



MARMA CHIKITSA IN FROZEN SHOULDER (AVBAHUKA)- A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Marma Chikitsa is an ancient healing system from India and has roots in *Ayurveda* and martial arts traditions, particularly *Kalaripayattu* ("practice in the arts of the battlefield."). The word "*Marma (vital points)*" refers to vital energy points in the body, and "*Chikitsa (Treatments)*" means treatment or therapy. *Marma Chikitsa* is a therapeutic practice involving manipulating and stimulating these vital points to promote physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. The present case is of a Frozen shoulder also known as adhesive capsulitis. The condition severely affected the movement of the shoulder joint. The patient has no history of recent trauma or any metabolic disorder like Diabetes mellitus, Hypertension or thyroid disorders. Treatment of Frozen shoulder (adhesive capsulitis) with medications and surgery is a very tedious job for the physician/surgeons. The condition is similar to *Avbahuka*, in Ayurvedic literature. The patient's main concern was pain and restriction in the movement of the shoulder joint. In the present case study, *marma Chikitsa* has been employed in the case of frozen shoulder and the results were very encouraging. This case report suggests that *Marmachikitsa* should be considered an effective option for the medical and surgical management of frozen shoulder cases.

Key Words: Frozen shoulder, Adhesive capsulitis, *Avbahuka*, *marma Chikitsa*, Ayurveda.

INTRODUCTION

*Marma Chikitsa*¹, an integral component of traditional Indian medicine, traces its roots back to ancient times. This therapeutic system is deeply ingrained in the philosophies of *Ayurveda* and Siddha medicine, which have been practiced for thousands of years to promote physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. *Marma Chikitsa* revolves around the concept of *Marma* points, vital energy points within the body that are pivotal for the regulation of life force, or *Prana*. The word "*Marma*" is derived from the Sanskrit language, meaning hidden or secret. In *Ayurveda* "*Marma*²" denotes the specific point which may cause death, if injured severely. These *Marma* points are specific areas

where various anatomical and physiological elements, such as muscles, ligaments, veins, bones, and joints, converge³. There are a total of 107 recognized *Marma* points⁴, and each point is believed to correspond to a specific organ or function in the body. The practice of *Marma Chikitsa* involves the stimulation and manipulation of these *Marma* points through a range of techniques, including massage, pressure, tapping, and the application of herbal oils or pastes. The objective of *Marma* therapy is to harmonize and optimize the flow of *Prana* throughout the body, ensuring a balance in the body's life energy⁵. *Marma Chikitsa* operates on the fundamental

principle that the human body is a dynamic network of energy channels, and any disruption in the flow of this vital energy can lead to various ailments and imbalances. By working on the *Marma* points, practitioners can correct these imbalances and restore the body to a state of equilibrium, enhancing overall health and healing. The benefits of *Marma Chikitsa* are multifaceted and encompass both physical and psychological aspects. Physically, *Marma* therapy is utilized to address a wide array of ailments, including musculoskeletal disorders, neurological issues, digestive problems, respiratory disorders, circulatory concerns, and more. By stimulating the *Marma* points, practitioners can alleviate pain, improve flexibility, enhance circulation, and facilitate the body's natural healing mechanisms. Moreover, *Marma Chikitsa* is also highly regarded for its positive impact on mental and emotional well-being⁷. It is known to reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, promoting mental clarity, focus, and relaxation. By balancing the *Prana* (Vital energy) flow within the body, individuals often experience heightened levels of vitality, mental resilience, and emotional stability. Frozen shoulder⁸ is a chronic idiopathic condition characterized by pain and restriction in the shoulder joint movement, also known as adhesive capsulitis, which is more commonly affecting elderly females. It has shown some association with diabetes, Heart and thyroid disease. Diagnosis is made on clinical grounds because X-rays don't show any changes. The management in modern medicine includes the pain killer drugs followed by injection of steroids in the glenohumeral joint, surgical treatment includes manipulation of the shoulder joint under

anaesthesia and arthroscopic release of the tight fibres of the capsules. In *Ayurveda*, the same condition may be correlated with the *Avbahuka*⁹, The *vata dosha* is vitiated in this condition. Acharya Sushruta in *Sushruta samhita Chikitsa sthan* mentioned the treatment¹⁰ that includes *vaman* (Therapeutic vomiting) and *nasya karma* (medication through nasal route). Both the treatment options advised by Acharya Sushruta are very difficult to intervene in any patient as a lot of preparation and time is required before starting treatment, and both therapies are not feasible in most patients. *Marma* therapy is an ancient therapy that is now trending as it does not require much preparation and is not an issue of feasibility. There are no adverse effects of the *marma* therapy, which may occur in modern medicines. *Marma* therapy is quick in action easy to administer and very cost-effective without any adverse effects and very little chance of recurrence. *Marma Chikitsa* complements other Ayurvedic treatments along with yoga and meditation practices. It is important to note, however, that *Marma* therapy should be administered by well-trained and experienced practitioners to ensure its safety and effectiveness. Understanding the precise location and significance of each *Marma* point is crucial to harness the full potential of this ancient healing art. So we have taken this present study as a case of frozen shoulder, where *marma Chikitsa* has been intervened and the results were very encouraging. The present study is a case report of the frozen shoulder (Adhesive capsulitis), where *Marmachikitsa* has been administered. The case was unique in terms of severity and non-association of the usual causative factors.

