joint was normal.

### Treatment

The treatment involved the administration of *Marma Chikitsa*. The present study includes stimulation of 8 Marma points that is *Kshipra, Kurpar, Ani, Urvi, Kakshadhara, Amsa, Amsaphalaka, and Brihati Marma* & these will be stimulated 15 -18 times on average in a single sitting.<sup>[3]</sup> The details of the administration are as follows.

**Duration of study - 10 days**

**Follow up - 7<sup>th</sup> day**

SN	Marma Name	Stimulation Time	Frequency	Duration
1.	<i>Kshipra</i>	0.8 sec	15-18 Times	Twice a day
2.	<i>Kurpar</i>	0.8 sec	15-18 Times	Twice a day
3.	<i>Ani</i>	0.8 sec	15-18 Times	Twice a day
4.	<i>Urvi</i>	0.8 sec	15-18 Times	Twice a day
5.	<i>Kakshadhara</i>	0.8 sec	15-18 Times	Twice a day
6.	<i>Amsa</i>	0.8 sec	15-18 Times	Twice a day

7.	Amsaphalaka	0.8 sec	15-18 Times	Twice a day
8.	Brihati	0.8 sec	15-18 Times	Twice a day

- Steady and moderate pressure will be applied slowly and gently.
- pressure will be increased gradually depending upon pressure strength.

**Assessment criteria**

The assessment of the effect of treatment will be based on subjective and objective parameters of disease which will be recorded before and after treatment. The symptoms will be graded on the basis of the scoring system to be adopted as below<sup>[4]</sup> –

**1. Pain**

SN	Pain	Grade
1.	VAS range in between 0-2	0
2.	VAS range in between 2-4	1
3.	VAS ranges in between 4-6	2
4.	VAS ranges in between 6-8	3
5.	VAS ranges in between 8-10	4

**2. Stiffness**

SN	Stiffness	Grade
1.	No stiffness	0
2.	Stiffness, no medication	1
3.	Stiffness, relieved by external application	2
4.	Stiffness, relived by oral medication	3
5.	Stiffness not responded by medicine	4

**3. Flexion**

SN	Flexion	Grade
1.	161 °-180°	0

2.	121 °-160°	1
3.	81 °-120°	2
4.	41 °-80°	3
5.	0 °-40°	4

**4. Extension**

SN	Extension	Grade
1.	41°- 60°	0
2.	31°- 40°	1
3.	21°- 30°	2
4.	11°- 20°	3
5.	0°- 10°	4

**5. External Rotation**

SN	External Rotation	Grade
1.	81°-90°	0
2.	61°-80°	1
3.	41°-60°	2
4.	21°-40°	3
5.	0°-20°	4

**6. Abduction**

SN	Abduction	Grade
1.	161°- 180°	0
2.	121°- 160°	1
3.	81°- 120°	2
4.	41°- 80°	3
5.	0°- 40°	4

**7. Tenderness**

SN	Tenderness	Grade
1.	On pressing patient does not feel any pain	0
2.	On pressing patient feels pain, but no sign on the face (wincing)	1
3.	On pressing pain appears on face of the patient (wincing)	2

4.	Wincing of the face and withdrawal of the affected part on the pressure	3
5.	A patient is not allowed to touch	4

## 8. Sleep

SN	Sleep	Grade
1.	More than 8 hours	0
2.	6-8 hours	1
3.	3-6 hours	2
4.	Less than 3 hours	3
5.	No sleep	4

## OBSERVATION

Diagnostic criteria	Before treatment	After treatment
Pain	VAS score 7	Absent (Grade 0)
Stiffness	Stiffness, relived by oral medication (Grade 3)	No Stiffness (Grade 0)
Flexion	102° (Grade2)	165° (Grade 0)
Extension	30° (Grade 2)	45° (Grade 0)
External rotation	53° (Grade 2)	65° (Grade 1)
Abduction	45° (Grade 3)	123° (Grade 1)
Tenderness	On pressing pain appears on face of patient (Grade 2)	On pressing patient does not feel any pain (Grade 0)

## DISCUSSION

The results mentioned above were evaluated by considering the improvement in symptoms using the VAS scale for subjective criteria such as pain. Additionally, the range of motion (ROM) was evaluated using a goniometer scale for objective parameters which include symptoms like stiffness and difficulty with ROM. According to all *Samhitas* and *Sangraha Granthas*, *Avabahuka* is described as a *Vatavyadhi*.

The demanding workload and fast-paced lifestyle, combined with improper dietary habits, can lead to numerous health issues, especially disorders caused by vitiation of *Vata* known as *Vatavyadhi*. One such painful condition is *Avabahuka*, which can severely affect the patient's daily routine. The practice of *Marma Chikitsa* can help improve both pain levels and restrictions in shoulder movement. In a study, participants underwent ten days of *Marma Chikitsa* treatment which resulted in significant improvements in their symptoms. Pain severity decreased and movement became easier. The study also observed an improvement in extension and rotation flexibility following the treatment.

### Probable mode of action of Marma

*Marma Chikitsa* is a traditional Indian therapy that offers various benefits such as relieving muscle tension, promoting better sleep, removing energy blockages, clearing obstructions of *Srotas*, pacifying *Vata Dosh*, controlling *Vyana Vata*, balancing the functioning of the autonomic nervous system, and improving physical flexibility. This therapy is particularly beneficial for people who experience *Avabahuka*, a condition characterized by stiffness, rigidity, and degeneration caused by *Ama* and *Vata* aggravation. *Marma Chikitsa* can reduce the vitiation of *Vata* and relieve *Ama* aggravation, thus alleviating the symptoms of *Avabahuka*.<sup>[5]</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The case report shows significant relief in signs and symptoms such as pain, stiffness, tenderness, sleep disturbances, and restricted range of motion within 10 days. This indicates that *Marma Chikitsa* is a prompt and non-pharmaceutical method of treatment that provides immediate pain relief to the patient.

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