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# Study of *Marma* in Extremities with special reference to *Varma (Siddha)* Therapy

Author: Geetha Kumar<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Rachana Shareer, Dr. Vasantparikh Ayurvedic College, Vadnagar, Gujarat, India

## ABSTRACT

The *Marmas* are the places where *soma* (*kapha*), *maruta* (*vāyu*) and *tejas* (*pitta*) representing three *doṣa* the three *Gunas*, *rajas*, *satva* and *tamas*, and the *bhūtātma* resides. According to *Siddha* system *Varma* is vital life energy points located in body and identified as 108 by *siddhar*. *Varmam* is the condition in which the blockage of vital energy in the body to produce the disease. This blockage occurs due to external injury, psychological stress and their effects through *doṣā*. In the *siddha* system of medicine *varmam* points has not only explained for traumatic effect but therapeutically the stimulation of surrounding *Varma* point as a treatment can restore the affected health. The study symbiotically put forward the knowledge of *marma*, *marmabhighatalakshana* from ayurvedic *marma* with therapeutic knowledge of *siddha* *varma* therapy to cure certain diseases.

**Key Words** *Marma*, *Vaikalyakara*, *Siddha Varma*, *Manipulation Technique*

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## INTRODUCTION

The word *Marma* denotes a point of vital importance in the body, a mortal, a vulnerable point or a sensitive point where vital force or life is situated. Further, it is a conglomeration of various structures like *Mamsa*, *Sira*, *Snayu*, *Asthi*, *Sandhi*. *Marma*<sup>1</sup>.

According to *varma* theory there are points in a body which are vital energy storing points through which vital energy is transmitted to various parts of the body and all the functions of the body are mediated. Totally 108 *varma* points are mentioned and these are used to stimulate energy. Heal the disease and improve the immune system. *Varma kkalai* which took birth

as a method of defence developed into a martial art used for attacking enemies. This science is useful in curing disease of Nervous system including paralytic disorders and also many other chronic diseases like Arthritis, Skeletal and Muscular disorders.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To understand the *marma* in extremity with its anatomical location and its injury effect.
- To understand the *siddha varmam* therapy .
- To apply the *siddha varma* therapy in *marma sthana*

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

Susrthasamhitha with its commentary related with marma and siddha literature to understand the varmam therapy, related journals, modern anatomy book text and web were referred for review of literature

LITERATURE REVIEW

*Suśruta* has classified these *Marma* points into various categories depending upon the period of fatality (Table 1 and 2).

**Table 1** Marmas and the Period of Fatality<sup>2</sup>

S.No	Type of Marma	Period of fatality	Symptoms of injury
1	<i>Sadyah Prāṇahara Marma</i>	One week	Inability to perceive senses, mental disorders and feeling of severe pain.
2	<i>Kālāntara Prāṇahara Marma</i>	15 days to one month	Depletion of tissue and death occurs due to severe pain and depletion of tissues.
3	<i>Viśalaghna Marma</i>	May kill after removal of shalya or foreign body	Injured patient survives till the removal of <i>śalya</i> or foreign body from the wound.
4	<i>Vaikalyakara Marma</i>	Disability, May kill due to severe trauma.	severe pain and disability
5	<i>Rujākara Marma</i>	No fatality but acute pain	Acute pain

