



Research Article

Marma: An Ayurvedic Review

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Abstract

Marma are vital anatomical points described in Ayurveda, where Prana (life force) is predominantly situated. Injury to these points may result in pain, deformity, disability, or even death. The science of Marma plays a crucial role in Shalya Tantra, with significant relevance in surgery, traumatology, yoga, physiotherapy, and Marma therapy. Classical Ayurvedic texts enumerate 107 Marma, classified on the basis of structure, location, and the effect of injury. This review article compiles classical Ayurvedic references related to Marma, explains their classifications, and correlates them with modern anatomical concepts to highlight their clinical and therapeutic importance.

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KEYWORDS: Marma, Prana, Shalya Tantra, Vital Points, Ayurveda.

1. INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda emphasises the preservation of life and the prevention of injury. The concept of Marma Sharira explains specific vulnerable points of the body where muscle (Mamsa), vessels (Sira), ligaments (Snayu), bones (Asthi), and joints (Sandhi) meet. These sites are considered seats of Prana and are extremely sensitive to trauma. Detailed descriptions of Marma are available in classical Ayurvedic texts, especially Sushruta Samhita, where Marma Vigyana is regarded as half of Shalya Tantra.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is a narrative review based on classical Ayurvedic texts such as Sushruta Samhita, Charaka Samhita, and Ashtanga Hridaya, along with their commentaries. Modern anatomy and physiology textbooks were also reviewed to establish correlations. Relevant verses and descriptions were compiled, analysed, and interpreted descriptively.

Concept of Marma

The word Marma is derived from the Sanskrit root Mr, meaning death. Thus, Marma denotes vital points whose injury may be fatal. Classical Ayurvedic texts define Marma as sites where multiple anatomical structures meet and where Prana is specially located.

Classical Shloka (English Transliteration):

“Māṃsa-sirā-snayu-asthi-sandhi-sannipātāḥ marmāṇi”

English Meaning:

Marma are the vital points of the body where muscle, blood vessels, ligaments, bones, and joints meet.

Citation: Sushruta Samhita, Sharira Sthana 6/16

Classification of Marma

Table 1: Structural Classification of Marma

| Type of Marma | Number | Dominant Structure |
|---------------|------------|---------------------|
| Mamsa Marma | 11 | Muscle tissue |
| Sira Marma | 41 | Blood vessels |
| Snayu Marma | 27 | Ligaments / Tendons |
| Asthi Marma | 8 | Bones |
| Sandhi Marma | 20 | Joints |
| Total | 107 | |

Table 2: Classification of Marma According to Effect of Injury

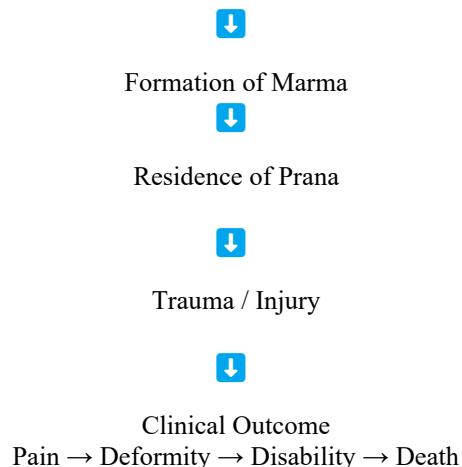
| Category | Number | Effect of Injury |
|--------------------|--------|---------------------------------------|
| Sadyapranahara | 19 | Immediate death |
| Kalantarapranahara | 33 | Delayed death |
| Vishalyaghna | 3 | Death after removal of a foreign body |
| Vaikalyakara | 44 | Deformity / Disability |
| Rujakara | 8 | Severe pain |

Table 3: Regional Distribution of Marma

| Region | Number of Marma |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Shakha (Extremities) | 44 |
| Madhya Sharira (Trunk) | 26 |
| Urdhva Jatrugata (Head & Neck) | 37 |
| Total | 107 |

Flow Chart 1: Conceptual Flow of Marma Vigyana

Anatomical Convergence
(Mamsa + Sira + Snayu + Asthi + Sandhi)



Clinical and Therapeutic Importance

Knowledge of Marma is essential in surgical procedures to avoid fatal complications. Therapeutically, Marma stimulation helps in pain management, neurological disorders, musculoskeletal conditions, and stress-related disorders. Marma therapy is gaining importance as a non-invasive holistic treatment modality.

Modern Anatomical Correlation

Marma points can be correlated with nerve plexuses, major blood vessels, vital organs, and endocrine glands. For instance, Hridaya Marma corresponds to the heart, while Shirah Marma relates to the brain and cranial nerves.

3. DISCUSSION

The detailed classification and prognostic approach of Marma Vigyana reflects the advanced anatomical knowledge of ancient Ayurvedic scholars. Modern trauma medicine also recognizes vital areas, validating the relevance of Marma science today. Integrative research may further establish its clinical utility.

4. CONCLUSION

Marma are vital life-supporting points that play a significant role in surgery, trauma care, and therapeutic practices. Proper understanding of Marma is essential for Ayurvedic practitioners and can contribute to holistic healthcare when integrated with modern medical knowledge.

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