AIM OF STUDY:

The study aimed to assess the effect of *Marma Chikitsa* in the management of Frozen shoulder (*Avbahuka*).

Patient information

The present study is a case of 58yrs Female suffering from a frozen shoulder on the left side for the last six months. The patient was attended in OPD no 2 (*Shalya tantra*) of A tertiary Centre of *Ayurveda* in Shillong Meghalaya. There was no history of diabetes mellitus, Hypertension, Thyroid disorder or any other metabolic disorders. The patient was investigated for routine blood and urine investigation but there were nothing significant found. There is no relevant family history found. The patient has taken treatment from several hospitals in allopathy which includes calcium supplements and Analgesic drugs, but those drugs are not helping the patient's condition. The two main complaints of the patients were pain in the left shoulder and restriction in the movement of the affected shoulder joint. The diagnosis was made based on the history and physical examination. On X-Ray of the shoulder joint bony structure has no sign of arthritis or any other significant changes in the structure of the

shoulder joint or any trauma. After obtaining written informed consent from the patients, the *marma Chikitsa* along with local *Nadi swedana* (Steam fomentation) with *Maha Narayan tail* (*Ayurvedic* classical oil preparation for local application) was used at the time of the *marma Chikitsa*. The patient was advised to visit OPD (Outpatient Door) for the *nadi swedana* daily and on alternate days for *Marma Chikitsa* sitting. Written informed consent has been taken from the patient before starting the therapy.

Clinical findings and assessments

There are two clinical symptoms, pain in the affected joint and restriction in the movement of the same joint. These are only two main concerns of the patient. The patient was seeking management for these two complaints. The effect of therapy on the patient was assessed by two parameters i.e. Pain and Range of movement in the left shoulder joint. The pain was assessed on a Visual Analog Scale (VAS) scale and Active range of motion (AROM) to assess the movement in the affected joint. Assessment was done on the before treatment on the 4th sitting and on the 8th sitting.

Table: 1. Assesment Criteria

S.N.	Parameter	Before treatment	4 th sitting	8 th sitting
1	Pain (on VAS Scale)	9	4	1
2	AROM in degree	90 ⁰	120 ⁰	170 ⁰

Table -2 Dashvidha pariksha

SN	Dashvidha pariksha	Assessment
1.	<i>Prakruti</i>	<i>Kapha vata</i>
2.	<i>Vikruti</i>	<i>Vata kapha</i>
3.	<i>Sara</i>	<i>Medosar</i>

4.	<i>Samhanana</i>	<i>Pravara</i>
5.	<i>Pramaan</i>	<i>Madhyama</i>
6.	<i>Satmya</i>	<i>Pravara</i>
7.	<i>Satva</i>	<i>Madhyama</i>
8.	<i>Ahaar shakti</i>	<i>Madhyama</i>
9.	<i>Vyayaam Shakti</i>	<i>Heen</i>
10.	<i>Vaya</i>	<i>Prodhavastha</i>

Table -3 Astavidha pariksha

SN	<i>Astavidha pariksha</i>	<i>Assessment</i>
1.	<i>Nadi</i>	<i>Kapha vata</i>
2.	<i>Mutra</i>	<i>Samanya</i>
3.	<i>Mala</i>	<i>Samanya</i>
4.	<i>Jihvya</i>	<i>Samanya</i>
5.	<i>Shabda</i>	<i>Samanya</i>
6.	<i>Sparsha</i>	<i>Sheet & snigdha</i>
7.	<i>Driga</i>	<i>Samanya</i>
8.	<i>Akriti</i>	<i>Samanya</i>

Intervention of marmachikitsa:

The *marma Chikitsa* in the patient was given by a trained professional, who has appropriate knowledge of disease conditions and the *marma* points. The main *marma* points¹¹ which were manipulated in the patient were, *Talahridaya* (*hypothenar space*), *Manibandha* (*wrist joint*), *Kurpara* (*elbow joint*), *Ani*(*Anterior aspect of upper arm*), *Amsa*(*shoulder*), *Amsaphalaka* (*lateral side of upper back*), and *c*. The procedure is done in the sitting position, the patient was made to sit straight. Before starting the affected site has been given *nadiswedana*. The oil used in the therapy was a little warm. The first step is to apply oil in the *Talahridaya marma* and the

