



Importance of Marma Therapy in Surgical Care

Dr. Abhijit Sadanand Shiralkar¹, Dr. Archana Abhijit Shiralkar²

¹Assistant professor, Dept. of Shalyatantra, Yashwant Ayurvedic Medical College & Research Centre
Kodoli

²Associate Professor, Dept. of Rognidan Avum Vikriti Vidnyan, Yashwant Ayurvedic Medical College &
Research Centre Kodoli

ABSTRACT: Marma therapy is the original point system of healing in the body. “ Marma” is one of the unique and important topics that plays an important role in surgery. Hence it is rightly called as Shalya Vishayardha. Marma plays significant clinical role and may be correlated to the Acupressure / Acupuncture. Marma are the critical points of body associated with different organs and nerves. Ayurveda describe use of Marma therapy for various diseases and identification of Marma point thus these points acts as a physiological junctions. Vaidya Sushruta described ‘the locations of the Marma points, as well as how they influence prana. He stated that it is important for the surgeon to have knowledge of these points for the purpose of avoiding them, so as to cut into them could result in a catastrophic outcome. This article summarizes various perspective of Marma and their clinical importance as per Ayurveda.

KEY WORDS: Marma, Shalya Tantra, Marma Therapy, Acupressure, Acupuncture, Vital points.

INTRODUCTION

Marma therapy is an ancient and dynamic healing technique of Ayurveda that is still relevant in modern medicinal practice. It focuses on vital energy points in the body, known as marma points. The therapy involves stimulating specific marma points on the body to promote healing and balance the body’s energy. Ayurveda is widely known to be a mind-body healing system, and the healing occurs much faster if the mind energy supports the physical treatment. Marma are the specific energy points which- are connected through the energy channels to the vital organs of the body. But the energy channels between the mind and body is left unaddressed. Marma plays most effective and powerful role in bringing the mind and body together. Marma therapy directs the mind energy to the diseased part of the body by strengthening the bridge between the mind and the body. This strengthening of the energy channels accelerates the healing. Sushruta, the pioneer of the surgical school of Indian system of medicine has vividly described marma in his classical text sushruta samhita. The ‘Marma Sharir’ section in the sushruta samhita is one of the important comprehensive guide on surgico-anatomical vital points in the human body.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Marma defination

Marma point is defined as an anatomical site of conglomeration of muscles, veins, ligaments, bones and and joints where prana is specially associated^[1].It is not necessary that, all the structures must be present collectively at the site of marma.

Marma are also the sites where not only Tridosha (vaat, pitta and kapha) are present, but their subtle forms prana, ojas and Tejas are also present with satva, Rajas and Tamas^[2]. Hence this is specified area on the body, which has relation through pranic channel Acharya Dalhan, the commentor of sushrut samhita stated the definition of marma as Maryantiitimarmanyuchyate means marma are specific vital areas on the body and a sort of injury to these areas can lead to death.

Acharya Sushruta made it clear that, if marma are injured, they don't always result into death, but can cause various diseases which are difficult to cure and may lead to debility. This naturally indicates that all vital points always don't lead to death when injured. Such points may be used as a therapeutic points, where stimulation to these points may activate pranic channels and healing of these disease take place by both mind energy and body treatment. Hence these points can be divided into: 1) Therapeutic points and 2) Lethal points –Lethal points should be protected during surgery to overcome the possibility of death or severe complications, whereas, other marma points should be used as therapeutic points to accelerate the healing.

Sushruta depicted that “ knowledge of marma is nearly half of the knowledge of surgery “ because knowledge on various dimensional classification, their nature, extent of area, consequence & consequential prognosis of marma plays crucial role for the surgeons, particularly during the course of surgical procedure over the Marma area of the body.

CLASSIFICATION OF MARMA

Sushruta identified 107 marma points, which are crucial for understanding surgical anatomy and ensuring Safe surgical practices.

Sushruta classified Marma points based on their structure and function. Depending upon the presence of dominant structure at the point, marma are classified with their numbers as –

- 1) Mansa Marma: Related to muscles-11
- 2) Sira Marma : Related to the head- 41
- 3) Snayu Marma: Related to ligaments-27
- 4) Asthi Marma: Related to bones -8
- 5) Sandhi Marma: Related to blood vessels-20

Sushruta has divided marma into another five groups as per the consequences or prognosis of trauma over it, which are as follows with their numbers-

- 1) Sadya pranhara Marma (Immediately death from injury)-19
- 2) Kalantara pranhara Marma (Death occurs after lapse of time)-33
- 3) Vishalyaghna Marma (Death occurs shortly after removal of shalya)-3
- 4) Vaikalyakara Marma (Injury causing deformity/restlessness)-44
- 5) Rujakara Marma (Injury causing severe pain)-8

Considering the sites and location of marma based on the shadangas (six parts) of the body, Sushruta has given five regions and the number of marma present in it as follows-

- 1) Urdhva and Greeva (head and neck) – 37
- 2) Ura Pradesh (the chest)-12
- 3) Udar ptradesh (the abdomen)-12
- 4) Prushtha (back)-14
- 5) Sakthi (the extremities)-11 in each extremity

IMPORTANCE OF MARMA

Dealing with the distribution of 107 marmsa. Sushruta being surgeon has stressed the importance of knowledge of marma in surgical practice^[3]. In any surgical procedure, the knowledge of marma and other structures like nerves, muscles, bones, veins and arteries is utmost essential^[4]

The marma points are utilized to find out the energy imbalance of tissues and organs in order to improve diagnosis and treatment. As per certain latest researches marma activation enhances the cellular intelligence, cellular metabolism and cellular immune function. Allowing the free flow of the mind energy helps to activate the metabolic fire, so that the circulation, nutrition and rejuvenation of cells occurs much faster. Marma therapy activates the neural pathway leading from the brain to the diseased area of the body which is to be treated. The energy channels in the whole body become stronger and cleaner. Therefore, the usual treatments or surgical procedure become far more effective with marma as a supporting component.

