



Marmachikitsa (Therapy) In Head, Neck, And Ocular Health

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KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT:

Background:

Marma Shareera, one of the vital concepts of Ayurveda, is a therapeutic science based on the stimulation and regulation of marma points—vital anatomical and energetic centres where Prana (life force) is concentrated. The head and neck region houses several major marma points that directly influence sensory organs, cognitive functions, and neuromuscular balance, particularly impacting ocular and neurological health.

Objective:

To understand the role and therapeutic application of Marma Chikitsa in promoting head, neck, and ocular health through the activation of specific marma points and to assess its potential in managing related disorders.

Methods:

A review of classical Ayurveda texts like Sushruta Samhita and Ashtanga Hridaya, and contemporary studies on marma therapy was conducted. The anatomical location, functional significance, and therapeutic indications of major head and neck marma, such as Sthapani, Avarta, Apanga, Adhipati, Vidhura, Manya, Neela, Matruka, Phana, Shanka, and Krukatika were analyzed. Practical techniques, including gentle stimulation, Abhyanga (oil massage), Nasya (nasal therapy), and Netra Tarpana (ocular nourishment), were performed and evaluated for their physiological and therapeutic effects in the Marma OPD of SDM College of Ayurveda.

Results:

Stimulation of cranial and cervical marma points demonstrated significant benefits in relieving headaches, migraines, cervical stiffness, eye strain, and anxiety. Enhanced blood circulation, neural conductivity, and ocular function were observed as major outcomes. Marma therapy showed potential as a non-invasive, holistic intervention to harmonize Vata–Pitta dosha and strengthen the Prana Vaha Srotas (vital energy channels).

Conclusion:

Marma Chikitsa serves as an effective integrative approach for maintaining and restoring the health of head, neck, and eyes. By harmonizing the subtle and physical energies through precise marma activation, it promotes neuromuscular relaxation, visual clarity, and mental



tranquillity. Further clinical research is warranted to substantiate its efficacy through modern scientific parameters.

Introduction

Ayurveda recognizes *marma* as vital energy points where *Mamsa* (muscle), *Sira* (vessels), *Snayu* (ligaments), *Asthi* (bone), and *Sandhi* (joints) meet¹. These are centres of life energy (*Prana*), and their stimulation or injury can influence both physiological and psychological functions. According to *Sushruta*, there are 107 *marma* points² recognized in the human

body, of which around 37 are located in the head and neck region³.

The head (*Shiras*) is considered the seat of all sensory organs (*Indriya*), while the neck (*Griva Pradesha*) forms a vital channel between the brain and body. The practice of *Marma Chikitsa* helps harmonize *Vata* and *Pitta dosha*, enhance *Prana Vata* flow, and nourish the nervous and sensory systems.

Marma Name	Location	Number	Physiological Significance
Adhipati Marma⁴ (Fig 1)	Crown of head (<i>Brahmarandhra</i>)	1	Governs higher consciousness, brain, and pineal-pituitary axis.
Simanta Marma⁵ (Fig 2)	Along the sagittal suture	5	Regulate mental stability, cerebrospinal fluid flow.
Sthapani Marma⁶ (Fig 3)	Between the eyebrows	1	Controls intellect, pituitary function, relieves headache.
Avarta Marma⁷ (Fig 4)	Above each eyebrow	2	Improve vision, relieve frontal headache.
Apanga Marma⁸ (Fig 5)	Outer corner of each eye	2	Influence optic nerves, reduce eye strain.
Utkshepa Marma⁹ (Fig 6)	Temporal region above Ears	2	Related to hearing, balance, and temporal lobe circulation.
Phana Marma¹⁰ (Fig 7)	On either side of the nose	2	Regulate breathing, olfactory function, sinuses, and oxygenation to brain and eyes.
Ashta-Matruka Marma¹¹ (Fig 8)	Four on each side of the neck (total 8)	8	Represent carotid and jugular regions; control cerebral blood flow and voice regulation.



