Effect of Marma Chikitsa in pain management of Sandhivata (Osteoarthritis) - A Single Case Study

Mahima Asthana¹, Rita Marwaha², Pankaj Gupta³, Nisha Bhalerao⁴, S. D. Panda⁵

¹Post Graduate Scholar, Dept. of Rachna Sharir, Professor, Pt. Khushilal Sharma Govt. Ayurved College & Institute, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India.
²Professor & HOD, Dept. of Rachna Sharir, Professor, Pt. Khushilal Sharma Govt. Ayurved College & Institute, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India.
³,⁴Associate Professor, ⁵Assistant Professor, Dept. of Rachna Sharir, Professor, Pt. Khushilal Sharma Govt. Ayurved College & Institute, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India.

ABSTRACT

Osteoarthritis (OA) is a type of degenerative joint disease that results from breakdown of joint cartilage and underlying bone. It is believed to be the fourth leading cause of disability in the world, affecting 1 in 7 adults in the United States alone. The most common symptoms are joint pain and stiffness. Usually, the symptoms progress slowly over years. In this paper there is a case of 52 year old female patient that came to our institute with complain of pain, swelling and stiffness of right knee joint since 1 year. X-ray suggested narrowing of the space between the bones in the joint. X-ray also shows spurs around the joint. In this case study of Marma Chikitsa is done in the pain management of Osteoarthritis.

Key words: Marma Chikitsa, osteoarthritis, Sandhivata, Case Report

INTRODUCTION

Since ancient times, Ayurveda has been a part of Indian society and offers a variety of holistic methods for managing health. Ayurvedic holistic medicine focuses on treating illnesses by restoring the body's balance. Marma is the vital energy point located on the surface of the body. Marma Sthana is defined as Anatomical site where Mamsa, Sira, Snayu, Asthi and Sandhi meet together. As the body is alive and pulsating with energy there is a numerous energy points within it and upon the surface. These points are known as Marma points. The Sanskrit word Marma actually means mortal or vulnerable points means the area that is weak, tender or sensitive.¹² They are the seats of Prana within the body stimulation of this points in proper manner causes increase in flow of Prana within the body.

There is a specific Marma points for specific disease, Stimulation of these points in proper manner causes chemical changes and signals the body to produce neurochemicals that heals the body and causes relief in pain. Marma is a hidden gem of Ayurveda; it is a non-pharmacological treatment which gives instant and permanent relief.

Osteoarthritis is a chronic, degenerative, disorder of unknown case characterized by gradual loss of articular cartilage. it is the most prevalent disease in our society, with a worldwide distribution. it ranks fourth in health impact in human and eighth in men in the western world.¹² In England between 1.3 and 1.75 million people have symptomatic osteoarthritis.¹² It is a long-term chronic disease which results in bones rubbing together and creating stiffness, pain, and impaired movement. The disease most commonly affects the
joints in the knee, hand, spine and is also present in shoulder and hip joint. It is related to ageing, it is
associated with a variety of both modifiable and non-
modifiable risk factors including obesity, lack of
exercise, occupational injury, trauma.

Osteoarthritis is classified into two groups. Primary
osteoarthritis can be localised or generalised, the latter
more commonly found in postmenopausal women,
with development of Heberden's nodes. Secondary
osteoarthritis has an underlying cause, such as trauma,
obesity, Paget's disease, or inflammatory arthritis.

Altogether 10-15% of adults over 60 have some degree
of osteoarthritis, and with an ageing population it is
becoming an increasingly important disease. More
than 80,000 hip or knee replacement were performed
in 2000 in the UK.[4]

In Ayurveda osteoarthritis is correlated with
Janusandhigatavata. Acharya Charaka explained
Sandhigata Vata under Vatavyadhi. When the vitiated
Vata lodges in Janu Sandhi it is considered
Janusandhigata Vata. He had explained this condition
with symptoms such as pain while walking,
inflammation, crepitus present in joint.[5] Acharya
Sushruta has added peculiar symptoms like
degenerative changes in joints as the symptoms of
Sandhigata Vata.[6]

Other treatment pathies has its own limitations the
pharmacological intervention involved administration
of NSAIDs, they only relieve the pain but not
completely cure the disease, they cause many side
effects also. Hence there is a great need to find an
effective way to treat the disease, in this aspect Marma
therapy gives a new ray of hope, it is completely non
pharmacological way of treatment, which gives prompt
relief to the patient.

**CASE STUDY**

A 52-year-old female patient came in an outpatient
department (OPD) at, Pt. Khushilal Sharma Govt.
(Autonomous) Ayurveda College and Institute, Bhopal
(M.P.) Patient has a complaint of right knee pain in the
last 1 year, it was associated with stiffness, swelling
and crepitus. Pt. has undertaken X-ray and diagnosed
with osteoarthritis, she has taken allopathic medicine
but didn't get any permanent relief, so she approached
for Ayurvedic treatment. Her *Marma* therapy was
started, after the therapy of 21 days she got significant
relief in her pain, and stiffness.

