

Pain Management through *Marma Chikitsa* in *Katigraha*

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Abstract

Introduction: *Ayurveda* as science of life and spiritualism provides many ways of healthy living and focused towards the prevention and treatment of diseases. *Ayurveda* presented the concepts regarding anatomical and physiological aspect of body. *Marma* is one of the subject in *Ayurveda* and it is considered that places in the body where *Prana* exist. Various texts of *Ayurveda* mentioned 107 *Marma* points based on anatomical positions and different structures around them. *Marma* points in the body mainly built up by groups of muscles, ligaments, vessels, tendons and bones, etc. *Marma* points are related with *Tridosha*, *Bhutatma* and *Triguna* therefore any injury and trauma to the *Marma* can lead painful manifestations which may be lethal sometimes. In *Ayurveda*, the pain is correlated with *Vedana /Shula*. *Katigraha* mentioned in *Ayurveda* which is painful and affects the normal routine life of an individual. **Aim and objectives:** To study the importance of *Marma chikitsa* in management of pain occurs in *Katigraha*. **Material and Methods:** For conceptual study material was collected from Ayurvedic classical literature and modern texts, previous research papers and articles. **Result:** Stimulation of *Katiktarana* and *Kukundara Marma* points induces the flow of *Prana* and vital energy which can result in relief of pain in *Katigraha* and entering in a state of healthy body, mind and spirit. **Discussion:** *Marma chikitsa* is the best technique for prevention and management of pain in various disorders.

KEY WORDS: *Marma Chikitsa, Katigraha, Pain*

Introduction

Ayurveda described various principles related to the anatomical and physiological aspects of human body. The concept of *Marma* is one such principle of *Ayurveda* theories which resembles some vital and delicate points of body. As per *Ayurveda* the *Marma* can be described as a junction of *Mamsa, Sira, Snayu, Asthi* and *Sandhi*, etc. The literature suggests that *Vata, Pitta* and *Kapha* elements meet at this junction therefore *Marma* points are responsible for physiological as well as pathological events. The deep-seated *Marma* are physio-anatomical structures having specific dimensions, depth and clinical utility. There are numerous scattered references to *Marma* in vedic and epic sources which certifies that early fighters of south-Asia practiced the knowledge of attacking and defending vital points by *Kalaripayattu* which is oldest form of martial art in south India.¹

In our classics, there are 80 types of *Vataja Nanatmaj Vyadhis* and *Katigraha* is one among them.² The word *Katigraha* having pain and restricted movements or stiffness. Low back pain is the leading cause of disability. Therefore, this condition remains a diagnostic and therapeutic challenge for the clinician as well as

rheumatologist.³ Low back pain is the major work related musculoskeletal disorder among the IT professionals in India.⁴

In *Ayurveda*, there is no specific medicine for any kind of pain. Management of pain depends upon the causative factor or *Doshika* predominance responsible for the pain. In modern medicine pain treatment are several analgesics, anti-inflammatory, antipyretic drugs, chemo trypsin and serratiopeptidase like chemicals and opioids are used, but there is no universal drug for all kinds of pain till today.⁵

Instant pain relief is the motive of *Marma Chikitsa*. Stimulation of *Marma* can produce analgesia by secreting several prostaglandin inhibitors, endorphins, interferon and other opioid like substances which are a hundred times more potent than opium. Instant pain relief by *Marma* therapy is possible within no time.⁶

Aims and Objectives

- To explore the importance of *Marma chikitsa* in the management of pain in *Katigraha*.

Material and Methods:

It is a conceptual study. The material was collected from the classical Ayurvedic literature, modern text and various research papers etc.

