

CRITICAL REVIEW ON SURGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF MARMA

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ABSTRACT

The word “*Marma*” had first appeared in *Atharva Veda*. *Marmas* are described as half of surgical topics. *Marma*, are the crucial areas of the body, if injured results either in death or deformity. *Marmas* are systematically classified based on structure, measurement, effect of injury etc. *Marmas* play a vital role during surgery, injuries witnessed in war fields and in accidents. Impact and effect of injuries on these vital areas are oftenly the decisive factors of life and death. Every precaution has been registered in *Samhitas* to protect these vital areas.

Keywords: *Marma*, Pain, Vital area, *Marmaghata*

INTRODUCTION

Marmas are the special and vital areas of the body. The term *Marma* is derived from the word *mṛnj* which means death. Injuries to these 107 *marmas* may results in severe pain, deformity and even results in death. These vital areas are to be avoided or special care should be taken in surgical and para surgical procedures. As many anatomical structures are underlying these *marmas* injuries may prove dangerous and fatal. *Brihatrayees* have explained in detail the concepts of *Marma* and its details of classifications, effect of injury etc. *Marma vishaya* is considered by *Acharya Sushruta* as of maximum importance and during each surgical explanation either he has mentioned the utmost careful measures or addressed to avoid them as much as possible. *Marma* is an entity which is understood as the site of life, support and utmost important area. As per *Dalhanas* explanation *marma* is that which kills. *Marma* has to be understood to that vital

area where *mamsa*, *sira*, *snayu*, *sandhi* and *Asthi* are present, where *prana* is located.¹

Relevance of Classification:

Marmas are classified based on *Rachana* (composition), *Sihana/Anga* (location), *Parinama* (impact of injury), *Pramana* (Measurement) and *Sankhya* (number). *Rachananusara* classification²: This classification reflects the anatomical relevance in understanding *marma*. *Marmas* are classified based on *Rachana* into *Mamsa marma*, *siramarma*, *snayu marma*, *Asthimarma* and *sandhi marma*. *Vagbhata* has added one more *Dhamani marma* in this classification. The dominant structure of that specific area is given the name for eg: *Janu* is a *Sandhi marma*. Apart from the existence of *Asthi*, *Snayu*, *Mamsa* and *Sira*, the dominant entity *sandhi* is referred and *Marma* is named in that specialty of classification.

Stananusara Classification³: This classification defines the identification and exact location of *Marma*.

Being classified as *Shakhagata, Prushta, udara, Uras* and *urdhwa jatrugata marma*, add to anatomical relevance of *Marma. Parinamanusara* Classification⁴: This classification is very rational and crucial and decide the prognosis of a condition. This classification includes *Sadyapranahara, Kalantarapranahara, Vaikalyakara, Vishalyaghna* and *Rujakara*. This classification is very decisive as it defines the role of anatomical structures in and around the *Marma*. Impact of the injury to a particular *marma pradesha* decides the effect in terms of this classification. Eg; If *Shankha marma* is injured it results in sudden death. *Pramanusanusara* classification⁵: This classification decides the area of a particular *marma* and thus a clue to a surgeon during surgery.

Sankhyanusara classification: This classification narates the numerical aspect of *marma*.

Importance of Trimarma: *Acharya Charaka* accepting the 107 *marmas*, explains the three *marmas Siras, Hridaya* and *Basti* in *Trimarmeeeya chikitsa*. In this chapter *Acharya* highlights the importance of these *marmas* and diseases and their treatment protocols⁶.

Acharya Charaka in *Siddhistana* explains the importance of these three *marmas* as follows⁷:

Hridaya: *Hridaya* has ten dhamanies, seat of *prana* and *vyana vata, sadhaka pitta, Avalambaka kapha,manas, buddhi* and *chetana sthana, moolasthanana* of *pranavaha* and *Rasavaha srotas* and also the seat of *paraajus*. Because of all these facts *Hridaya* is one among the *Dasha pranayatana* and *Sadyapranahara marma*. *Siras:* *Siras* is the seat of all *jnanendriyas* and their paths of *Indriya vishaya gnana*, if injured results in *cheshtanasha, chakshuvibhrama, hanugraha* etc.

Basti: *Basti* is situated in midst of *Guda, mushka, sevani, Shukra* and *mutra vahininadi* and controls their integrity.