**History of Past Illness**

No history of Hypertension, Diabetes Mellitus, or any
other serious illness.

**Family History**

No any family history related to Diabetes and
Hypertension is present.

**Treatment History**

History of taking analgesic oral pills

**Personal History**

- Appetite - Normal
- Bowel - Clear
- Sleep - Disturbed
- Micturition - Normal

**Physical Examination**

- Body weight - 63 kg
- Heart rate - 97/min
- Respiration rate - 24/min
- Blood pressure - 140/80 mmhg

**On Examination**

- Duration of pain - 1 year
- Site - unilateral
- Location - right knee joint pain
- Pain - severe in nature (grade - 4)
- Swelling - severe (grade - 4)
- Stiffness - present, for 10-15 min (grade - 4)
- Crepitus - audible (grade - 3)
- Restricted movements - does not allow passive
  movements (grade - 4)
Investigation
- CBC with ESR
- X-ray

Treatment
Treatment involved administration of Marma therapy. Present study includes stimulation of 3 Marma that is Indrabasti, Gulfa, Janu. These will be stimulated for 15-18 times on an average in single sitting.[7]

Total duration - 21 days

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SN</th>
<th>Marma</th>
<th>Stimulation time</th>
<th>Sitting of Marma Chikitsa</th>
<th>Total time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Indrabasti</td>
<td>0.8 sec</td>
<td>Three times a day</td>
<td>21 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Gulfa</td>
<td>0.8 sec</td>
<td>Three times a day</td>
<td>21 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Janu</td>
<td>0.8 sec</td>
<td>Three times a day</td>
<td>21 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A steady and moderate pressure will be applied slowly and gently.

Pressure will be increased depending upon patient strength.

During the therapy, therapist was supposed to continuously watch the facial expression of the patients.

Assessment Criteria
1. Pain (Sandhi Shola)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SN</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Grading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>No pain</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Mild pain</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Moderate pain without difficulty in walking</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Moderate pain with difficulty in walking</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Severe pain with difficulty in walking</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Swelling (Sandhi Shoth)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SN</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Grading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>No swelling</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Slightly obvious</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Covers well over the bony prominence</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Stiffness (Sandhi Graha)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SN</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Grading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>No stiffness</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>&lt;5 min</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>5-10 min</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>10-15 min</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>&gt;15 min</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Crepitus (Sandhi Sphutan)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SN</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Grading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>No crepitus</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Occasional crepitus</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Persistent and palpable crepitus</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Persistent and audible crepitus</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Restricted Movement (Akunchan Prasaranjanya Vedana)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SN</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Grading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>No pain</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Pain without winching of face</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Pain with winching of face</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Prevent complete flexion</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Does not allow passive movement</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>Before treatment</th>
<th>After treatment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pain</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**DISCUSSION**

At this study most of our knowledge of the aetiology and epidemiology of osteoarthritis is from observational studies. Our diagnostic measures are based on clinical findings. Osteoarthritis is currently a major public health problem and the impact of the ageing boomers will further increase the burden to society. None of the therapeutic intervention are curative for osteoarthritis with many patients needed joint replacement.

Due to the fact that *Marmas* are the seats of *Prana*, the vital life force that controls both the body’s subtle and physical processes, stimulating *Marmas* can modulate *Prana* flow in various body parts, removing blockages and enhancing physical energy currents within the body to have corresponding healing effects. According to *Ayurveda*, vitiated *Vata* is the primary causative component of *Sandhivata*. *Prana* is associated with *Vata Dosha*, which is why *Marma* Therapy is particularly helpful in treating *Vata* illnesses. Of the five *Vata Doshas*, the one most closely related to the *Marmas* is *Vyana Vayu*, which is connected to the skin and the flow and circulation of *Prana*. After *Marma* therapy patient is getting prompt relief in pain and stiffness of joints. Her joint movements also get improved. This treatment helped to strengthen various musculatures and various structures in knee region. Although not all symptoms are cured significantly, still pain management through *Marma Chikitsa* is a new approach towards the problem of osteoarthritis.

**CONCLUSION**

The case report demonstrates a noteworthy advancement in symptoms such as pain, stiffness, and restricted movements. Therefore, *Marma Chikitsa* can be utilized as an alternate therapy for osteoarthritis pain management if it is conducted correctly. It is a non-pharmacological way of treatment that not only give relief in the pain but also heals the disease.

**REFERENCES**

1. Vasant Lad, Anisha Dhurve; Marma points of Ayurveda. First paperback edition
4. Arthritis Research Campaign. Available at: http://www.arc.org.uk/about_arth/astats.htm

**How to cite this article**: Mahima Asthana, Rita Marwaha, Pankaj Gupta, Nisha Bhalerao, S. D. Panda. Effect of Marma Chikitsa in pain management of Sandhivata (Osteoarthritis) - A Single Case Study. J Ayurveda Integr Med Sci 2024;5:303-306. http://dx.doi.org/10.21760/jaims.9.5.51

**Source of Support**: Nil, **Conflict of Interest**: None declared.