Review of Literature

Marma

Vyutpatti of word *Marma* –

Meaning of *Marma* is explained as *Sandhistanam* or *Jeevasthanam*.⁷ The term *marma* derived from ‘*Mru*’ *dhatu* meaning ‘death’.⁸ The vital points of the body causing death after infliction called ‘*Marma*’.⁹

Definition of *Marma* –

Marma is defined as the anatomical structure where *Mamsa* (muscle), *Sira* (vessels), *Snayu* (ligaments), *Asthi* (bones), and *Sandhi* (articulation) are assembled and form a complex structure, which is also the site of *Prana*.¹⁰

Agni, Soma, Vayu, Satwa, Rajah, Tamah, Bhuthatma and *Panchendriyas* are called *Pranas*.¹¹

In *Ashtanga Hridaya*, *Acharya Vagbhata* has defined *Marma* as the site where *Mamsa, Sira, Snayu, Asthi, Sandhi* and *Dhamani* confluence. The body part that shows uncharacteristic pulsation with severe pain after infliction is called *Marma*.¹²

Acharya Sushruta described 107 *Marmas* in *Sushruta Samhita* and same is followed by *Ashtanga Sangraha* and *Ashtanga Hridaya*. *Marmas* are classified according to location, structure, prognosis and measurement.¹³ The severity of damage caused to *marma* depends upon the force of injury and type of *marma* injured.¹⁴

Shula (Pain)

Acharya Charaka has opined that *Marma* is the site of *Chetana*, and hence the sense of pain will be more in this region compared to other parts of the body.¹⁵

Marmas are considered as half of the surgery subject as any injury to *Marmas* can prove to be fatal so if the patient is promptly treated by the skilled doctor even though the patient will suffer from excessive pain.¹⁶

In *Susruta Samhita*, *Maharshi Susruta* has mentioned that the commonest cause of pain is *Vata*.¹⁷ In all cases of *Vatika* predominance, the chances of pain are quite common along with other clinical presentations of *Vatika* anomalies. In a normal state, the *Vata* is responsible for the activation of several functions of different systems.¹⁸

Katigraha

In “*Shabdikalpadruma*” the word meaning of “*Kati*” is “*Katyate Vastradina Aavriyate*”, the part of the body which is covered with clothes. “*Graha*” means holding. It is originated from dhatu “*Graha Upadane*”, one which gives support.¹⁹

Katigraha is a *Vataja Nanatmaja Vyadhi* described by *Acharya Sharangadhara*.²⁰ He has explained it as ‘*Katisthambhana Vedana Vishesha*’ a condition marked by pain and stiffness in the *Kati pradasha* (Pelvic region). The term *Katigraha* is explained by *Acharya Sodhala* in *Gadanigraha Vatavyadhiadhikara* as a condition characterised by the vitiated *Vata* either *Shuddha* or with *Ama*, taking ashraaya in the *Katipradesha* causing *Ruja* and *Graham* in the area.²¹ The description of *Katigraha* with its etiological factors, symptoms, and treatment is found in *Bhavaprakasha Amvatadhikara*.²²

So it is concluded that *Katigraha* is a condition characterized by *Shula* and restricted movements of *Kati* caused by *Vata*. None of the *Brihatrayees* have explained *Katigraha* as a separate disease but have considered it as a symptom in various diseases such as *Arshas*, *Ashmari*, *Bhagandara*, *Ajeerna*, *Kshataksheena*, *Vatajwara* and some other diseases.

Marma Chikitsa

Marma chikitsa can be explained as way of stimulating specific vital points of the body to enhance the ‘Pranic energy’. It can be defined as the technique to stimulate specific vital points of the body in certain way at a critical moment of time for purpose of healing.²³

Marma chikitsa is oldest treasure of Indian surgery from Vedic period. During Vedic period the knowledge of *Marma* was known to the emperors and warriors. The concept of practical use of *Marma* was famous in those days to achieve the maximum effect when fighting with enemies during war.²⁴

The knowledge of *Marma* during war can be traced to Saraswati culture or Indus valley civilization, when weapons were used to target vital points on body.²⁵

Skill of human being lies mainly in his efficiency to perform various actions with his hand. *Acharya Susruta* has mentioned “*Hastameva pradhaana-tamam yantranam*”, which means human hand is the most important

instrument.²⁶ The actual therapy consisting of application of pressure with thumb or fingers over the *Marma* points.²⁷

Manipulation of following *Marmas* are essential for the management of pain in *Katigraha*,²⁸

