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Efficacy of *Marma Chikitsa* in the Pain Management of Tennis Elbow - A Single Case Study

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ABSTRACT

Tennis elbow, also known as lateral epicondylitis, is a condition that can result from overuse of the muscles and tendons in the elbow. Tennis elbow is linked to repeated motions of the wrist and arm. Tennis elbow is often due to damage to a specific forearm muscle extensor carpi radialis brevis (ECRB). When the ECRB muscle is weakened from overuse, microscopic tears form in the ECRB tendon where it attaches to the lateral epicondyle of humerus. This leads to pain directly over the outside lateral part of the elbow. 1 to 3% of adult population in each year affects with tennis elbow and it is more common in the dominant arm with symptoms such as pain or burning on the outer part of your elbow, weak grip strength, and tenderness. Many surgical procedures, medications are present today for the treatment of the disease, but it is the need of time to develop some non-invasive techniques for better results. *Marma* is a concept which helps in achieving this. *Marma* point is a junction on body where two or more types of tissue meet, such as muscles, veins, ligaments, bones or joints. From common ailments to serious neuromuscular diseases, all can be treated by *Marma Chikitsa*. Application of pressure to these *Marma* induces the flow of energy. This case study shows that pain in tennis elbow may be successfully managed by *Marma Chikitsa*.

Key words: Tennis elbow, Ayurveda, Marma, Marma Chikitsa.

INTRODUCTION

The term 'Ayurveda' is derived from the Sanskrit words *Ayur* (life) and *Veda* (science or knowledge). Thus, *Ayurveda* translates to knowledge of life. *Marma* is very important and unique concept of *Ayurvedic Sharir*. *Acharya Sushruta*, *Charak*, and *Vagbhatt* has mentioned *Marma* in their respective texts. The *Marma* are points in the body where *Mamsa*, *Sira*,

Snayu, *Asthi* and *Sandhi* conjoin. *Marma* are the sites where *Tridosha* (*Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*) are present with their subtle forms; *Prana*, *Oja* and *Tejas*. They also contain three *Gunas* namely *Sattva*, *Raja*, *Tama* and soul or life force (*Bhutatma*).^[1] Stimulation of *Marma* points for the management of various diseases is called *Marma Chikitsa*. *Acharya Sushruta* has described 107 *Marma* in *Sharir Sthana* and often describes *Marma* as *Shalyavishyaardh*.^[2] The healing through *Marma Chikitsa* affects the *Chakras*, *Doshas* and physical health. The purpose of *Marma Chikitsa* is primarily to manipulate subtle energy or *Prana*, but they are also very effective for relieving stiff muscles and boosting circulation.

Tennis elbow, also known as lateral epicondylitis or enthesopathy of the extensor carpi radialis origin is a condition that can result from overuse of the muscles and tendons in the elbow. Tennis elbow was first described by Runge in 1873 and eventually given the name Lawn tennis arm by Henry Morris writing in the lancet in 1982.^[3] Despite its name, it occurs to people

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whose job involves repeated movements such as plumbers, painters, carpenters. Tennis elbow is often due to damage to a specific forearm muscle extensor carpi radialis brevis (ECRB). When the ECRB muscle is weakened from overuse, microscopic tears form in the ECRB tendon where it attaches to the lateral epicondyle. 1 to 3% of adult population in each year affects with tennis elbow.^[4] It affects people of all ages but it is most common in adults between the ages of 30 and 60. The symptoms of tennis elbow develop gradually. In most cases, the pain begins as mild and slowly worsens over weeks and months which radiates from the outside of the elbow into the forearm and wrist. The other symptoms such as weakened grip strength, and tenderness. There is usually no specific injury associated with the start of symptoms. The symptoms are often worsened with forearm activity, such as holding a racquet, turning a wrench, or shaking hands.

General treatment of tennis elbow

General treatment includes rest, various types of topical and medicinal NSAIDs, extracorporeal shock wave therapy, steroid injection, needle fenestration, percutaneous radiofrequency thermal treatment and surgery.^[5]

CASE STUDY

A male patient of 32 years of age carpenter by occupation consulted to *Marma* OPD of Pt. Khushilal Sharma Govt. Ayurveda college, Bhopal. He complained of pain and weakness in the left arm since from 4 months. Symptoms were getting aggravated by doing his occupational work. He was diagnosed as a case of tennis elbow. He was taking analgesic and anti-inflammatory medicines for pain management.

History of past illness

No history of hypertension, diabetes mellitus or any other serious illness.

Surgical history: NAD

Personal history

Bowel - Constipated

Appetite - Hunger

Sleep - Normal

Allergy - Nil

Clinical Findings

On physical examination, health of patient was good, his pulse was 65/min, BP was 126/82 mm of Hg. There was mild swelling over the lateral condyle of humerus, and pain was aggravated during extension of forearm. Other movements of the arm were normal.

Treatment Protocol

Marma Chikitsa was administered for 10 days on the left arm and forearm once a day.

Following *Marma* points were stimulated -

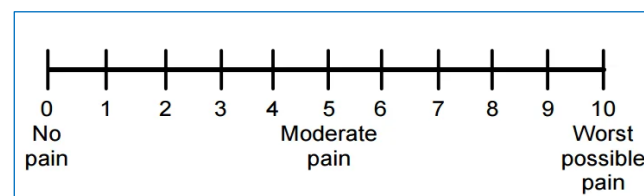
1. *Urvi*
2. *Ani*
3. *Kurpar*
4. *Indrabasti*
5. *Manibandha*
6. *Kshipra*

Each *Marma* was stimulated for 0.8 sec over 15-18 times.

A steady and moderate pressure was applied slowly and gently.

Assessment criteria

NRS (Numerical Rating Scale) for assessment of pain.



Grading of pain

No pain - 0

Mild pain - 1-3

Moderate pain - 4-6

Severe pain - 7-10

OBSERVATION

Table 1: Grading of pain

Day	Grading of pain by NRS
2 nd day	9
4 th day	7
6 th day	6
8 th day	4
10 th day	2

RESULTS

Observations during treatment are mentioned in table 1. As *Marma Chikitsa* was given to patient, there is significant relief in the pain from day 1 to 10th day and grip strength of his left arm also increased.

DISCUSSION

Ayurveda is a way of living. It is not merely a treatment modality but a complete system to provide a holistic health at physical, mental and social level. *Marma Chikitsa*, the art of treating specific vital points on the human body - is one of the greatest healing secrets of Ayurveda. It can be used to detoxify, strengthen and revitalize the body, for rejuvenation and relaxation or to release blocked energy. Using these subtle energy points, we can stimulate the function of the internal organs, promote self-healing and harmonize mind and body. We can improve eyesight, balance the digestive system, alleviate headaches, reduce tension and alleviate or cure many other everyday complaints. mental, spiritual levels. *Ayurveda* has the potential to lead the health care system of the country.

In tennis elbow, there is degeneration at the ECRB tendon's attachment, weakening the anchor site and placing greater stress at lateral epicondyle of humerus. This can lead to pain associated with activities in which this muscle is active, such as lifting, gripping and grasping. According to *Ayurveda*, the main

etiological factor for tennis elbow is vitiated *Vata*. Since *Prana* is connected to *Vata Dosha*, hence *Marma Chikitsa* can be especially useful in treating the *Vata* disorders.

CONCLUSION

Marma Chikitsa is ancient, simple, non-invasive way of treatment which shows significant relief in sign and symptoms and can be used as an alternate therapy in the management of tennis elbow. It improves the quality of life of patients and side effects of analgesics can also be prevented.

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