



ROLE OF MARMA THERAPY IN ANANTAVATA: A SINGLE CASE STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TRIGEMINAL NEURALGIA

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Abstract

Anantavata is a severe Vatika Shiroroga described in classical Ayurvedic texts, presenting with intense, recurrent, unilateral pain involving the head, face, eyes, ears, jaw, and neck. The clinical presentation of Anantavata closely resembles Trigeminal Neuralgia (TN), a chronic neuropathic pain disorder affecting the fifth cranial nerve. Contemporary management of TN relies on anticonvulsants and invasive neurosurgical procedures, which often provide temporary relief with significant adverse effects. Ayurveda offers a holistic, non-invasive therapeutic approach through Marma Chikitsa, which involves stimulation of vital energy points to regulate Prana, balance Doshas, and restore neuromuscular coordination. This article aims to evaluate the role of Marma Therapy in the management of Anantavata with special reference to Trigeminal Neuralgia

Keywords: Anantavata, Trigeminal Neuralgia, Marma Chikitsa, Shiroroga, Vata Vyadhi, Craniofacial Neuralgia

Introduction

Anantavata is enumerated among the most painful Shirorogas in Ayurveda. Acharya Sushruta describes Anantavata as a Tridoshaja condition with predominance of Vata, producing piercing and tearing pain extending from the neck to the eyes, ears, teeth, and temporal region. Trigeminal Neuralgia, described in modern neurology, presents with sudden electric shock-like facial pain along the distribution of the trigeminal nerve. The striking similarity in Nidana, Lakshana, and Vedana Prakriti allows a strong Ayurvedic correlation between Anantavata and TN.

Concept of Anantavata in Ayurveda

Nirukti and Definition

The term *Anantavata* denotes incessant, spreading pain (*Ananta = continuous; Vata = pain-producing Dosha*). Acharya Charaka explains that vitiated Vata localized in Shiras produces severe Vedana and functional impairment.

Nidana

- Excessive exposure to cold and dry wind
- Suppression of natural urges
- Excessive speaking, shouting, or chewing hard substances
- Mental stress and anxiety

Lakshana (Clinical Features)

- Unilateral severe facial pain
- Pain radiating to eyes, ears, teeth, and neck
- Jaw stiffness and neck rigidity
- Recurrent episodic attacks

Samprapti

Vitiated Vata along with Pitta and Kapha lodges in Shira, Greeva, and Hanugata Srotas, involving Prana and Udana Vata, leading to extreme neuralgic pain .

Trigeminal Neuralgia: Modern Correlation

Trigeminal Neuralgia is caused by neurovascular compression, demyelination, or idiopathic degeneration of the trigeminal nerve. It manifests as paroxysmal, unilateral facial pain triggered by light touch, chewing, or speaking. The episodic nature, trigger zones, and unilateral distribution show close resemblance to Anantavata Lakshana.

Concept of Marma and Marma Chikitsa

Acharya Sushruta defines Marma as vital points where Mamsa, Sira, Snayu, Asthi, and Sandhi intersect and where Prana resides . He warns that injury or imbalance at Marma sites leads to severe pain, deformity, or death, highlighting their therapeutic importance.

Marma Chikitsa involves controlled stimulation of these points to normalize Pranic flow, pacify Vata, and restore neuromuscular coordination.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVE :

To study the role of Marma Therapy in management of Anantava with special reference to Trigeninal Neuralgia.

MATERIAL AND METHODS :

CASE PRESENTATION Patient Details:

- Age: 40 years
- Gender: Female
- Occupation:

Occupation: Beautician

- Medical History: No significant systemic illnesses; occasional seasonal allergies.

▪ Symptoms: A 40-year-old female patient presented with unilateral right-sided facial pain for 4 years, diagnosed as Trigeminal Neuralgia by a neurologist. Pain was sharp, electric shock-like, recurrent, and triggered by chewing, brushing teeth, and speaking. The condition was refractory to long-term carbamazepine therapy.

Diagnosis: The patient was diagnosed with TN based on clinical examination and patient-reported symptoms, consistent with Ayurvedic diagnosis of Anantavata.

Treatment Plan: Marmas used in Marma therapy for Anantavata.