1. *Katikataruna*

2. *Kukundara*

Table:- Details of these *Marmas* are given in following table.²⁹

NAME OF MARMA	SHADANG ANUSARA	RACHANA ANUSARA	PARINAM ANUSARA	PRAMANA	PANCHMAHABHUTA PREDOMINANCE	SANKHYA
<i>Katika taruna</i>	<i>Prushthagata</i>	<i>Asthi</i>	<i>Kalantar pranahara</i>	½ Angula	<i>Agni and Jala Mahabhuta</i>	2
<i>Kukundara</i>	<i>Prushthagata</i>	<i>Sandhi</i>	<i>Vaikalyakar a marma,</i>	½ Angula	<i>Vayu Mahabhuta</i>	2

Katikataruna Marma – Site is 2 and ½ inch downwards and inwards from the greater trochanter of the femur, the line joining the greater trochanter with ischial tuberosity, the greater sciatic notch. Structures present may be terminal branch of common iliac artery, internal iliac vessels, sacral plexus of nerves, sacroiliac ligament. Trauma of this *Marma* causes rigidity of back and lower limb due to compromise of its vascular supply, haemorrhage, anaemia and death.³⁰

Kukundara Marma - Site on both side of vertebral column at sacroiliac joint. Structures around it are gluteus maximus muscle, superior gluteal vessels and nerve, inferior gluteal vessels and nerve, inferior pudendal artery and vein, sciatic nerve. Trauma on this *Marma* will cause sensory and motor function loss of lower half of body e.g. Paraplegia, foot drop.³¹

Technique of Marma Therapy³²

Marma chikitsa is an uncomplicated and easy-to-learn technique of regaining the vital energy. The practitioner must remain steady, quiet and mentally alert during this practice.

➤ Inclusion criteria

- Patient having loss of sensation and pain in lower back region with stiffness
- Patients irrespective of gender
- Age 18-70 years
- Patient irrespective of religion and socioeconomic status

➤ **Exclusion criteria**

- Pregnancy
- Infective, inflammatory and neoplastic condition of spine
- Any surgical intervention
- Metabolic and congenital abnormalities
- Lumber stenosis
- Spinal fracture and deformities

Method of application of therapy:

Pre therapy exercises:

It comprises of the following steps

1. Total relaxation of body.
2. Deep breathing exercise.
3. Perception of body as whole.
4. Perception of psychic centres.
5. Perception of Marma points.

Actual therapy:

Gentle massage with thumb and fingers over the *Marma* points.

- Pressure - Depend upon the nature of Marma
- Stimulation time - 0.8sec/ stimuli
- Time – 1 time per day
- Repetition - 15 to 18 times in single sitting.

1. *Katikataruna Marma:*

- Position of patient: Prone Position
- Site of Stimulation: The line joining the greater trochanter of femur with ischial tuberosity, the greater sciatic notch.
- Method of stimulation: Apply pressure with the help of both thumb at the site of *Katikataruna marma* in ascending manner on either side simultaneously.

2. *Kukundara Marma:*

- Position of patient: Prone Position
- Site of Stimulation: Sacroiliac joint
- Method of stimulation: Apply pressure with the help of both thumb at the site of *Kukundara marma* in ascending manner on either side simultaneously.

Discussion

Marma Chikitsa works on the neuro-endocrine system. While giving pressure or stimulation over these points, certain chemical substance and neurotransmitters are released like endorphins and enkephalin which send nerve impulse to brain causing the desired effect. Another theory states that the very small electrical changes that occur at *Marma* points is found to be capable of producing an effect responsible for triggering the desired effect.

Stimulation of *Katikataruna* marma and *Kukundara marma* will release the muscle spasm of gluteus maximus, stimulate the nerves of sacral plexus and sciatic nerve. The toxins that are settled in the nerve fibre or myelinated sheath and interrupting the conductivity of the nerve impulse are drained out by exertion of physical pressure on these nerve endings.

Marma treatment will stimulate the biochemistry and energy channels of the body and release some hormones and neurochemicals which will heal the deformity along with effect on anatomical structures like nerves, ligaments, joints, vessels and bones.

Conclusion

From this above study it can be concluded that by stimulating *Katikataruna* and *Kukundara marma* points will be helpful in reducing the pain in the condition of *Katigraha*. Because above *Marmas* are interlinked with each other by neural pathways. So, the *Marma Chikitsa* may be effective in *Katigraha*.

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