



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

A SYSTEMIC REVIEW ON MARMA SHARIRA W.S.R. TO PRUSHTAGATA MARMA

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ABSTRACT

'Marma' comes from Sanskrit word 'mru' which means 'to kill'. The 107 marma points are categorised in terms of their effect on the vitality of the body. Marma are the critical points of the body associated with different organs and nerves. Ayurveda describes use of marma therapy for various diseases and identification of marma points which is to be cured, since injury to these points may cause serious harmful effects including death.

Different muscles, bones, veins, ligaments and joints meet with each other at the marmas, thus these points act as physiological junctions.

Acharya Sushruta describes the locations of the marma points as well as the effect of injury on those point causes.

This article summarises various perspectives of marma with special reference to prushtagata marma.

INTRODUCTION

Marma sthana is defined as the site where there is confluence of structures like mamsa (muscular components), sira (vascular components), snayu (neuro connective tissue component), asthi (sclerous component) and sandhi (articular components) along with prana (life force) resides making it as its specific place.

They are spread all over the body and according to Acharya Sushruta, marma sthanas are points where vata, pitta, kapha, sattwa, rajas, tamas are present along with Chetana dhatu and atma.

A person injured in the vital spots die immediately or suffer from unforeseen ailments which is life threatening; if anyone survives by the efficiency of the physician, is sure to suffer from deformities.

Injury to the marma, though slight, will produce severe pain leading to greater complication including death, therefore, these points are considered crucial during surgical procedures. Marma sthana- Marma sthanas are mentioned in detail in the Rigveda, Atharva veda, Sushruta Samhita etc. Ayurvedic Acharyas have given prime importance to marma sthana in Shalya chikitsa.

CLASSIFICATION OF MARMA

Marma has been described by several ancient Ayurvedic acharyas including Charaka and Vagabhata among others.

The best descriptions however is given by Sushruta in sharira sthana of sushruta Samhita. He covered many aspects of anatomy and surgery in this text written centuries ago.

Acharya Sushruta describes 107 marma in the body. He defined marmas as the vital points of the body which shows various fatal signs and symptoms on trauma where pranas of vital energy resides or flows through.

ACCORDING TO LOCATION-

- *In upper limb(bahu) = 22
- *In lower limb (Sakthi)=22
- *in abdomen (udar Pradesh) and chest (urah Pradesh)=12
- *In head and neck (urdhwajatrugata)=37
- *At the back (prushta)=14

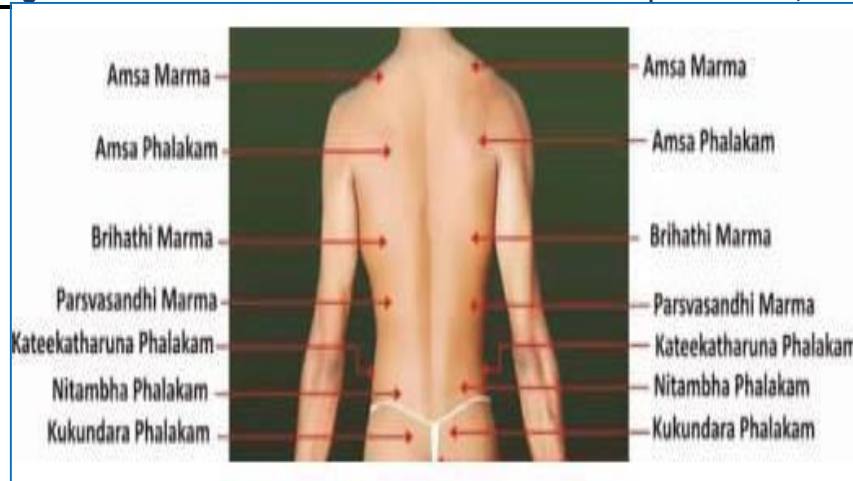
ACCORDING TO TRAUMATIC EFFECT AND PROGNOSIS-

- *Sadya pranahara marma (sudden death)=19
- *Rujakara marma (continuous pain due to trauma)=8
- *Vaikalyakara marma (deformity due to trauma)=44
- *Kalantara pranahara marma (death within short period)=33
- *Vishalyaghna marma (person lives until removal of foreign body)=3

PRUSHTAGATA MARMA

Prshtamarmas are vital points in the back of the trunk. They are 14 in number (7x2).

Name of Marma	Number	Group of Marma	Class of Marma
Katikataruna	2	Asthi Marma	KalantharaPranahara
Nitamba	2	Sandhi Marma	KalantharaPranahara
Brhati	2	Sira Marma	KalantharaPranahara
Amsa	2	Snayu Marma	Vaikalyakara
Kukundara	2	Sandhi Marma	Vaikalyakara
Parsvasandhi	2	Sira Marma	KalantharaPranahara
Amsaphalaka	2	Asthi Marma	Vaikalyakara



1. Katikataruna Marma

There are two vital points for Katikataruna, which are located on either side of Prsthavamsa (vertebral column) facing at the level of Sronikanda (iliac crest). Injury to such points causes death being affected by Sonitaksaya (blood lose), Pandu (anaemia), Vivarna (lack of lusture / cyanosis) and Hinarupa (disfiguration). It is located at the level of fourth lumbar vertebrae and occupies a dimension of 1cm and grouped as Asthi Marma under the class of Kalantara Pranahara Marmas.