**Table 2** Classification According To Sadanga Śārīra<sup>3</sup>

śākhāgata marma		Madhyaśārīra	Ūrdhavajatrugata
<i>Bāhu marma</i> (11×2=22)	<i>Sakthi marma</i> (11×2=22)	<i>Udara-Uras</i> (12)	<i>śiras &amp; Grīva</i> (37)
<i>Kṣipra-2</i>	<i>Kṣipra-2</i>	<i>Guda-1</i>	<i>Dhamāni-4</i>
<i>Talahṛdaya-2</i>	<i>Talahṛdaya-2</i>	<i>Vasti-1</i>	<i>Mātrukā-8</i>
<i>Kūrca-2</i>	<i>Kūrca -2</i>	<i>Nābhi-1</i>	<i>Krukatikā-2</i>
<i>Kūrcaśir-2</i>	<i>Kūrcaśir -2</i>	<i>Hṛdayam-1</i>	<i>Vidhuram-2</i>
<i>Mañibandha-2</i>	<i>Gulpha-2</i>	<i>Sihānamūlam-2</i>	<i>Phana-2</i>
<i>Indravasti-2</i>	<i>Indravasti-2</i>	<i>Stanarohitā-2</i>	<i>Apānga-2</i>
<i>Kūrpara-2</i>	<i>Jānu-2</i>	<i>Apalāpam-2</i>	<i>Āvarta-2</i>
<i>Āni-2</i>	<i>Āni-2</i>	<i>Āpastambam-2</i>	<i>Utksepa-2</i>
<i>Ūrvi-2</i>	<i>Ūrvi-2</i>		<i>śankha-2</i>
<i>Lohitākṣa-2</i>	<i>Lohitākṣa-2</i>		<i>Sthapāni-1</i>
<i>Kakṣadhar-2</i>	<i>Vitapa-2</i>		<i>Sīmānta-5</i>
			<i>Śṛṅgātaka-4</i>
			<i>Adhipati-1</i>

There are 44 marma in extremities, each extremity is having 11 marma, injury occurring to these marma causes deformity. It will not have any immediate life threatening effect unless there is massive destruction of blood vessels, so prone treatment may avoid life threatening situation. Most of the marma come under the prognostic classification *vaikalyakara marma*.<sup>4</sup>

1. *Kūrca Marma* situated above *kṣipra Marma* injury produces reeling and tremor.
2. *Gulpha-* situated in ankle region, injury produces pain and limping.
3. *Jānu Marma* – situated in knee joint injury produces limping.

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4. *ĀniMarma* – situated in two fingers above knee joint injury produces severe swelling and stiffness.

5. *ŪrviMarma* - situated in the middle of the thigh injury leads to waisting of the muscle.

6. *Lohitākṣa* - situated at the root of the limb injury produces palsy or atrophy.

7. *Vitapa Marma* – situated between pelvis and scrotum injury produces causes infertility.

**Vaikalyakara Marma<sup>5</sup>**: Which produce deformity due to predominance of saumya (AP Maha *Bhūta* in nature) *Soma*, water supports life by its stability and cold properties. Very serious injury at this marma points cause death due to involvement of arteries and veins.

The post traumatic effect of *Vaikalyakaramarma* are leads to permanent loss of function, due to involvement of anatomical structure like soft tissue such as neurovascular bundles, muscles, skin fascia.

### Classification of siddhavarmanas<sup>6</sup>

The ' *varmakannādi-500*' mentions about *varma* points of the body from head to toe

1. *Varmapoints* from head to neck... 25
2. *Varmapoints* from neck to umbilicus... 45
3. *Varma* points from umbilicus to anal orifices... 09
4. *Varmapoints* in hand..... 14
5. *Varmapoints* in leg..... 15

In another book '*ODIVU MURIVU*' Sara *Sutthiram-1200*, *varmam* has classified in to two types

1. *Paduvarmangal*... 12
2. *Thoduvarmangal*... 96

Total... 108

### **Varmamenergy<sup>7</sup>**

*Varma* energy is the foundation of *varmam* medical system. *Varma* energy rapidly rotate and circulates in the body just like blood flows and breath circulates in the human body.

*Siddha* used *varmam* as a general word to cover ' *vasi*', vital air and breathe. *Varma* is an extremely subtle energy that operates inside the body. The *siddha* studied this *varmam* energy in its various aspects.

1. The energy that spreads from pineal gland to the whole body-*Manośakti*
2. The energy that spreads from surface area of brain to various parts of the body-*Peroliśakti* or energy of supreme bliss
3. The energy from the *mooladharam* and spreads throughout the body-*Arulshakthi* or energy of Grace
4. The energy derived from food consumed - *kāyaśakti*
5. The collective energy created by the force of all the above-*Gandhaśakti* or Magnetic energy

In the above manner *siddhas* have discovered more than 20 kinds of bodily energy. The *Siddhas* cured diseases and prevented them in the long run by using these *varma* energies.

