



Review Article

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A CRITICAL REVIEW ON MARMA THERAPY AND ITS CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Marma Chikitsa, an integral component of Ayurveda, is based on the stimulation of vital energy points (Marmas) which are the meeting points of muscles, blood vessels, ligaments, bones, and joints. The therapy is based on the concept of Prana (life energy) and aims to restore physiological and psychological balance. Although Marma Chikitsa is ancient, modern scientific understanding of how it works is still limited. Hence, a comprehensive review of classical Ayurvedic texts such as Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita, along with contemporary literature, was conducted to understand the history, classification, and therapeutic applications of Marma Chikitsa. Similarly, a comparative analysis was also performed with modern healing methods such as acupuncture, reflexology, and trigger point therapy to identify similarities in structure and function. Ayurvedic texts describe 107 Marma points, classified based on anatomical structures, location, and their effects on health. Stimulation of these points through gentle pressure, massage, or rhythmic techniques improves energy flow (Prana), enhances blood circulation, and balances the Doshas. Clinical observations suggest its benefits in musculoskeletal pain, neurological disorders, stress-related conditions, and metabolic dysfunctions. The therapy also exhibits neurovascular and myofascial mechanisms similar to those observed in other complementary medical practices. Marma Chikitsa combines anatomical knowledge with energy-based healing, bridging traditional and modern therapeutic systems. It focuses on complete well-being—both physical and mental—offering a non-invasive alternative for prevention and rehabilitation. Further scientific validation through controlled studies is needed to establish standardized protocols and clarify physiological mechanisms.

Keywords: Marma Chikitsa, Varma Science, Prana, Dosha balance, Acupoints, Trigger point therapy.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, the ancient Indian system of medicine, emphasizes maintaining harmony between the body, mind, and spirit to ensure complete well-being. Among its many therapeutic branches, Marma Chikitsa stands out as a unique approach that integrates anatomical understanding with the regulation of vital life energy (Prana).

Acharya Sushruta defines Marma as the junction or confluence of five vital structural components of the body- Mamsa (muscles), Sira (blood vessels), Snayu (ligaments, tendons, nerves), Asthi (bones), and Sandhi (joints). These are the locations where the vital life energy resides.¹ There are 107 major Marma points distributed throughout the human body, and any injury to these points may lead to Moha (confusion or unconsciousness), Bala-hani (loss of strength), Ruja (pain), or even Murchha (loss of consciousness), depending on the type and severity of trauma.^{2,3} Therefore, accurate knowledge of Marma locations and their vulnerability is essential for preventing fatal injuries and ensuring safe surgery.

While classical Ayurvedic texts primarily emphasized Marmas as vital and vulnerable anatomical sites, later scholars expanded their therapeutic significance through the development of Marma Chikitsa— an Ayurvedic modality that stimulates these points to promote healing. By applying precision pressure or gentle stimulation techniques such as light strokes, tapping, holding, or single-finger pressure, Marma Chikitsa aims to modulate autonomic, neuroendocrine, and psychophysiological networks. This gentle manipulation facilitates the flow of Prana, clears physiological blockages, and restores homeostasis across body

systems, acting as a non-pharmacological approach for disease prevention and health promotion.⁴

In recent years, Marma Chikitsa has attracted growing attention within integrative and preventive medicine for its potential role in managing orthopedic, muscular, and neurological disorders. Clinical observations suggest that it relieves pain, stiffness, and spasms; enhances circulation, metabolism, digestion, and immunity; and helps rebuild hormonal balance. Additionally, it has been shown to reduce stress, anxiety, and fatigue while improving focus and sleep quality. Marma Chikitsa also offers preventive and adjunctive support in lifestyle-related disorders such as hypertension, diabetes, and thyroid dysfunction, and may even serve as a non-invasive alternative that minimizes the need for surgical interventions.^{5,6,7}

Interestingly, the Ayurvedic concept of Marma shows notable similarities with modern therapeutic systems such as acupuncture, reflexology, and trigger point therapy, all of which target specific body sites to influence physiological and energetic functions. Anatomical studies indicate that Marma points and acupoints share similar neurovascular and myofascial mechanisms. However, Marma Chikitsa remains distinct, rooted in Ayurvedic principles of prana flow and dosha balance, bridging traditional and modern healing systems.⁸

Although Marma Chikitsa is an ancient practice, scientific research on it is still limited. This review explores its historical foundations, anatomical basis, and therapeutic significance within holistic and integrative medicine.

LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE CONCEPT AND EVOLUTION OF MARMA

The concept of Marma has been mentioned since the Vedic period and further evolved through the Epics and Samhita periods, reflecting its gradual development from protective and martial

applications to clinical and therapeutic relevance. To provide a clearer understanding of the historical evolution of Marma science, scattered references from classical Ayurvedic and Vedic literature have been systematically compiled and presented in a Table 1 for easier interpretation and comparative analysis.

Table 1: Description of Marma and Marma Chikitsa from different Sources

Source	Descriptions
Vedic Period (Rig-Veda, Atharva-Veda)	First references to Marma and Varma (protective covering); prayers and mantras used to protect vital parts. Knowledge of Marma known to kings and warriors through Dhanur Veda (martial science), reflecting its role in energy protection and warfare. ⁹
Epics – Mahabharata and Ramayana	References describe injuries to vital points in humans and animals (e.g., Lakshmana’s unconsciousness, Ravana’s wound), showing awareness of fatal effects of Marma trauma in battle. ¹⁰
Arthashastra (Kautilya)	References to the use of armor and weapons to protect Marmas, emphasizing physical safeguarding of vital points in warfare. ¹¹
Siddha System	Links Marma points to lunar and planetary influences, integrating the concept with cosmic and astrological factors. ¹²
Acharya Charaka (Charaka Samhita)	Acharya Charaka emphasized the importance of Marma Vigyan and dedicated a separate chapter to it, introducing the concept of Tri Marma—the tripod of life. According to him, Hridaya-mula-sthito ca nrnām prāṇāḥ pratiṣṭhitaḥ Tasmāt teṣām sadā yatnam kurvīta pāriṇāḥ (Charaka Samhita, Siddhi Sthana 9/9), indicating that Marma are the seats of Chetana (consciousness); hence, any trauma or disease affecting these vital centers causes more intense pain and functional disturbance compared to other body parts. ¹³
Acharya Sushruta (Sushruta Samhita, 400–600 B.C.)	Marmaani maamsa-siraa-snaayavasthi-sandhi-sannipaataah; Teshu svabhaavata eva visheshena praanaah tishthanti; Tasmaan marmasvabhihataah taastaaṇaṃ bhaavaan aapadyante (Su.Sha.6/16) Acharya Sushruta described 107 Marma points in detail, defining them as the junctions of five anatomical structures—Mamsa (muscle), Sira (vessels), Snayu (ligament and nerve), Asthi (bone), and Sandhi (joints)—where Prana resides; stimulation of these points optimizes Prana Vayu and helps maintain the equilibrium of Doshas. ¹⁴
Acharya Vagbhata (Ashtanga Sangraha / Hridaya)	Marma are sites where Dhamanis (arteries) converge with Mamsa (muscle), Sira (vessels), Snayu (ligament and nerve), Asthi (bone), and Sandhi (joints) showing pain and abnormal pulsation on pressure or trauma. ¹⁵ Ashtanga Hridaya and Ashtanga Sangraha (Shareera Sthana), states that such points indicate pathophysiological disturbances. Api cha maranakaari-tvān marma Vridhdha Vagbhata defines Marma which leads to death.
Etymology – Shabdakalpadruma	mṛ + sarvadhātubhyo ’manin (Śabda Kalpadruma 641) Derived from root Mri-Dhatu, meaning Sandhisthana (junction of structures). ¹⁶
Shabdostam	mṛ-manin jīvasthāne, sandhi sthāne, tātparye ca (śabdostama) Defines Marma as Jeevasthanana (seat of life) and Sandhisthana.
Halayudha Kosha	mṛ + sarva-dhātubhyo ’manin iti manin sannipātaḥ śirā-snayu-sandhi-māmsa-asthi-sambhavaḥ (Halāyudha koṣa 518) Junction of Sira, Snayu, Sandhi, Mamsa, and Asthi. Structural seat of life (Prana Sthana).
Amarkosha	mṛ-minini, mṛ + prāṇatyāge (Amarakosha 3/5/30) Derived from Mri-Pranatyage, meaning “that which causes death,” as injury to Marma leads to death or severe damage.
Dalhana	mārayantīti marmāṇi Marma are points on body surface which are life-threatening vital points.
Acharya Arunadatta (Saravanga Sundari)	Derived from Mring - Marma is seat of Prana which is constituted by confluence of Sira, Snayu, Asthi and Sandhi and injury to Marma causes Maranasadrisha Dukha (death-like suffering).
Acharya Narahari (Raja Nighantu)	Defines Marma as Jeevasthanana linked to Chaithanya.
Acharya Bhavaprakasha	Marma is junction of Mamsa, Sira, Snayu, Sandhi, and Asthi where Prana resides.