The iliac crest is the point where large amount of red bone marrow is found; thus, bone marrow is extracted from this site for bone marrow transplantation. It is also most ideal donor site for bone grafting. Damage or injury to this point disturbs in hematopoiesis to produce blood cells and lymphocytes that support the body immune system.[9]

2. Kukundara Marma

There are two Kukundara Marmas located at both sides Parsva (lateral sides of back; or flank), i.e., the outer sides of the Jaghana (gluteal region), and at the either sides of the Prsthavamsa (vertebral column). Injury to these points causes Sparsajnana-Upaghata or a loss of feeling of touch (sensory loss) and Cheṣṭa-Upaghata (loss of muscle function). The Kukundara-Marma occupies a dimension of 1cm and grouped as Sandhi-Marma under the class of Vaikalyakara-Marmas. It is the point where the sciatic nerve passes from the lumbar plexus and sacral plexus (L4-S3) and runs through the buttock and to the lower limb.

Injury to this point results in loss of function as its articular and muscular branches are disturbed. Loss of sensation (including loss of muscle bulk or fasciculation) may present as the sciatic nerve innervates the skin on the posterior aspect of the thigh and gluteal regions, as well as the lateral aspect of lower leg.

3. Nitamba Marma

There are two vital points, namely Nitamba, located at the both sides of Parshva (lateral sides of back; or the flank) and just above the Shronikanda (iliac crest) that enshroud and link the structures of the greater pelvis with the superolateral margin or flank.

Injury to these points results in death due to Shosa (wasting) and Dourbalya (weakness) of lower limbs. The Nitamba-Marma occupies a dimension of 1cm and grouped as Sandhi-Marma and Kalāntara-Prānahara Marmas. The hip bone is the fusion of three bones of the pelvis and acts to retain balance of the body and to support the weight of the body in both static (standing) and dynamic (walking or running) postures. Thus, atrophy and muscular debility is common when the point is injured.

4. Parsva sandhi Marma

There are two vital points, namely Parsvasandhi, situated at the lower end of the Parsva (flank), in between the pelvis and flank, and facing obliquely above the pelvis. Injury to these points brings about fatal conditions due to accumulation of blood caused by internal haemorrhage in the abdomen.

The Parsvasandhi Marma occupies a dimension of 1cm and grouped as Sira-Marma under the class of Kalantara-Pranahara-Marmas. This point is located at the aortic bifurcation, at the level of the fourth lumbar vertebrae, where the abdominal aorta branches into the left common iliac artery and right common iliac artery. Just below this site, at the level of the fifth lumbar vertebrae, the left common iliac vein and right common iliac vein (each formed by the external iliac veins and internal iliac veins) come together to form the inferior vena cava. Internal hemorrhage in the pelvis may lead to hemorrhagic shock (a condition of reduced tissue perfusion) leading to inadequate delivery of oxygen and nutrients and to death.

5. Brhati-Marma

There are two vital point namely Brhati, located at the either sides of the Prsthavamsa (spinal column), at the level of the Stanamula (base of the breast); injury to which results in death as a complication of shonita atipravrtti (severe bleeding). The Brhati-Marma occupies a dimension of 1cm and grouped as Sirā Marma under Kalantara-Pranahara-Marmas. Dr. Alan George A. et al. Critical analysis of Prshta Marma (vital points in the back) In the right side, the vital point is located just behind the diaphragm (at a level of 10th thoracic vertebrae and in between the 7th and 8th rib), below which the liver rests.

6. Amsaphalaka Marma

On the either sides of the Prshtavamsa (spinal column) and near the articulating place of the shoulders and neck on the back, there are two vital points called Amsaphalaka. Injury to these points triggers loss of sensation and disability to move arms, as well as dystrophy or progressive muscular wasting of the upper limbs with limited range of movement.[17] The Amsaphalaka-Marma occupies a dimension of 1cm and grouped as Asthi-Marma under the class of Vaikalyakara-Marmas. This point is located above the spine of the scapula, at the level of the first thoracic vertebrae. The brachial plexus is originated from the neck and passes through the cervico-axillary canal for cutaneous and muscular innervations of the upper limb (the axilla and arm); thus, its injury causes loss of sensation, peripheral neuropathy) and dystrophy. Loss of shoulder (glenohumeral joint) movement and stabilization occurs when the rotator cuff muscles (the scapulohumeral muscles and tendons) are injured.

7. Amsa-Marma

The vital point, namely Amsa, is located in between the upper end of Bahu (arm) and Griva (neck) of the either sides, where the scapulae is bound together to form the shoulder joint. Injury or damage to the point causes Stabdha-Bahuta (stiffness; loss/ reduced range of motion of arm). The Amsa Marma occupies a dimension of 1cm and grouped as Snayu-Marma under the class of Vaikalyakara-Marmas. This point is supposed to be located within the area of the rotator cuff (comprising of four muscles and their tendons) that stabilize the scapulohumeral joint of the shoulder.

CONCLUSION

Symptoms of Marma injury vary based on the type and nature of the injured site and its associated Marma. The Amsaphalaka Marma and Kukundara Marma can be understood as vital points where major nerve to the respective limb runs underneath them. However Amsaphalaka is Asthi Marma and Kukundara is Sandhi Marma owing to the anatomical structures associated with them. But both are Vaikalyakara Marmas due to their ability to impair the normal function of corresponding limb once injured. The Parsvasandhi and Brhati Marma are Sira Marmas due to their underlying presence of major blood vessels and veins. Hence, their injury causes hemorrhage and leads to death (Kalanthara Pranahara).

For a physician/surgeon knowledge of Marma is essential for better understanding and treatment of an injured site. Hence the importance of marma can be understood based on the vulnerability/sensitivity the marma point holds.

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