Manya Marma¹² (Fig 9)	Lateral sides of neck (near carotid arteries)	2	Maintain speech, respiration, and blood supply to brain.
Neela Marma¹³ (Fig 9)	Near the thyroid region, mid-neck	2	Regulate thyroid, voice, and neuroendocrine balance.
Krukatika Marma¹⁴ (Fig 10)	Junction of head and neck	2	Control cervical movement, lymphatic and neural coordination.
Vidhura marma¹⁵ (Fig 11)	Posterior to Ear lobule	2	Controls Auditory and Equilibrium

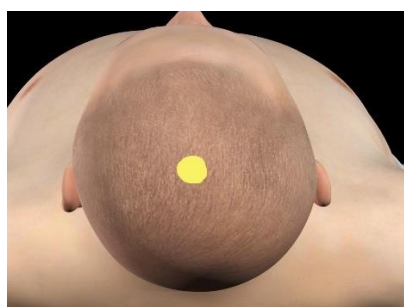


Fig 1

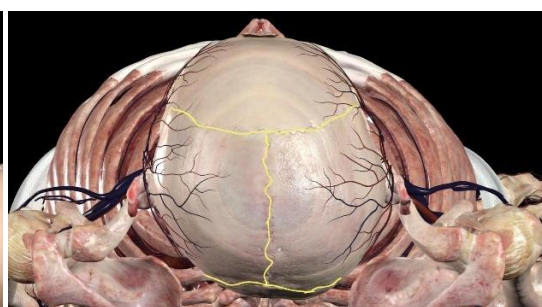


Fig 2

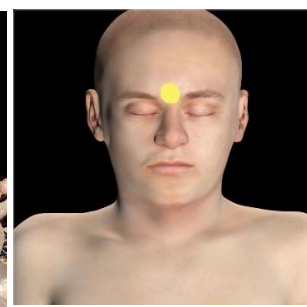


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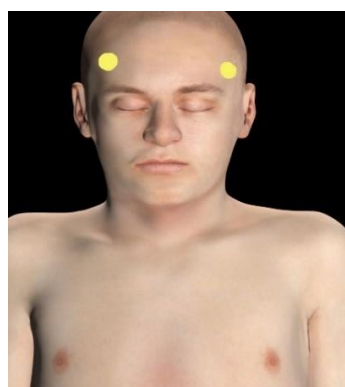


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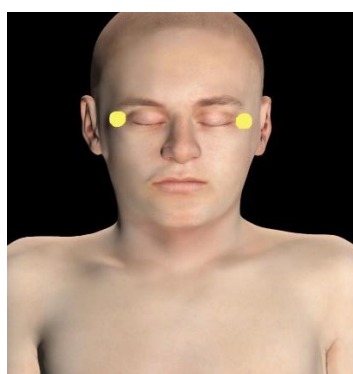


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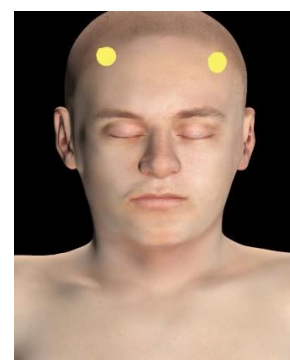


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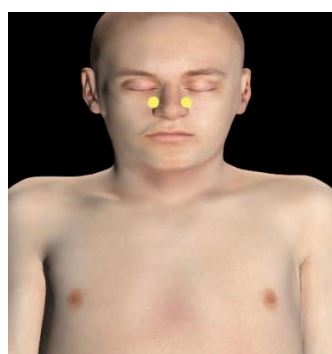


Fig 7

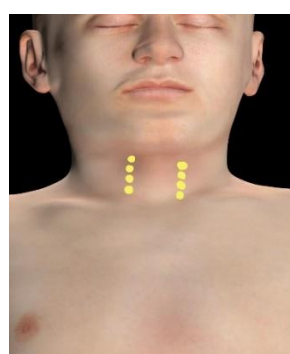


Fig 8

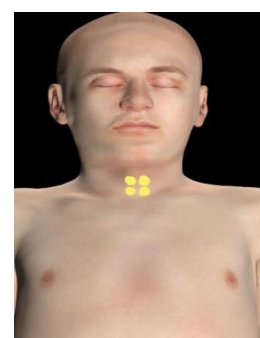


Fig 9

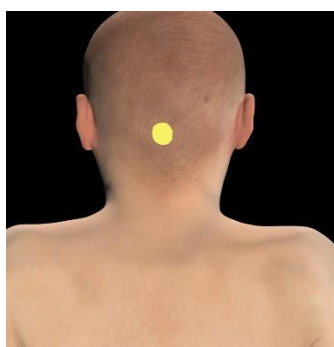


Fig 10



Fig 11

Physiological Significance of Head and Neck *Marma*

1. Neurological Regulation:

Stimulation of *Adhipati*, *Simanta*, and *Sthapani marma* enhances neural conductivity, cerebral blood flow, and autonomic nervous system function.

