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

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## 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.<sup>[1]</sup> 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.<sup>[2]</sup> In England between 1.3 and 1.75 million people have symptomatic osteoarthritis.<sup>[3]</sup> 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

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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 replacements were performed in 2000 in the UK.<sup>[4]</sup>

In Ayurveda osteoarthritis is correlated with *Janusandhigata vata*. 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.<sup>[5]</sup> Acharya Sushruta has added peculiar symptoms like degenerative changes in joints as the symptoms of *Sandhigata Vata*.<sup>[6]</sup>

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 complain 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.<sup>[7]</sup>

**Total duration - 21 days**

SN	Marma	Stimulation time	Sitting of Marma Chikitsa	Total time
1.	Indrabasti	0.8 sec	Three times a day	21 days
2.	Gulf	0.8 sec	Three times a day	21 days
3.	Janu	0.8 sec	Three times a day	21 days

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)**

SN	Criteria	Grading
1.	No pain	0
2.	Mild pain	1
3.	Moderate pain without difficulty in walking	2
4.	Moderate pain with difficulty in walking	3
5.	Severe pain with difficulty in walking	4

**2. Swelling (Sandhi Shoth)**

SN	Criteria	Grading
1.	No swelling	0
2.	Slightly obvious	1
3.	Covers well over the bony prominence	2

4.	Marked and much elevated	3
5.	Severe and very much elevated	4

**3. Stiffness (Sandhi Graha)**

SN	Criteria	Grading
1.	No stiffness	0
2.	<5 min	1
3.	5-10 min	2
4.	10-15 min	3
5.	>15 min	4

**4. Crepitus (Sandhi Sphutan)**

SN	Criteria	Grading
1.	No crepitus	0
2.	Occasional crepitus	1
3.	Persistent and palpable crepitus	2
4.	Persistent and audible crepitus	3

**5. Restricted Movement (Akunchan Prasaranjanya Vedana)**

SN	Criteria	Grading
1.	No pain	0
2.	Pain without winching of face	1
3.	Pain with winching of face	2
4.	Prevent complete flexion	3
5.	Does not allow passive movement	4

**OBSERVATION**

Symptoms	Before treatment	After treatment
Pain	4	0

Swelling	4	2
Stiffness	4	1
Crepitus	3	0
Restricted movement	4	1

## 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 Dasha*, 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.

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