Marmaghata Lakshanas: When a *Marma* is injured, results in either death or deformity. Depending upon the site there may be general (*samanya*) and specific symptoms. *Samanya lakshanas*⁸ include *Bhrama, pralapa, Moha, Moorcha, teevra ruja, Rudhira srava, Urdhwavata* and so on. *Vishesa viddha lakshanas* are specific to each *Marma*⁹ for Eg: If injury to *Urvee/*

Bahvee marma located in mid of thigh /arm results in *sakthishosha* (Dystrophy of Thigh / arm) due to *Shonita kshaya*. If injury over *Vitapa marma* located in between *Vankshana* (inguinal) and *Vrashana* area (scrotal) results in impotence and *Alpa shukrata*.

Impact of Injury¹⁰: *Sadyapranahara marma* is having the *Agni* dominance, when injured results in *viparyaya* of *Manas* and *buddhi* due to lack of *Gnana* perception from *Indriyas*. The resultant severe pain from impact of injury will result in immediate death. The signs and symptoms of Vasovegal, Cardiogenic and Hypovolaemic shocks usually present in the same manner. The cause of death here is either due to severe pain or massive haemorrhage. In *Kalantara pranahara marma* due to *Agni* and *soumya guna*, injured person may succumb to it within one month. This is due to *dhatukshaya* and also by the intensity of pain followed by the injury. *Vaikalyakara marmas* are *soumya*, and results in lifelong deformity. *Vishalyaghna marmas* are *vayu* predominance, until and unless the *shalya* is there in the injured site there will not be death but if otherwise results in disaster. *Rujakara marmas* are *Agni* and *vayu* dominance, the injury results in various types of chronic pain.

Precautionary Measures: Owing to the impact of *Marmaghata* and its sequels *Acharyas* have enlisted certain precautions.

Ashmari Chikitsa: *Acharya Sushruta* has instructed the surgeon to take the permission from King or higher authority before *Ashmari nirharana shastra karma*. When the surgeon locates the *Ashmari* during *Shastrakarma* of *Ashmari*, he has to inspect the face of the patient before taking the incision, if *Vivrataksa* and loss of conscious (*vichetana*) is observed then instructed to stop the procedure¹¹. At the concluding *shloka* of the chapter highlights eight parts in and around *Basti* as *Ashta marmas* and instructed always to protect them from injury during Surgery.¹²

Kshara Karma: In *Pradesha vishesha* (location wise) contra indications of *Kshara prayoga*, *Sushruta* lists *marma pradesha* as a first place where *kshara karma* should not to be done.¹³

Agnikarma, Application of *kshara* and *visha Dravyas* should be avoided in *Marma Pradesha* as area of

Marma is vital.¹⁴ *Shalya nirharana*: When a *Marma* is injured, *Vata* aggravates in and around the affected area and results in the pain. The pain may be intensified to the extent of loss of consciousness, so it is the duty of the surgeon to examine the patient thoroughly before removing the *Shalya*.¹⁵

Prognosis of Marmaghata:

The slight injury over these *Marma* may result in serious effects, which are difficult to cure. The disorders even which are affecting *Marma pradesha* are also challenging and should be handled with great efforts.¹⁶ *Marmaghata* even it is minor, either results in death or Deformity.¹⁷

Treatment:

Diseases affecting *Marma Pradesha* are deep seated and they are usually difficult to treat. But by the utmost efforts of *Vaidya* they can be managed.¹⁸ While explaining the management of injury to *Shakha marma*, *Acharya Vagbhata* explains, if a *Marma* is injured, amputation shall be executed quickly at the nearer and proximal joint, as vasoconstriction occurs and results in Haemostasis. The life of a person is saved when bleeding is stopped.¹⁹ *Acharya Sushruta* also recommends amputation at the level of *Manibandha* and *Gulphapradesha* when there is an injury to *kshipra* and *Tala hridaya marma* and may results in fatal consequences due to bleeding and severe pain. Amputation Constrict the vessels and bleeding is arrested, and life of a person is saved.²⁰

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 im-

portance of *Ashtamarmas* in the conclusive verse of *Ashmari chikitsa*, itself is an outstanding example to protect the *Marmas*.

CONCLUSION

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 *Bhootatma* reside in these *Marma pradesha*, injury on these areas are usually fatal. Knowledge of *Marma* is fundamental in *Shalya tantra* and considered as half of surgical topics.

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