

A Review on Traditional *MarmaChikitsa* in Ayurveda

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ABSTRACT

The word *marma* has the meaning of essence, vital points, life spot, and conjugation points. It is 107 in number from where the *pranas* flow throughout the body. Manipulating these, we can recharge the *pranas* or vital energy for health, well-being, and personal transformation. As per yogic and *Vedic* aspects, these vital points have the basic source of life process i.e. *ojo*, *teja*, and *prana*, which is comparable to the *kapha*, *pitta*, and *vata doshas* of *Ayurveda*. In *marma chikitsa* we can try to vibrate or press vital points of the body to restore the normal functioning of *ojo*, *teja*, and *prana*. The results of *marma* healing are so enduring and fruitful that it is not possible to believe them at first sight and if one sees or experiences them, it is considered as a miracle, whereas it is a positive method. Is completely scientific and works only on the basic principles of nature.

Key Words *Prana, Ayurveda, Surgery, Pingala, endorphins*

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INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, which is considered one of the *Vedas*, is practiced all over India. *Marma* is one of the important structures. The earliest mention of the word *Marma* is found in the *Atharvaveda*. The kings and warriors knew *Marma* during the Vedic period. It was used in warfare to hit and kill their opponents to the utmost extent possible. As a result, it's safe to suppose that this science was used in both warfare and surgery. The understanding of *marma* is the only extant unequivocal evidence of ancient Indian medical professionals' extensive grasp of anatomy. *Marma* refers to the seat of *vayu* or *prana*. 107 vulnerable critical places on the body's surface

have been identified as *marmas* by ancient *acharyas*. These *marma* points are the seats of *prana*. If trauma is inflicted on these *marma* points, the *prana* is disturbed producing disease leading to deformity or death¹. *Marma* Therapy is becoming very popular in the country and abroad and it is also helpful in keeping you physically and mentally away from diseases. *Marma* therapy is an *Ayurvedic* therapy with a history of 5000 years².

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The literary material related to *marma* therapy has been collected from different *sthanas* (parts) of *Ayurvedic* textbooks and modern

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medical books, critically reviewed and correlated with modern terms.

MARMA

The term *marma* is derived from the Sanskrit term *Mring marane* or *Mru prana tyage*. That which causes death or death-like similar miseries³. According to *Dalhana* the commentator of *Susruthasamhitha*, *marma* is that which kills⁴. The *Astangasangraha*, *Vaghbata* describes the *marma* as that particular part of the body that is fatally vulnerable to injury⁵. According to *Charaka*, the severity of pain on *marmasthana* will be greater than on other parts of the body. This is due to the presence of the *chetana* or *prana*⁶. *Susrutha* defines *marma* as a collection of anatomical structures that include *mamsa* (muscle), *sira* (blood vessels), *snayu* (ligaments and 14 nerves), *asthi* (bone), and *sandhi* (joints)⁷. In another context, *soma*, *marutha*, *teja*, *satwa*, *rajas*, and *tamas* are believed to be the six key elements that make up *marmas*. *Marmasthanas* are the seat of *soma* (*sleshma*), *marutha* (*vata*), *teja* (*pitta*), and the three mental forces - *rajas*, *tamas*, and *satwa*. Other than these the supreme power in these places, the *prana* circulates more, and hence termed as *marma*⁸. When injured the *doshas* get vitiated in the surrounding areas of the *marma*. This aggravated *dosha*, which is primarily *vata*, causes significant discomfort in the body as well as a blockage of free *prana* and *vyana vayu* movement. This *vyana vayu* controls the free

flow of nutrients to all of the body's tissues. When this gets blocked all the systems suffer due to the lack of nutrition and free of *prana*⁹.

IMPORTANCE OF MARMA

The knowledge of *marma* is extremely important in *Ayurveda*. The diseases that afflicted these places were thought to have an extremely poor prognosis. Furthermore, diseases that do not affect the *marmapradesha* are usually simple to treat. *Susrutha* believes that the sickness that affects the *marmasthana* is more difficult to treat. It can be cured with much strenuous effort. *Marmasashtra* was enumerated for the benefit of patients who undergo surgery. The surgeons are advised not to disturb any *marma* or rather, protect even the neighborhood *marmasthana* from blunt or sharp instruments and also the *kshara* (caustics) or *agni* (cattery) for the successful completion of surgery. If any of the instruments damage these *marmasthanas*, the patient will most likely die or, if he lives, will be disfigured. Proper knowledge of the structure, dimension, lesion or injury, and location contribute much to the perception and practice of *Salyatantra*¹⁰. As a result, medical authorities have described the *marma*, which can be summarized as follows:

- The knowledge of the *marmas* is so intertwined with *Salyatantra* that it is considered half of it.
- They are the conglomerating point of the five elements *prithvi*, *jala*, *teja* or six structures, *mamsa*, *sira*, *snayu*.
- It is described to know the signs and symptoms produced by any injury on this.

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- During surgery, these structures, and their surroundings should be avoided at all costs.

