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# Efficacy of *Marma Chikitsa* in the Pain Management of “*Plantar Fasciitis*” (*Vatakantak*) - A Case Study

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## ABSTRACT

Plantar fasciitis is a cause of foot pain in adults, with the peak incidence occurring in people between the ages of 40 and 60 years. The pain originates at or near the site of the plantar fascia attachment to the medial tuberosity of the calcaneus. *Vatakantak* is associated with a painful foot and ankle joint disease. It is aggravated *Vata* as a result of walking on an uneven surface. A 40-year-old female came to the OPD of Pt. Khushilal Sharma Government Ayurvedic College and Hospital, Bhopal (MP), with pain and restricted movement in her right heel for 3 months, having received conventional treatment with no significant change. In this case study, the effectiveness of *Marma Chikitsa* in the treatment of plantar fasciitis (*Vatakantak*) is assessed. The patient was treated with *Marma Chikitsa* for 15 days. The range of motion continuously improved. Self grading pattern for pain in the right heel was 3 before initiating therapy, but it decreased to 1 after the first course of the treatment plan and eventually to 0 after completion of treatment. The study found that *Marma Chikitsa* could be utilised to treat plantar fasciitis (*Vatakantak*).

**Key words:** Ayurveda, Plantar Fasciitis, Marma Chikitsa, Vatakantak.

## INTRODUCTION

It occurs due to friction or tear of the ossified posterior insertion of the plantar fascia which is common in people who stand or walk for long time. Plantar fasciitis is the result of degenerative irritation of the plantar fascia origin at the medial calcaneal tuberosity of the

heel as well as the surrounding perifascial structures.<sup>[1]</sup> Several factors that increase the risk of developing plantar fasciitis include obesity, pes planus (flat foot or absence of the foot arch when standing), pes cavus (high-arched foot), limited dorsiflexion of the ankle, prolonged standing, walking on hard surfaces, and faulty shoes. The diagnosis of plantar fasciitis can usually be made on the basis of history and physical examination alone.<sup>[2]</sup> The exact cause of plantar fasciitis is unknown but it is believed that most cases result from overuse stress. The probable risk factors of plantar fasciitis include trauma to heel, excessive running, obesity and occupation requiring prolonged standing.<sup>[3]</sup>

Ayurveda is the valuable knowledge that was pre-existing and developed by our great ancestors. *Marma* is a Sanskrit word that refers to any vital or sensitive *Sthan* of the body. *Marma* is the *Sthan* where *Mamsa*, *Sira*, *Snayu*, *Asthi*, and *Sandhi* conjoin. These *Sthan* are

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considered to be vital points because these are the site of *Prana* (vital force) and are influenced by consciousness. *Marma Sthan* can be activated by mild pressure and therapeutic massage. This technique is known as *Marma Chikitsa*. In *Vatakantak* vitiated *Vata* is accumulated in *Gulpha Sandhi* and produces pain. while *Rogmarg* of the *Vatkantak* is *Madhyam*. as per *Acharya Sushrut* in the *Sushruta Samhita*, *Vatkantak* is an imbalance of *Vata* at *Gulpha Sandhi*, as well as discomfort when walking on an uneven surface.<sup>[4]</sup>

### CASE REPORT

A 40-year-old female housewife came towards the outpatient department of Pt. Khushilal Sharma Government Ayurvedic College and Hospital in Bhopal (MP) with a three-month history of right heel pain. The patient complained of significant discomfort on the first step in the morning, which got worse, uncomfortable motions, and increased tenderness. Housework exacerbated the symptoms. She was diagnosed with plantar fasciitis. She had been taking analgesics and anti-inflammatory medications for pain management for one month. Patient has no other significant past history of hypertension, diabetes mellitus, tuberculosis, or any other chronic illness. On physical examination, there was no evidence of redness or swelling found in the right heel region. X-ray of right foot antero-posterior and lateral view demonstrates normal findings. On the basis of history and clinical examination of patient was diagnosed with Plantar fasciitis (*Vatakantak*).

#### Physical Examination

Weight: 53 kg, height: 152 cm, and BMI: 25.3 kg/m<sup>2</sup>, blood pressure = 130/90 mm Hg, pulse rate = 75 minutes; pallor, icterus, cyanosis, clubbing, and oedema 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.

#### Treatment

The treatment included the administration of *Marma Chikitsa*. The current study includes stimulation of five

*Marma* points: *Indrabasti Marma*, *Gulpha Marma*, *Kurchshir Marma*, *Talhritya Marma* and *Kshipra Marma* of each extremities of lower limb will be stimulated for 15-18 times on an average in single sitting by pulp of thumb.<sup>[5]</sup> The administrative details are as follows.

**Duration of study** - 15 days

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

SN	Marma	Stimulation Time	Frequency	Duration
1.	<i>Indrabasti Marma</i>	0.8 sec	15-18 Times	Twice a day
2.	<i>Gulpha Marma</i>	0.8 sec	15-18 Times	Twice a day
3.	<i>Kurchshir Marma</i>	0.8 sec	15-18 Times	Twice a day
4.	<i>Talhritya Marma</i>	0.8 sec	15-18 Times	Twice a day
5.	<i>Kshipra Marma</i>	0.8 sec	15-18 Times	Twice a day

- A steady and moderate pressure will be applied slowly and gently.
- Pressure will be increased gradually depending upon patient 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. Subjective and objective parameters will be assessed according to self-grading system.

**Table 1: Scoring pattern of sign and symptoms**

SN	Grades	0	1	2	3
	Sign and symptom				
1.	Pain	No Pain	Mild	Moderate	Severe

			Not disturbing daily routine activity and pain only during morning hours	Continuous pain in the morning hours and walking after rest.	Pain disturbing daily routine.
2.	Tenderness	No Tenderness	Pain on deep pressure	Pain on slight pressure	Pain on touch

## OBSERVATIONS AND RESULTS

Table 2:

SN	Signs and symptoms	Before Treatment	After Treatment
1.	Pain	3	0
2.	Tenderness	3	1

## DISCUSSION

The above-mentioned results were assessed by examining the improvement in symptoms using a self-grading scale for subjective factors such as pain. *Samhitas* and *Sangraha Granthas* refer to plantar fasciitis as a *Vatakantak*. The intense workload and fast-paced lifestyle, combined with inadequate dietary habits, can create a variety of health problems, including diseases induced by *Vata* vitiation known as *Vatavyadhi*. Plantar fasciitis is one such painful disease that can have a significant impact on the patient's daily activities. *Marma Chikitsa* can help reduce pain. Participants in a study were treated with *Marma Chikitsa* for 15 days, and their symptoms improved significantly. Pain intensity reduced and mobility became easier.

## Probable mode of action of Marma Chikitsa

*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 Dosha*, controlling *Vyana Vata*, balancing the functioning of the autonomic nervous system, and improving physical flexibility. This therapy is particularly beneficial for people who experience Plantar Fasciitis, a condition characterized by stiffness and degeneration caused by *Vata* aggravation. *Marma Chikitsa* can reduce the vitiation of *Vata* and relieve *Vata* aggravation, thus alleviating the symptoms of Plantar Fasciitis.<sup>[6]</sup>

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