CLASSIFICATION OF MARMA

Different Acharyas in Ayurvedic literature have described and classified Marma points in various ways based on their anatomical and clinical importance, highlighting the depth of understanding and clinical significance of Marma Chikitsa in Ayurveda.

According to Acharya Charaka¹⁷: Acharya Charaka described three vital Marmas, which are considered the most essential life centers:

1. Shira (Murdha Marma) – located in the head region (controls the brain)
2. Hridaya Marma – situated in the chest (controls the heart)
3. Basti Marma – located in the pelvic region (controls the urinary bladder)

While Charaka acknowledged the existence of 107 Marma points, he emphasized that these three are of the highest importance for sustaining life. Acharya Sushruta later included these same three in his detailed enumeration of 107 Marmas.

According to Acharya Sushruta¹⁸: Sushruta has mentioned a total of 107 Marmas, categorized based on anatomy (Rachana), body region (Shadanga), prognosis (Sadhya–Asadhyata), and metrical dimensions (Pramana), as shown in Tables 2–5.

Categorization based on Therapeutic Application

Scholars have further classified Marmas for clinical and therapeutic relevance as:

1. Sthula (Gross/Physical) and Sookshma (Subtle).
2. Vulnerable (Lethal) and Non-vulnerable (Therapeutic).
3. External and Internal.¹⁹

Table 2: Categorization according to Rachana (Anatomical Structure)

Type of Marma	Number	Examples / Names of Marmas
Mamsa Marma (muscle tissue)	11	Indrabasti (2), Kakshadhara (2), Kurcha (2), Kurchashira (2), Ansamula (2), Vidhura (1)
Sira Marma (blood vessels)	41	Apanga (2), Avarta (2), Shankha (2), Phana (2), Vidhura (2), Manya (2), Nila (2), Matrika (4), Hridya (1), Nabhi (1), Guda (1), Basti (1), Lohitaksha (2), Urvi (2), Kshipra (2), Talahridaya (2), Vitapa (2), Katikataruna (2), Parshvasandhi (2), Nitamba (2), Janu (2), Gulpha (2), Indrabasti (2)
Snayu Marma (ligaments/tendons)	27	Kurcha (2), Kurchashira (2), Ani (2), Janu (2), Vitapa (2), Kukundara (2), Katikataruna (2), Amsa (2), Amsaphalaka (2), Apanga (2), Phana (2), Shankha (2), Avarta (2), Vidhura (2), Nila (2), Matrika (4)
Asthi Marma (bone tissue)	8	Shankha (2), Amsaphalaka (2), Katikataruna (2), Nitamba (2)
Sandhi Marma (joints)	20	Kshipra (2), Manibandha (2), Kurpara (2), Kakshadhara (2), Amsa (2), Urvi (2), Kukundara (2), Janu (2), Gulpha (2), Parshvasandhi (2)
Total	107	

Table 3: Categorization according to Shadanga (Regional Classification)