marma point is activated with light compression through the pulp of the right thumb. After *Talahridaya Manibandha marma* is activated, and progressively reaches up to *Amsaphalaka*, one by one *marma*. The pressure was applied in optimal amounts. After stimulation of *Amsaphalaka* the *Mudiccu varmmam* point was manipulated with both thumb and movement were done in a clockwise and anticlockwise direction bilaterally. After that, the pressure is extended from the central point in either direction up to the end of the deltoid muscles. Again the manipulation of *marma* starts from *amsaphalaka* and moves distally towards the *Talahridaya marma* in the same manner. After the stimulation of *marma*

points the patient was encouraged to move her shoulder in a clockwise and anti-clockwise direction followed by adduction, abduction, and extension in the joint. The complete therapy takes 5-7 minutes for one sitting. The patient was asked about the pain on a one to ten scale and the range of motion was measured with the help of a goniometer. The patient was advised to do the shoulder joint exercise advised by the trained physiotherapist at her home for the next 15 days. The patient was followed for 6 months and no recurrence was reported by the patient.

Follow-up and outcomes:

The patient has received the intervention on each alternate day for 15 days. The effect of the therapy was assessed on the 7th day and 15th day of the treatment. After completion of the interventions, the patient was advised to do shoulder exercises at home for the next 15 days. The patient has been followed till 6 months after she became symptom-free, but no recurrence was reported.

DISCUSSION

It's important to note that *Marma Chikitsa* is deeply rooted in traditional Indian medicine systems like *Ayurveda*, Siddha, and Yoga. While it has a long history of use and is believed to provide therapeutic benefits, scientific evidence supporting its efficacy for musculoskeletal disorders is still evolving. It is advised to always consult a qualified healthcare professional before trying any alternative or traditional therapies for musculoskeletal issues.

In the context of musculoskeletal disorders, *Marma Chikitsa* is thought to operate through several mechanisms, in the present case the patient has pain in the shoulder joint before therapy 9 on the VAS scale which comes to 4 on the 4th sitting and 1 on the 8th sitting, which shows a

very significant improvement in the subsiding the pain in the affected joint. The second concern of the patient was a restriction in the movement, before starting therapy the movement was 90⁰ which extended to 170⁰ at the end of the therapy. This was also a very significant improvement.

Energy Balancing and Flow Enhancement:

Marma points are believed to be junctions of vital life energy (*prana*) within the body. By stimulating these points, we aim to balance the flow of energy, which is to be disrupted in musculoskeletal disorders like frozen shoulder. This balance is thought to aid in the healing and rejuvenation of affected tissues of the shoulder joint.

Nervous System Regulation:

Marma Chikitsa influences the nervous system by stimulating or calming specific *marma* points. This has a regulatory effect on the central and peripheral nervous systems, potentially reducing pain and promoting relaxation in muscles near the shoulder joint.

Stimulation of Pressure Points:

Stimulation of *marma* points often involves applying pressure or massage techniques. This pressure targets muscle knots, tension, and trigger points, helping to alleviate muscle stiffness, improve blood circulation, and reduce pain associated with shoulder joint.

Release of Toxins and Blockages:

Marma Chikitsa is thought to aid in the removal of metabolic waste and toxins accumulated in the muscles near the shoulder joint. By stimulating *marma* points, our aim is to release these toxins and clear any blockages in the body's energy pathways.

Promotion of Tissue Healing and Repair:

Stimulation of *marma* points is believed to enhance the flow of nutrients and oxygen to the affected tissues, promoting healing and repair. Improved circulation and oxygenation may help reduce inflammation and support tissue regeneration in the surrounding of the affected shoulder joint.

Enhanced Joint Mobility and Flexibility:

Marma Chikitsa techniques target *marma* points associated with shoulder joint and adjoining muscles, aiming to enhance joint mobility and flexibility. By focusing on these points, our aim is to reduce stiffness and increase the range of motion in the affected shoulder joint.

The main challenge faced in the case was the initial counselling of the patient, for the intervention, because patients always seeking medications for any type of treatment. As anybody can appreciate the *Marma chikitsa* is working from various angles discussed above. *Marma chikitsa* enhances the flow of energy, stimulates and regulates the nervous systems, and by stimulating the pressure points it releases the stored metabolic toxins and improves the healing of the tissue.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, *Marma Chikitsa* stands as a testament to the wisdom of ancient Indian healing practices. In this particular case, the intervention is only *Marma Chikitsa* without any oral medication which makes this therapy a safe, efficient and cost-effective management option for the frozen shoulder with less recurrence and no associated adverse effects. The main takeaway from the case report is that *Marmachikitsa* is a very good option for the treatment in comparison to the medical as well as surgical intervention which

takes more time and requires more hospitalization that increases the cost of the treatment. But for more concrete and widely acceptable results, a multicentre trial on a large sample size should be done. Its emphasis on balancing the body's life force through precise manipulation of *Marma* points makes it a powerful tool for holistic well-being, encompassing physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of health. As individuals continue to seek natural and holistic approaches to healing, *Marma Chikitsa* holds a significant place in the realm of traditional medicine and holistic wellness.

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Images :1

Before treatment (1)



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Images :2

after treatment (2)



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