

EFFICACY OF *MARMA CHIKITSA* IN THE MANAGEMENT OF SCIATICA
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ABSTRACT

The lifetime prevalence of low back pain ranges between 60% and 80%, while sciatica has a lower lifetime prevalence of 2% to 4%. Acharya Charaka identifies two types of Gridhrasi: Vataj and Vatakaphaja. In Vataj Gridhrasi, pain starts in the buttock (Sphik) and radiates to the lower back (Kati), back (Prushta), thigh (Uru), knee (Janu), calf (Jangha), and foot (Paada), accompanied by stiffness (Stambha), pain (Ruka), pricking sensation (Toda), and twitching (Spandana). In Vatakaphaja Gridhrasi, additional symptoms include anorexia (Aruchi), drowsiness (Tandra), and heaviness (Gaurava). Marma Chikitsa involves treating specific vital points to re-channelize Prana (the body's vital force). Touching a Marma point can alter the body's biochemistry, leading to significant chemical changes. This stimulation triggers the body to produce neurochemicals that promote healing. In this treatment, the Marma points Pada Kshipra, Pada Talahridaya, Gulpha, Indravasti, Ani, Janu, and Urvi were manipulated. Each Marma point was stimulated in rhythm with respiration, approximately 18 times per minute. Marma Chikitsa was performed every other day for two weeks.

KEYWORDS: Sciatica, Gridhrasi, Marma Chikitsa.**INTRODUCTION**

Sciatica is a severe condition marked by pain or abnormal sensations along the sciatic nerve or related lumbosacral nerve roots. It is often mistakenly referred to as any low back pain or leg pain, but true sciatica specifically involves pain from issues with the sciatic nerve or its roots. The sciatic nerve, the largest in the body, spans nerve roots from L4 to S3 and can be up to 2 cm in diameter. Sciatic pain worsens with actions such as lumbar spine flexion, twisting, bending, or coughing.

The sciatic nerve is crucial for motor functions, directly affecting the hamstrings and lower extremity adductors, and indirectly affecting the calf muscles, anterior lower leg muscles, and some intrinsic foot muscles. Its branches also contribute to sensation in the back and sides of the lower leg and the bottom of the foot. Sciatica is mainly due to inflammation causing nerve irritation.

Direct nerve compression, which leads to more severe motor dysfunction, requires urgent and detailed diagnostic assessment.^[1,2,3]

It is observed to be very prevalent throughout the world ranging from 1.2% to 43%.^[4] The life time incidence of sciatica varies from 13-40% while the annual incidence of an episode of sciatica can be between 1% to 5%^[5] it is most common during people's 40s and 50s and men are more frequently affected than women low back pain has been cited as fifth most common cause for hospitalization^[6] and the 3rd most reason for a surgical procedure.

Gridhrasi is categorized among the 80 types of Nanatmaja Vyadhi, which involve only one Dosha. The term "Gridhrasi" reflects the characteristic gait resembling that of a vulture. The primary signs and

symptoms of Gridhrasi include pain with a pricking sensation, stiffness, and repeated twitching in areas such as the buttocks, lower back, thigh, back of the knee, calf, and foot. Additionally, if Kapha is associated with Vata, symptoms like drowsiness, a feeling of heaviness, and loss of appetite may also be present.^[7,8]

Marma Chikitsa is the art of treating certain vital points to re-channelize the Pranna (vital force in the body). Touching a Marma point changes the body's biochemistry and can unfold radical, chemical change in one's makeup. Stimulation of these inner pharmacy pathways signals the body to produce certain neurochemicals that heals the body and mind.^[9]

CASE REPORT

A Female patient of 59 years old, reported to marma opd of pandit khushilal hospital, with the complaint of low back pain which radiate to left lower limb form last 9 months.

Chief complaints

Low back pain which radiate to left lower limb from 9 months, difficulty in walking from 15 days and also have complaints of Flatulence and constipation.

History of present illness

According to the patient, she was reportedly healthy before 9 months, then she suffer from low back pain which gradually radiate to left lower limb then she have problem in walking since 15 days and also having flatulence with constipation. So, she come to hospital for further management.

History of past illness

No any relevant past history of illness and no history of trauma. Past treatment history She went to a couple of

local house doctors for the same issue and was taking an over-the-counter medicine but don't get satisfactory relief.

Personal history

The appetite of patient was good. The bowel was constipated. The patient used to have sound sleep.

General Examination of patient

The blood pressure of the patient was 130/80 mm of Hg.

The pulse rate was 78 bpm.

The respiratory rate was 20 bpm.

The patient had no pallor, no icterus, no lymphadenopathy, no cyanosis, no clubbing, no edema and no signs of dehydration. Hight/weight –5 feet linch /59 kg.

Systemic Examination of patient

The results of the per abdominal, cardiovascular, respiratory and CNS examinations were all normal.

Local examination

Inspection - No any swelling or scar mark present

Palpation – No loss of curvature, tenderness (grade 3) present at L4-L5 level

SLR -Rt >90 degree and Lt 50 degree

Braggard's test - Rt >90 degree and Lt 50 degree

Xray LS spine Ap & Oblique – S/o degenerative changes in spine specially at L4-L5 level.

Diagnosis

Gridhrasi (Sciatica).