MARMA CHIKITSA

Marma therapy is similar to realising your power. *Marma* healing is the body's self-healing power. Peace and self-control come first from the healing of the *marma* and there is a feeling of happiness. There are permanent positions in distinct parts of the body for every component and part of the body. For every organ ailment, pressing and pressing the relevant *marma* repeatedly at the pace of 0.8 seconds provides immediate relief. *Marma* therapy helps relieve pain in the neck, back, waist, and legs¹¹.

Marma Science is the oldest medical system in the world. While the history of other medical practices is believed to range from a few hundred years to thousands of years, the medical system cannot be tied to a time block. *Tantra* (107 *marmasthana*), which are activated by *marma* therapy, are available in this human body only from the developmental order of humans. All medical practices have been developed by humans, but *marma* healing is a nature / God-given healing method. Hence its results cannot be compared with other medical methods. Many diseases that are incurable by any other method can be easily treated with *marma* disease¹².

BENEFITS OF MARMA THERAPY

Application of *marma* massage on *marma* points harmonizes the three biological humors i.e. *vata*, *pitta*, and *kapha*. Thus, it is the direct way of healing to harmonize the *prana* in the body and is helpful in a variety of disorders. During *marma*

therapy, very mild stimulation is done at the points of the body. By doing this, the blockage of *marma* points opens and this gives you relaxation physically and mentally. It is a powerful process and a therapy that helps to open the energy of these fragile parts of our body. If the points are pressed carefully on the skin, they can prove to be very positive for us¹³.

Marma therapy is beneficial for our bodies in many ways. It works physically, mentally, and spiritually in our bodies. It is considered to be very good for our body because it gives us the following benefits^{14,15}:

- Relieves chronic pain of the body.
- Detoxification of body in every way.
- Improves immunity, digestion, respiratory and neural health.
- Makes skin healthy
- Helps in balancing body temperature and *dosha*.
- Some neurochemicals, such as serotonin, help to release melatonin, which helps feel relaxed.
- One can get relief from heart, diabetes, blood pressure, obesity, migraine, cervical, paralysis, bone pain, and rheumatic diseases through heartburn.

DISCUSSION

Marma therapy is thousands of years old *Vedic* medical practice. At that time, *marma* therapy was used for the promotion of health and healing of diseases. Due to the highly effective and meditative effects of unintentional *marma* therapy, this method was replaced by *Ayurvedic*

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medicine, this method was traditionally taught as secret lore by medical practitioners. In the absence of extensive publicity and teaching, this science often disappeared. Due to being extremely obedient to using the right form and method, the knowledge of *marma* healing was kept unpublished for thousands of years. Many sages used it for their public interest, known from their practice and knowledge¹⁶. To keep this knowledge a secret in ancient times, before knowing it, it is necessary to know about *marma*. According to the medical definition, '*Marayantimirmani*' means that specific parts of the body, which are likely to die due to injury, are called *marmas*. It simply means that this part of the body is very important, and is full of life-giving energy. Trauma can be the cause of death. *Prana* is especially inhabited at these places. Therefore, these places should be vigorously guarded¹⁷.

The life energy *prana*, according to another Indian philosophy, governs the human body. *Ida* and *Pingala* are two dynamically opposing yet harmonizing forces that makeup *prana*. *Pingala* represents the male or positive energy, whereas *Ida* represents the female or negative energy. The *Ida* and *Pingala* are perfectly balanced in a healthy state. Disease results from an imbalance between the two. This balance is restored with correct therapy, resulting in cure¹⁸.

There are two currently favoured explanations as to the mode of action.

1. Western medical science believes that when pressure is applied to certain spots, chemical

compounds and neurotransmitters (such as endorphins and enkephalin) are released, which send nerve impulses to the brain, causing the intended effect. Endorphin is a protein molecule that has potent anti-pain properties. It is released by many parts of the nervous system and is also related to the glandular or endocrine system hence the name Neuroendocrine.

2. The pain-gate control theory Nerve fibres resemble a tangle of wires of varying widths, some thick and others tiny. Pain is transmitted through thin strands, while touch is transmitted through thick fibres. Experiments have shown that increasing the impulse transmission in the thick fibres selectively limits conduction in the thin fibres by closing a gate made up of specific nerve cells in the spinal cord.

3. Other Theories-It has been shown that the very small electrical changes that occur at the *marma* point are capable of creating consequences significantly greater than the minuscule electrical change at the point that triggers these effects. This is a brand-new field of study. These *marma* spots are now recognised to have low skin resistance, meaning they conduct electricity better than the surrounding areas. With the help of a highly developed camera to examine halo, it is being investigated whether a halo exists above these *marma* sites. According to preliminary research, this halo is made up of charged particles known as ions. In some cases, they are predominantly negative and some are predominantly positive^{19,20}.

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CONCLUSION

Marma therapy immediately cures diseases in a short period of time by being executive and always fruitful. The need is for the promotion and propagation of *marma* science and *marma* medicine so that more and more people can take advantage of this medical system. By any other method, many incurable diseases can be easily treated by *marma* therapy. *Marma* healing is a divine science, not a miracle. *Marma* therapy can be called the world's most accessible, inexpensive, universal, free, and successful medical system.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST-nil

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