Region	Number of Marmas	Names of Important Marmas
Urdhva Jatru (Head and Neck)	37	Shankha (2), Apanga (2), Avarta (2), Phana (2), Vidhura (2), Manya (2), Matrika (4), Nila (2), Krikatika (2), Sthapani (1), Hanu (2), Kantha (2), Greeva (2), Shringataka (1), etc.
Uras and Udara (Thorax and Abdomen)	12	Hridaya (1), Stana Moola (2), Stana Rohita (2), Nabhi (1), Guda (1), Basti (1), Apastambha (2), Apalapa (2)
Prushtha (Back)	14	Amsa (2), Amsaphalaka (2), Katikataruna (2), Kukundara (2), Nitamba (2), Parshvasandhi (2), Ansa Mula (2)
Bahu (Upper Limbs)	22	Kshipra (2), Manibandha (2), Kurpara (2), Kakshadhara (2), Urvi (2), Lohitaksha (2), Ani (2), Indrabasti (2), Talahridaya (2), Kurcha (2), Kurchashira (2)
Uru and Jangha (Lower Limbs)	22	Kshipra (2), Gulpha (2), Janu (2), Indrabasti (2), Ani (2), Urvi (2), Vitapa (2), Kukundara (2), Nitamba (2), Katikataruna (2), Talahridaya (2)
Total	107	

Table 4: Categorization according to Sadhya-Asadhyata (Prognosis)

Type of Marma	Number	Examples / Names	Predominant Dosha
Sadhyapranahara (immediately fatal)	19	Hridaya, Basti, Nabhi, Sira Matrika, Shankha, Guda, Shringataka, etc.	Agneya
Kalantarapranahara (fatal after some time)	33	Stana Moola, Apanga, Phana, Vidhura, Nila, Kantha, etc.	Somya and Agneya
Vishalyaghna (fatal after removal of foreign body)	3	Sira Matrika, Sira Shankha, Guda	Vayavya
Vaikalyakara (causes deformity)	44	Kurpara, Manibandha, Janu, Kshipra, Urvi, Vitapa, Kakshadhara, etc.	Somya
Rujakara (causes pain)	8	Kurcha, Kurchashira, Amsa, Amsaphalaka, Parshvasandhi, etc.	Somya, Agneya and Vayavya
Total	107		

Table 5: Categorization according to Pramana (Dimensional Measurement)

Dimension (Angula)	Number of Marmas	Examples
Ekangula (1 finger breadth)	6	Apanga, Phana, Vidhura, Avarta, etc.
Dwiangula (2 finger breadths)	2	Shankha, Nila
Triangula (3 finger breadths)	2	Hridaya, Nabhi
Swapaanitala (palm-sized)	9	Stana Moola, Stana Rohita, Katikataruna, Nitamba, etc.
Ardhangula (½ finger breadth)	88	Remaining smaller Marmas distributed across limbs and trunk.
Total	107	

Table 6: Techniques derived from Kalaripayattu

Uzhichil (Kalari Massage)	Use of medicated oils and rhythmic pressure	Enhances circulation and energy flow
Marma Pidichu	Targeted pressure or manipulation	Relieves pain and improves mobility
Pulling and Kneading	Manual tissue manipulation	Restores normal prana movement
External Therapies	Herbal poultices, oil applications, and bandaging	Treats trauma and swelling.

Table 7: Twenty treatment methods described by Schrott

1.	Sukshma Marma Therapy (Subtle Marma Therapy)	11.	Pranayama (Breath Synchronization)
2.	Gentle Circular Pressure	12.	Meditation
3.	Linear Strokes	13.	Yogasanas (Yoga Poses)
4.	Kneading	14.	Mudras
5.	Snehana (Oleation)	15.	Visualization
6.	Abhyanga (Warm Oil Massage)	16.	Setting a Healing Atmosphere
7.	Swedana (Application of Heat)	17.	Therapeutic Oils for Doshas
8.	Lepa (Herbal Pastes)	18.	Mindful Intention

9.	Herbal Poultices	19.	Herbal Medicine
10.	Use of Aromatic Essential Oils	20.	Post-treatment Rest

Table 8: Marma techniques described by Frawley

Massage and energy methods	These include the direct application of pressure (Abhyanga), using aromatic oils, and subtle energy work
Herbal methods	This involves using herbs both topically, as pastes, and internally, as medicines
Instrumental methods	Using tools like acupuncture needles or applying focused heat (Agnikarma). They also describe using the power of attention and breath to direct prana to the marma points during meditation (Dhyana).