2. Sensory Integration:

Krukatika, *Ashta-Matruka*, and *Manya marma* maintain smooth blood and lymphatic flow between the brain and peripheral organs, ensuring adequate oxygenation.

They help maintain congruency of the atlanto-occipito-axial joint and the patency of the foramen magnum.

3. Hormonal and Mental Balance:

The *Sthapani marma* corresponds to the hypothalamo-pituitary axis, influencing hormonal secretion and emotional stability.

It is also related with the *Agna Chakra* and its regulatory functions.

4. Pranic and *Dosha* Equilibrium:

Regular *marma* activation harmonizes *Vata* (neural flow) and *Pitta* (metabolic activity), ensuring clear perception and calm cognition.

It keeps the cerebro-somatic axis free of toxins (*Dusti*), supporting initiation and conduction of various sensory and motor functions without obstruction.

5. Optic Health:

Avarta and *Apanga marma* are related to the course of the middle cerebral artery and its distribution along the lateral sulcus to Wernicke's area and the visual cortex.

Injury to these *marma* may result in visual impairment and blindness.

The *Vidhura marma* point is also associated with the emergence of the facial nerve through the stylomastoid

foramen, and its branches supply the orbicularis muscles and eyelids.

Techniques of *Marma* Therapy

1. *Mardana* (Gentle Pressure and Massage)

- *Mardana* refers to rhythmic pressure or circular massage on *marma* using fingertips or palms.

- **Duration:** 1–3 minutes per point.

- **Benefits:** Activates local energy flow, improves circulation, and reduces stiffness¹⁶.

- **Recommended oils:** *Brahmi Taila*, *Ksheera Bala Taila*, *Mahararayana Taila*¹⁷.

- Particularly effective for *Sthapani*, *Avarta*, *Apanga*, *Krukatika*, and *Manya marma*.

2. *Abhyanga* (Oil Application and Massage)

- Warm medicated oils are applied to the head and neck in gentle strokes.

- Promotes lymphatic drainage, relaxation, and nourishment of neural tissues¹⁸.

- **Common formulations:** *Chandanadi Taila*, *Bala–Ashwagandha Taila*.

3. *Nasya* (Nasal Administration)

- Instillation of medicated oils such as *Anu Taila* or *Shadbindu Taila* through the nostrils.

- Acts directly on cranial *marma*, enhances oxygenation, and prevents neurodegeneration.

- Beneficial in sinusitis, headache, vision defects, and stress disorders¹⁹.

4. *Netra Tarpana* (Ocular Rejuvenation)



- Medicated ghee such as *Triphala Ghrita*²⁰ is retained around the eyes in a well-made dough boundary.
- Nourishes optic nerves, relieves dryness, and strengthens *Apanga* and *Avarta marma*.

5. Pranic Touch and Meditation

- Gentle touch on *Adhipati* and *Sthapani marma* with synchronized breathing.
- Balances the mind–body connection and stimulates *Sattva Guna*²¹.

Condition	Involved <i>Marmas</i>	Therapeutic Procedures
Eye fatigue, computer vision syndrome	<i>Apanga, Avarta, Phana</i>	<i>Mardana, Netra Tarpana, Nasya</i>
Sinusitis and nasal obstruction	<i>Phana, Sthapani</i>	<i>Nasya, Mardana</i>
Migraine, stress headache	<i>Sthapani, Utkshepa, Simanta</i>	<i>Abhyanga, Shirodhara, Mardana</i>
Insomnia, anxiety, depression	<i>Adhipati, Neela, Sthapani</i>	<i>Shiro Abhyanga, Meditation, Nasya</i>
Cervical spondylosis, neck stiffness	<i>Krkatika, Manya, Neela, Ashta-Matruka</i>	<i>Abhyanga, Mardana, Swedana</i>
Thyroid imbalance, hoarseness of voice	<i>Neela, Manya</i>	<i>Mardana, Warm oil application</i>
Ocular nerve weakness, blurred vision	<i>Apanga, Avarta, Phana</i>	<i>Netra Tarpana, Marma stimulation</i>