### **METHODS OF STIMULATION<sup>8</sup>**

The method of stimulating the *varmam* points is called '*KaibāgamSeibāgam*'. *Kaibāgam* is the technique of selecting particular fingers to stimulate a *varmam* point, for example, touching the point using the tip of the three middle fingers ( *kavuli Kālam*) is *Kaibāgam*. The stimulation or

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the application method is *Seibāgam*. The *Kaibāgam* varies based on the dimensions of the *varmam* points.

There are 12 methods of stimulation of varma points:

01. *Anukkal*\_ gentle vibration
02. *Asaitthal* \_ Mild vibration
03. *Pidiththal* \_clenching the *varmam* point along with the muscle
04. *Nazhukkal*\_ slipping pinch
05. *Thattal*\_ Mild Tapping on the *varmam* point
06. *Thadaval* \_gentle stroking with fingers
07. *Oondral* \_ prssing the *varmam* point with a single finger.

08. *Amarthal* \_Balancing the energy of the points in the bone joints

09. *Padhukkal*\_ placing the energy on the *varmam* point

10. *Karakkal*\_Transferring energy from one point to the other

11. *Pinnal* (braiding) \_strengthening one nerve as that of the other

12. *Yeanthal* \_ touching and lifting the *varmam* point

All these 12 methods can be executed on a *varmam* point. The *siddhas* had propounded that the application of these 12 techniques on a single *varmam* point is capable of curing different diseases (Table 3).

**Table 3** Comparative Study of Vaikalyakara Marma with Siddha System of Varma

S.NO	MARMA	VARMA	MODERN COREELATION	Significance in ayurveda	Siddha-Significance in treatment
1.	<i>Kūrca</i> (upper extyrimity)	<i>Mozi piragalvarma kavuli kalam thatchinaikalam ullankaivelli Marma</i>	Carpal, meta Carpal, inter Carpal ligament	Injury produces shivering and deformity of extrimity	Gives energy to the fingers Improves memory
2	<i>Kūrca</i> (lower extrimity)	<i>Viruthi kalam, paddankal varmaullankalvellaivarma</i>	Tarsal, metatarsal, intertarsal ligament	Injury produces shivering deformity of lower extremity.	Regulates blood supply to the lower limb, cures nervous disorders, regulate body heat
3	<i>Mānibandha</i> (wrist)	<i>Mañibandha, choodathrai, theethavarma</i>	Wrist joint	Pain, stiffness and deformity of joint	Strengthens the forearm and finger
4	<i>Gulpha</i> (ankle)	<i>Kanpugaichalvarma uppukutirvarma</i>	Ankle or talocrural joint	Pain, rigidity or limping of lower extremity	Strengthens upper and lower limb reduces heat in the eyes
5	<i>Kūrpara</i> (elbow)	<i>Kaimootuvarma</i>	Elbow joint	Restricted movement	Manages all disorder of the elbow joint
6	<i>Jānu</i>	<i>Kallmuttuvarma</i>	Knee joint	Limping	Relieves knee related pain
7	<i>Āni</i> (upper extrimity)	<i>Chavvuvarma</i>	Tendon of triceps	Sweeling, stiffness of upper extremity	Relieves all kind of painin upper extremity
8	<i>Āni</i> (lower extremity)	<i>Ulthodaivarma</i>	Tendon of	Swelling	Reduces pain in the

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			quadriceps	stiffness of lower extremity	lower limb, and regulates blood flow
9	Bahvi(upper extrimity)	Aamai kalam	Brachial vessels	Blood loss, and muscular atrophy	
10	Ūrvi (lower extrimity)	Aamai kalam	Femoral vessel	Blood loss,muscular atrophy	Strengthens the thigh
11	Lohitakṣa(upperextrimity)	Kai chulluku	Axillary vessels and brachial plexus	Paralysis, muscular atrophy	Reduces the fatigue in the upper limb
13	KakṣadharaMarma	Pirathari Marma, yanthi Marma	Brachial plexus	paralysis	Strengthens the lower limb and improves health condition, regulates body temperature and cures ear diseases