Table 9: Ten treatment methods described by Lad and Durve

Snehana (Oleation)	This technique soothes the nervous system, lubricates joints, and prepares the tissue for deeper work.
Swedana (Sudation)	This helps to open the body's channels, allowing for the deeper penetration of the oil and the removal of toxins.
Mardana (Deep Connective Tissue Massage)	This releases muscular tension and break up deep-seated blockages.
Pidana (Deep, Dry Pressure)	This technique is used for releasing emotional or physical stagnation and can be applied with the thumbs or fingers.
Veshtana (Binding or Holding)	This holds the energy and promote a sense of security
Lepana (Application of Paste)	This is used to reduce inflammation, relieve pain, and draw toxins from the area
Agni Karma (Application of Heat)	This is for certain pain conditions
Suchi Bharana (Puncturing with Needles):	
Trasana (Irritation)	This stimulates circulation and can help move stagnant energy.
Rakta Moksha (Bloodletting)	

THERAPEUTIC IMPLICATIONS OF MARMA STIMULATION/THERAPY

Several approaches to Marma stimulation, commonly known as Marma therapy, have been described by modern experts like Frawley D, Lad and Durve, Schrott, S. K. Joshi and Ayurvedic practitioners. These methods focus on activating Marma points to regulate Prana (vital energy), enhance healing, and restore physiological balance.

Agasthya Marma Shastra tradition (Kalaripayattu)

Kalaripayattu, the ancient martial art of South India, originates from Dhanurveda, the martial Upaveda of the Yajurveda, which includes the science of Marmas (vital points). Traditional texts describe 108 marmas, of which 64 are considered vital or lethal (Vadha Marmas). While these points can be fatal if struck in combat, they are therapeutically used in Marma Chikitsa to restore prana (vital energy), balance neuromuscular function and promote healing transforming martial knowledge into a therapeutic healing system.²⁰

The Agasthya Marma Shastra school applies dynamic techniques derived from Kalaripayattu, as shown in Table 6.

Schrott's Approach

Schrott et al. (2016) stated that Marma points hold vital information related to thoughts, emotions, feelings, and overall health. Stimulation of these Marma points can influence the functioning of internal organs, enhance mind-body coordination, and promote healing in conditions such as impaired eyesight, digestive issues, headaches, stress, and more.²¹ The following 20 methods for treating Marmas are shown in Table 7.

Frawley's Approach

Frawley classified marma techniques into three main groups to stimulate energy flow and promote healing.²² These classifications are shown in Table 8.

Joshi's Synchronization Method

This technique involves applying rhythmic pressure synchronization with heart rate and respiratory cycles, optimizing circulatory and nervous system responses.

Joshi SK (2010) developed a simple, rhythmic methodology for stimulating marma points that is based on the body's own rhythms of breath and heart rate. A key aspect is the precise, short duration of pressure applied to a marma point, which is synchronized with the natural body cycles.²³

Key principles of Joshi's Synchronization technique-

Rhythmic application: The pressure is applied rhythmically, often for a specific duration repeated several times in a sitting. For example, the pressure is held for approximately 0.8 seconds, the duration of a single heartbeat or one "Om Namah Shivay" mantra. This is repeated for 12 to 20 cycles, which aligns with a normal breathing rate.

Subtle, non-invasive pressure: Unlike more forceful acupressure or traditional massage, Joshi's technique involves gentle pressure from the fingers and thumbs. This subtle, light touch removes energy blockages and provides therapeutic benefits.

Synchronization with breath: The pressure is often synchronized with the patient's breathing, enhancing the energy flow and promoting deep healing to have a calming effect on the nervous system.

Holistic approach: The technique is combined with the patient's focus on the marma points, incorporating the mind-body connection to relieve physical and mental tension.