Scientific Correlation

Modern physiology supports the Ayurvedic concept of *marma* as functional neurovascular junctions:

- Marma* points correspond to peripheral nerve plexuses, arterial junctions, venous drainage, and lymphatic nodes.
- Sthapani* and *Adhipati marma* align with regions rich in autonomic and endocrine activity, such as the frontal lobe and pineal–pituitary axis.
- Manya* and *Krkatika marma* correlate with the carotid sinus and cervical sympathetic ganglia, regulating blood pressure and cranial perfusion.
- Apanga* and *Avarta marma* correspond anatomically to the supraorbital and infraorbital nerves, influencing ocular and facial sensations.
- Scientific studies on acupressure and neuromodulation parallel the effects of *marma* stimulation, showing reductions in stress hormones (cortisol) and activation of parasympathetic responses.

Mode of Action

- Activation of mechanoreceptors:** Pressure stimulates cutaneous and deep mechanoreceptors like Meissner’s, Pacinian, and Ruffini corpuscles in the skin and underlying tissues²². These receptors send afferent impulses via A-beta sensory fibres to the spinal cord and brainstem.
- Gate Control Theory:** Helps in modulation of pain and muscle tone. Incoming sensory signals inhibit pain transmission by closing the “pain gate” at the dorsal horn of the spinal cord, reducing pain perception and muscle tone²³.
- Neurochemical Release:** Pressure on vulnerable *marma* points triggers the release of endorphins, serotonin, and enkephalins, promoting relaxation, pain relief, and mood elevation²⁴.
- Autonomic Nervous System Modulation:** Enhances autonomic nervous system balance by shifting from sympathetic (stress dominance) to parasympathetic (healing/repair dominance).



- **Improved Circulation:** Improves micro-blood circulation and lymphatic drainage by supplying more oxygen to tissues and aiding detoxification²⁵.

Some *marma* points are directly related to cranial nerves and the cervical plexus, connecting to neurovascular reflex arcs. Their stimulation enhances cerebral blood flow and cranial nerve coordination.

As per Ayurvedic perspective, *marma* stimulation acts through *pranic* and *tridoshic* balance:

- ***Pranavayu Sancharana* – regulates nerve impulse**
- ***Vayu Prakopa Shamana* – restoration of circulatory balance**
- ***Srotoshodana* – improves microcirculation and detoxification**
- ***Indriya Prasadana* – rejuvenation of sensory and motor faculties**
- ***Manovaha Srota Prasadana* – mental calmness and stress reduction**

Precautions to Be Followed

- Avoid excessive pressure; *marma* are highly sensitive.
- Do not perform *marma* therapy during fever, infection, or acute neurological crisis.
- Always use warm oil and calm breathing during practice.
- Therapies should be administered by trained Ayurvedic professionals.

Conclusion

Gentle *marma* stimulation restores *Prana* energy flow, clears *Avarana* (obstruction) of *Vata*, and enhances *Ojas* (vital strength). *Marma Chikitsa* offers a comprehensive, non-invasive therapeutic approach for enhancing head, neck, and

ocular health. Through techniques such as *Mardana*, *Abhyanga*, *Nasya*, and *Netra Tarpana*, it harmonizes *Prana* and strengthens neurovascular and sensory functions.

The head and neck *marma*-especially *Sthapani*, *Adhipati*, *Apanga*, *Krukatika*, *Matruka*, and *Manya*—play pivotal roles in maintaining neurological stability and ocular vitality.

When correlated with modern anatomy, *marma* represents vital neurosensory and vascular junctions, demonstrating Ayurveda's deep understanding of human physiology. Future research integrating *marma* therapy with neuroscientific models can provide evidence-based validation for its therapeutic efficacy in neuro-ocular health.

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