Treatment

The Marma Chikitsa was performed in which following Marmas were manipulated.^[10]

S.no.	MARMA STHAN	STIMULATION n time	SITTINGS	Total time
1	Kshipra Marma	0.8 sec	2 Times a day	15 days
2	Talhridaya Marma	0.8 sec	2 Times a day	15 days
3	Gulpha Marma	0.8 sec	2 Times a day	15 days
4	Indravasti Marma	0.8 sec	2 Times a day	15 days
5	Janu Marma	0.8 sec	2 Times a day	15 days
6	Ani Marma	0.8 sec	2 Times a day	15 days
7	Urvi Marma	0.8 sec	2 Times a day	15 days
8	Nitamb Marma	0.8 sec	2 Times a day	15 days
9	Katiktaran Marma	0.8 sec	2 Times a day	15 days
10	Kukundar Marma	0.8 sec	2 Times a day	15 days

Rest was recommended to the patient for some time and then advised to walk for few steps. Each Marma were stimulated and rhythm of stimulation of Marma was same as the rhythm of respiration i.e. approx 18 times per minute.^[10] The Marma Chikitsa was performed on every day for two weeks. The observations were analyzed on the basis of assessment parameters clinically on 0 day, 7th day, & 14th day.

Assesment criteria

Subjective: Stambha (stiffness), Ruja (pain), Toda (pricking sensation), Spandana (twitching), Tenderness.

Objective: SLR Test, Braggard's Test, Walking time.

These parameters were categorized into 4 grade for

0- No pain

1- Mild

2- Moderate

3- Severe

SYMPTOMS	GRADE 0	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3
Ruja (pain)	No pain	Mild	Moderate	Severe
Stambha(stiffness)	No stiffness	Mild	Moderate	Severe
Toda (pricking sensation)	No pricking sensation	Daily 10-20 min.	Daily 21-60 min.	>1 hr.
Spandana (twitching)	No tingling sensation	Daily 10-20 min.	Daily 21-60 min.	>1 hr.
Tenderness	No tenderness	Tenderness with grimace and flinch to palpation	Tenderness with withdrawal	Withdrawal to non noxious stimuli
SLR Test	>90 degree	>75 - <60 degree	>60 - <45 degree	<30 degree
Breggard's Test	>90 degree	>75 - <60 degree	>60 - <45 degree	<30 degree
Walking time	Up to 20 sec	21-40 sec	41-60 sec	Above 60

RESULT

Patient was clinically improved after treatment and assess on the basis of following parameters.

Parameters	Before treatment	After treatment
Stambha (stiffness)	Grade 2	Grade 1
Ruja (pain)	Grade 3	Grade 1
Toda (pricking sensation)	Grade 2	Grade 0
Spandana (twitching)	Grade 2	Grade 1
Tenderness	Grade 2	Grade 0
Slr test	Grade 3	Grade 1
Bregards sign	Grade 2	Grade 0
Walking time	Grade 3	Grade 1

DISCUSSION

Gridhrasi is a Shoolpradhan Vatavyadhi characterized by pain originating in the buttock (Sphik) and radiating to the lower back (Kati), back (Prushta), thigh (Uru), knee (Janu), calf (Jangha), and foot (Paada). The condition includes symptoms such as stiffness (Stambha), pain (Ruka), pricking sensations (Toda), and twitching (Spandana). Vataj Gridhrasi presents with these symptoms, while Vatakaphaja Gridhrasi also includes anorexia (Aruchi), drowsiness (Tandra), and a sense of heaviness (Gaurava).^[11]

Marma points, vital spots on the body linked to Prana and Vata, play a crucial role in treatment. Stimulating these points with appropriate pressure can lead to biochemical changes in the body, restoring Vata to its natural state and alleviating symptoms like pain, pricking sensations, and stiffness. This approach can serve as an alternative to surgery. A 54-year-old female patient visited Marma Chikitsa opd in pandit khushilal sharma hospital bhopal, suffering from low back pain radiating to her left lower limb for the past eight months, with walking difficulties for the last 15 days, and experiencing flatulence with constipation. She underwent Marma Chikitsa, with manipulation of specific Marma points (Kshipra, Talahridya, Gulpha, Indravasti, Janu, Ani, and Urvi) every other day for two weeks. The treatment resulted in significant improvements: 90% reduction in pain (Ruja), 70% improvement in stiffness (Stambha), 80% reduction in pricking sensations (Toda), and 95% improvement in both the straight leg raise (SLR) test and Braggard's test.

Mode of action of Marma chikitsa

Marma Chikitsa works by precisely touching specific points at critical moments, which is an essential aspect of Pranic healing. This process connects Prana with Vata Dosha, which relates to deep seated, chronic and degenerative diseases like Gridhrasi. It is one of the safest, non-invasive, and cheapest therapy among all. Also this therapy has no side effects and no any preparation is required before therapy. It even satisfies the Sushruta's concept of "Hastamaeva Pradhantamam Yantram". By the use of appropriate pressure over these Marma points, these vital and powerful points can be stimulated leading to biochemical changes in brain as well as in the body, resulting in suppression of the symptoms like Ruja, Toda, Stmabhaetc. The result is supposed to be immediate and long lasting.

CONCLUSION

Gridhrasi, a Shoolpradhan Vatavyadhi, commonly affects middle-aged and older adults, as well as individuals in certain occupations. Marma Chikitsa has been found to be significantly effective in managing all aspects of Gridhrasi (Sciatica). This treatment is cost-efficient, safe, and beneficial, enhancing the patient's quality of life.

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