Self-marma therapy

Joshi SK., has also developed a form of self-marma therapy that can be practiced regularly to maintain health and prevent disease. This involves the individual applying the same rhythmic pressure technique to their own marma points

Application of pressure or thumb or fingers over Marma points

Pressure- depends on the nature of Marma

Stimulation time- 0.8 sec /stimuli

Time- 3 times /day

Repetition- 15 -18 times in single sitting

Lad and Durve's Techniques

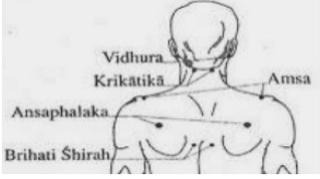
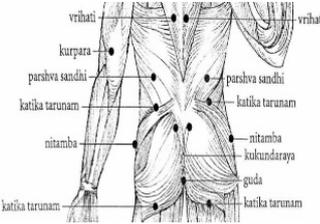
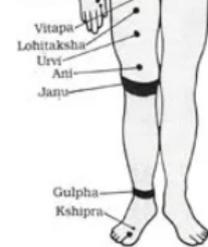
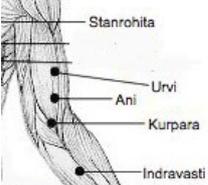
Vasant Lad explained 10 methods to stimulate and activate Marma points for therapeutic benefits.²⁴ These methods are shown in Table 9.

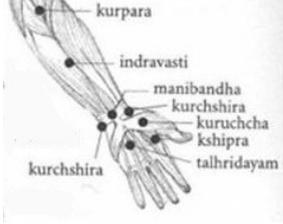
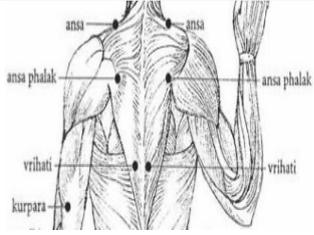
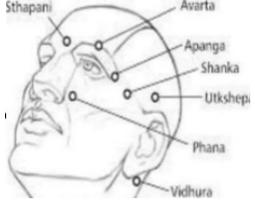
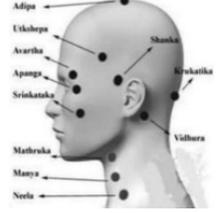
Procedure explained-

1. Apply steady pressure for about 2 mins in beginning. Unless gentle pressure is required, it begins with medium pressure which gradually increases with exhale.
2. Circle counterclockwise than clockwise.
3. Clockwise is tonifying, stimulating, strengthening. Pacifies vata and kapha but may increase pitta.
4. Counterclockwise is calming is coming, reducing and pacifying. It soothes pita dosha but may stimulate vata and kapha. It can be used for detoxification purposes.

APPLIED ASPECTS OF MARMA CHIKITSA

Table 10: Marma points and their clinical application

Disease	Marma points	Figures
Cervical Spondylosis (Greevastambha)	Manyakrikatika, Ansa, Vidhura	 <p>Figure 1: Marma stimulation points for cervical spondylosis²⁵</p>
Lumbar Spondylosis (Katigraha)	Katiprishtha, Trika, Bruhati, Urvi, Parshwasandhi Lohitaksha	 <p>Figure 2: Marma stimulation points for Lumbar spondylosis²⁶</p>
Scaitica (Gridrasi)	Urvi, Lohitaksha, Kukundara, Janu, Indrabasti	 <p>Figure 3: Marma stimulation points for Scaitica²⁷</p>
Tennis elbow(Kurpara sandhi ruja)	Kurpara, Ani, Indrabasti	 <p>Figure 4: Marma stimulation points for Tennis elbow²⁶</p>
Plantar Fascitis(Vatakantaka)	Kshipra, Talahridaya, Kurucha, Kuruchasira	 <p>Figure 5: Marma stimulation points for Plantar fasciitis²⁸</p>

<p>Daibetes Mellitus</p>	<p>Kurpara, Kuruchasira, Indrabasti, Talahridaya</p>	 <p>Figure 6: Marma stimulation points for Daibetes mellitus²⁶</p>
<p>Frozen Shoulder (Avabahuka)</p>	<p>Ansa, Ansaphalaka, Ani, Urvi, Kurpara</p>	 <p>Figure 7: Marma stimulation points for Frozen shoulder²⁶</p>
<p>Migrane(Ardhavabhedaka)</p>	<p>Shiramarma- Sthapani, Shankha, Utkshepa, Simanta, Adhipati, Avarta</p>	 <p>Figure 8: Marma stimulation points for Migrane²⁹</p>
<p>Tension Headache (Urdhvajatrugata)</p>	<p>Sthapani, Utkshepa, Simanta, Adhipati, Manya Marma</p>	 <p>Figure 9: Marma stimulation points for Tension Headache³⁰</p>
<p>Hypertension</p>	<p>Talahridaya</p>	 <p>Figure 10: Marma stimulation points for Hypertension³¹</p>
<p>Rhinitis</p>	<p>Phana</p>	 <p>Figure 11: Marma stimulation points for Rhinitis³²</p>