DISCUSSION

This is a matter of observation that most of the *Marmas* that are situated in the extremities come under the classification of *vaikalyakara* (deformity). The *Vaikalyakara Marma* has the ‘*AP*’mahabhuta in it. So injury to this marma will not cause any fatal effect as it has ‘*soma guna*’ which will sustain life but there will be disability. They are not fatal, even though there is involvement of vessels. It is due to specific anatomy of the region. The structure involved here is soft tissue such as neurovascular bundles, muscles, skin fascia. The fracture of bone is also an emergency for the purpose of *vaikalyata and ruja.s*. The observation of trauma described in modern surgery has been highlighted in *Suśruta* for the first time and holds such injuries less significance of vital structure in head neck and trunk.

The *siddha varmas* are divided in two types-*padu varma* and *thodu varma*. The place where energy is blocked is called *paduvarma*. They are

12 in number. Points where energy has to struggle to get through are called as *thodu varmam* they 96 in number. Therefore total 108 *varma* according to *siddha* system. Each *padu varmam* is the junction of *thodu varmam* sites. *Paduvarmams* are nothing but meridians through the entire body.

*Siddha* system of medicine says *varma* is said to be the blockage of vital energy in the body. This blockage may be caused due to external injuries or psychological stress or due to the effect of *doshas*.The changes occurring in the body on being hit at some specific points in the body directly or indirectly with a particular force is called *varmam*. The changes occurring in the body vary with the force of hitting time or duration and the physical strength of victim. Pain swelling, bleeding ,muscle spasam of limbs, loss of function of the organs, vomiting, protrusion of the tongue, heraniation of the testicles, protruded eye ball, breathlessness, fainting and death may occur. Though *varma* text mentions the existence

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of 800 *varmapoints* in the body, among them 108 *varma* points serve as the basis of art of *vamams*. Among them *paduvarmas* are the points which are connected with the nerves of the brain directly and indirectly and aid in alleviating brain related disorder. All the mentioned methodologies are performed by stimulation of *varma* point that are found on the surface of the body

The method of stimulating the *varmam* points is called ‘*KaibāgamSeibāgam*’. *Kaibāgam* is the technique of fingers to stimulate a *varmam* point. For example, touching the point kavuli *Kālam* using the tip of the three middle fingers is *Kaibāgam*. The stimulation or the application method is *Seibāgam*. The *Kaibāgam* varies based on the dimensions of the *varmam* points. The method of stimulation are gentle vibration, Mild vibration, clenching the *varmam* point along with the muscle, slipping pinch, Mild Tapping on the *varmam* point, gentle stroking with fingers pressing the *varmam* point with a single finger, Balancing the energy of the points in the bone joints, placing the energy on the *varmam* point, Transferring energy from one point to the other, strengthening one nerve as that of the other, touching and lifting the *varmam* point. All these 12 methods can be executed on a *varmam* point. The *siddhas* had propounded that the application of these 12 techniques on a *varmam* point is capable of curing various diseases.

## CONCLUSION

Marma is the anatomical point where six structure collectively present which is the location of prana, where severe injury produces deformity, loss of movement, even some time death. It is the weak vital point where energy (life) present.

The basic principle of *siddha varma* medical system is to regularize *varmam* energy and there by safeguard the body and life by different types of external internal treatment. The energy filled *siddha Varma* points perform the fundamental functions receiving and supplying energy to the body.. When these functions are disrupted, the body succumbs to diseases. Proper stimulation of these points escalates the efficiency of these functions and helps the body become hale and healthy. These stimulation methods can be successfully used to treat the injured marma in the extrimities which will be come under the classification of *Vaikalyakara (deformity)*. *Āyurvedic* principle of *Marma Shastra* and principle of treatment of *Siddha Varma* medicine are similar, in *Āyurveda* the explanation of marma based on more in prognostic way of injury while in *Siddha* medicine the points of *varma* explanation is based on treatment methodologies. If knowledge of both medicinal systems regarding *Marma* and *Varma* are shared together efficacy of the treatment of traumatic chronic painful condition will be improved.

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