Understanding marma points helps surgeons avoid these vital areas during procedures, minimizing the risk of fatal complications. These important points should be handled with great care during surgery and always kept safe from trauma or injury because they are vital for life. Even in performing kshar karma, knowledge of marma is essential. Kshar can act like a surgical instrument, hence one should be very much cautious^[5]. The area of marma is very much sensitive (mrudu), hence surgeon should take great precaution while performing procedures like surgery, ksharmakarma on the marma area or near these vital points^[6,7]

Marma Therapy in Surgical Practice:

Integrating marma therapy into surgical care involves using these points to promote healing, reduce pain, and enhance overall well-being. These are some specific ways where the marma therapy can be applied in surgical care. For example prior to surgery, marma points are stimulated to calm the patient's mind and body, reducing anxiety and promoting relaxation before surgery. Similarly in post-surgery recovery, marma therapy is used to accelerate healing, reduce pain, and minimize swelling. Specific marma points are targeted to enhance blood circulation and support the body's natural healing processes. Marma points are massaged or stimulated to alleviate pain and discomfort, which can be particularly beneficial for patients recovering from surgery. Marma therapy helps in reducing stress and anxiety, which is crucial for patients undergoing surgery. This holistic approach supports the patient's overall well-being. Marma therapy considers the patient's physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being, offering a comprehensive approach to healing.

1. Marma therapy in Anorectal Surgery :

Marma therapy can be incorporated into the anorectal surgeries like haemorrhoids, anal fissures and fistula-in-ano to minimize trauma and ensure optimal energy flow during the procedure.

Prior to surgery, marma points such as Agni Marma (located on the navel) can be stimulated to reduce anxiety, stress and prepare the body for surgery. Madhyama Marma (midline of the body) points can be stimulated to ensure balanced energy flow and ease tension. Janu Marma (knee) point can be stimulated to enhance overall circulation and support the body's natural healing processes.

Post-surgery marma therapy focuses on points like Guda marma (around the anus) to promote healing, reduce pain, and prevent infection. Gentle regular massage and application of Ayurvedic oils around the anus (Guda marma) can be beneficial and can improve blood flow and reduce discomfort enhancing faster recovery. Apana marma (lower abdomen) is stimulated to support digestion and elimination of feces and flatus, which are crucial for healing. It will prevent constipation leading to faster recovery from anorectal surgeries.

This comprehensive approach not only aims to support the patient's healing journey, balancing physical recovery but also look after healthy mental status and emotional well-being which is equally important.

2. Marma therapy in orthopaedic surgery:

In orthopaedic surgery like knee or hip replacement, stimulation of marma points, such like kshipra Marma (located between the thumb and index finger) to reduce anxiety and promote mental clarity.

Post-Surgery: Focus on marma points like Janu Marma (around the knee) or kukundara Marma (hip area) to facilitate pain relief, reduce inflammation, and speed up tissue healing. Gentle massage or specific exercises targeting these points enhances circulation and reduces recovery time.

This integrative approach can be customized based on individual needs and specific surgical interventions. It can help in faster recovery and improved comfort for patients. Marma therapy as an adjuvant therapy in surgical procedures helps in not just the physical recovery, but also in emotional well-being. Balancing energy flow promotes overall health, leading to a smoother recovery journey.

DISCUSSION

Marmas are the vital areas of the body which need to be protected from injuries, if injured may result in chronic pain, deformity or even death. If an injury occurs even nearer to a Marma, results in same effects when marma is directly injured. Marmas are classified in a realistic manner as in Marmaghata site of the injury becomes more important rather than type of injury. Classification of Marma based on Effect of injury and measurement are the basic clues to the surgeon to proceed further. Types and Rules of incisions to be taken have been stressed on during each surgery to highlight the importance of possible Marmasthana and its avoidance during surgery. Mentioning the importance of Ashtamarmas in the conclusive verse of Ashmari chikitsa, itself is an outstanding example to protect the Marmas.

CONCLUSION

Marma are vital points, centres for the prana. They can be used specifically for the diagnosis and treatment of disease or generally for promoting health and longevity. Human body when exposed to trauma shows various sign and symptoms depending on severity and types of trauma. Acharya Sushruta mention 107 deep or superficial points on body surface when get traumatized produce various signs and symptoms not only on the basis of type of injury but on the basis of its constituents. Our physic comprises vessels, muscles, bones, joints, nerves, ligaments etc. every where in more or less proportion. According to Acharya Sushruta, the point where all the above structures meet and is the site of prana (vitality) is nothing but Marma. "Agni Soma Vayu" are basic components of Marma. Ayurveda emphasized on anatomical perspective, any misconception regarding anatomical framework may leads failure of medical procedures. They form one of the main pillars of Ayurvedic thought and practice. This article described Marma points which need to be covered while Marmaghata to prevent fatal conditions. An injury on Marma results in medical or surgical emergencies leading to fatal consequences. Marma viddha lakshanas are the first ever documentation of Applied and surgical anatomy. As Soma, Maruta, Tejas and also Satwa, Rajas and Tamas along with Bhootama reside in these Marma Pradesh, injury on these areas are usually fatal. Knowledge of Marma is fundamental in Shalyatantra and considered as half of surgical topics.

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