DISCUSSION

Ancient Ayurvedic texts such as the Sushruta Samhita and Charaka Samhita describe Marmas as vital junctions of muscles, vessels, ligaments, bones, and joints where life energy (Prana) resides.¹ Marma Chikitsa—the therapy based on these points—aims to balance Prana and harmonize the body and mind. It combines anatomical knowledge with energy-based healing, making it both physical and psychological therapy. Thus, its roots can be traced back to the Vedic period, with detailed development found in classical Ayurvedic texts such as the Sushruta Samhita.

Recent interpretations suggest that Marma stimulation influences neurological, circulatory, and musculoskeletal systems, resulting in pain relief, improved mobility, and emotional stability.⁵ The therapy also aligns closely with Yogic principles, as both emphasize the regulation of Prana to achieve mind-body harmony. Techniques such as gentle pressing and rhythmic tapping of Marma points are non-invasive yet effective, offering alternatives to surgical or pharmacological interventions. In modern healthcare, Marma Chikitsa shows promise in preventing lifestyle diseases and enhancing treatment outcomes when integrated with conventional medicine.

Modern studies have found that many Marma points overlap with major nerve plexuses, vascular junctions, and myofascial trigger zones. Techniques developed by scholars such as Frawley, Lad, Schrott, and Sunil Kumar Joshi use precise, rhythmic stimulation to activate neurophysiological responses—enhancing circulation, balancing autonomic tone, and promoting the release of endorphins. These mechanisms explain its observed benefits in pain management, neurological conditions, stress disorders, and metabolic imbalances.

Marma Chikitsa shares similarities with acupuncture and reflexology, which also use point-based stimulation.⁸ However, it remains unique to Ayurveda, focusing on Prana flow and Tridosha balance. Although clinical experiences are promising, scientific evidence is still limited. More standardized clinical studies and imaging-based research are needed to confirm its mechanisms and establish its place in modern integrative medicine.

Probable Mode of Action of Marma Therapy

Pranic Regulation: Marmas act as “switches” for vital energy. Stimulation clears obstructions, enhances energy flow, and restores balance in the body’s Prana.³³

Neurophysiological Effects: Pressure or massage of Marma points can trigger the release of endorphins, prostaglandin inhibitors, and other endogenous compounds, providing pain relief and promoting tissue repair.³⁴

Circulatory and Musculoskeletal Modulation: Targeting Marmas improves local blood flow, lymphatic drainage, and joint mobility, supporting overall tissue health.

Psychosomatic Integration: Marma therapy influences the mind-body connection, reducing stress, anxiety, and emotional tension, which in turn enhances systemic homeostasis.³⁵

Dosha Balance: Marma stimulation particularly affects Vata Dosha, regulating movement and flow within the body, but can also harmonize all Tridoshas and Trigunas, contributing to holistic health.³²

CONCLUSION

Marmas are vital centers of Prana—the essential life force that sustains both body and mind. Marma Chikitsa represents a gentle, natural, and non-invasive healing approach that activates specific points to restore physiological balance and promote wellness.

Marma science has long been recognized for its therapeutic and preventive potential. It can be practiced anywhere, at any time, and often without the need for medication. Marma Chikitsa not only serves as a diagnostic and therapeutic tool but also as a holistic approach to maintaining health and longevity. In modern healthcare, it offers valuable support in managing musculoskeletal, neurological, and stress-related disorders, while also helping to prevent lifestyle diseases. When integrated into contemporary medical systems, it enhances treatment outcomes and encourages holistic patient care. However, continued research and clinical validation are essential to standardize its practice and establish its role within evidence-based medicine. By bridging traditional Ayurvedic wisdom with modern scientific understanding, Marma Chikitsa stands as a timeless, integrative healing system that nurtures both body and consciousness.

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