Treatment	Marma therapy
Treatment given	Marma therapy - twice one minute for each Marma.
Treatment duration	7 days
After treatment	8 th day
Follow up period	20thday, 30th day
Total study duration	30 days

TREATMENT PROTOCOL :

SN	Marma points	Stimulation time	Marma therapy sittings	Total time period
1	Adhipati	0.8sec	Twice daily	30 days
2	Simanta	0.8sec	Twice daily	30 days
3	Utsepa	0.8sec	Twice daily	30 days
4	Shankha	0.8sec	Twice daily	30 days
5	Apang	0.8sec	Twice daily	30 days
6	Avrata	0.8sec	Twice daily	30 days
7	Sthapani	0.8sec	Twice daily	30 days
8	Vidhur	0.8sec	Twice daily	30 days
9	Krikatika	0.8sec	Twice daily	30 days

According to their anatomical location of Marma points, every Marma point will be stimulated for 15-18 times on an average in single sitting.

1. Adhipati Marma – The Adhipati Marma is located at the top most portions of the head. The stimulation is done by joining tip of all four fingers and thumb. There are also two different postures from which stimulation of these Marmas are performed.

2. Simanta Marma- The Simanta Marma is situated on all the four side of head. Put both the hands on the head. Join the tip of fingers of both the hand (Coronal and sagittal sutures) and put the thumb on back side of head (Lambdoid sutures). The pressure is applied by the tip of finger and thumb.

3. Utkepa Marma - Utkhepa Marma Situated above the temples at borders of hair line. The stimulation is done by either by the tip of index finger or middle finger.

4. Sankha Marma - Shankha Marmas are located above the outer end of the eyebrows, in between the Karna and Lalata. The stimulation is done by either by the tip of index finger or middle finger.

5. Sthapni Marma- The Sthapni Marma is located between the eyebrow. The stimulation is done by the pulp of the thumb is kept over the Sthapani Marma, upward and inward pressure is given to stimulate.

6. Apanga Marma – The Apanga Marmas are situated on Bhropuchha Adho (eyebrows below outside the eye). A gentle pressure has been applied with the help of tip of index finger on both sides.

7. Avarta Marma- The Avarta Marmas are situated in the centre the eyebrows, in the upper border of orbital cavity, on the forehead. The stimulation is done by thumb pressure directly upwards and posteriorly.

8. Vidhura Marma - The Vidhura Marma is located on the back side of ear. The pressure has been applied on Vidhura Marma with the help of thumb in posterior aspect of ear.

9. Krikatika Marma - The Vidhura Marma is located on the junction of head and neck. A gentle pressure has been applied with the help of tip of index finger on both sides.

Assessment Criteria

Pain intensity was assessed using the Visual Analogue Scale (VAS).

Parameter	Before Treatment	After 30 Days
VAS Score	9/10	3/10
Frequency of attacks/day	8–10	2–3
Duration of pain episode	30–60 sec	5–10 sec

Mode of Action of Marma Therapy

Ayurvedic Perspective

- Pacification of aggravated Vata Dosha
- Regulation of Prana Vata
- Removal of Srotorodha
- Enhancement of Dhatu nutrition

Modern Scientific Perspective

- Stimulation of mechanoreceptors inhibiting nociceptive transmission (Gate Control Theory)
- Modulation of trigeminal nerve excitability
- Improved microcirculation reducing neurogenic inflammation
- Activation of parasympathetic nervous system

Outcome

Approximately 70% reduction in pain intensity and frequency was observed. The patient reported significant improvement in quality of life with no adverse effects.

Discussion

Marma Therapy addresses both structural and functional pathology in Trigeminal Neuralgia. Unlike pharmacological suppression, it restores neuro-pranic balance. The encouraging clinical outcome supports classical claims regarding Marma significance and opens avenues for integrative pain management.

Conclusion

Marma Chikitsa is an effective, non-invasive, and cost-efficient therapeutic modality in the management of Anantavata with special reference to Trigeminal Neuralgia. By pacifying Vata Dosha and modulating neuro-pranic pathways, Marma Therapy offers sustained pain relief without drug dependency. Large-scale randomized clinical trials are recommended to standardize Marma-based treatment protocols.

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