

Marma Sharir and its Clinical Significance: A Review

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ABSTRACT

Aim: To explore the concept of *marma* as described in *ayurvedic* literature and analyze its clinical relevance in injury prevention, modern sports safety equipment, and surgical practices.

Objectives: To understand the anatomical and physiological significance of *marma* points.

To evaluate the role of *marma* in pain, injury, and mortality.

To examine the integration of *marma* knowledge in modern medical and sports practices.

Observations: Ayurvedic texts describe 107 *marma* points where *mamsa* (muscle), *sira* (vessels), *snayu* (ligaments), *asthi* (bones), and *sandhi* (joints) meet, and where *prana* (vital life energy) resides. Injury to these points can cause pain, functional impairment, or even death. In modern life, accidents and sports injuries are frequent and may impact *marma* points. Current protective gear such as helmets and padding are unconsciously aligned with *marma* protection. Additionally, knowledge of

marma points is increasingly relevant in surgical practices to avoid iatrogenic damage to vital areas.

Main Findings: *Marma* points are critical anatomical sites with high physiological importance. Their protection correlates with better clinical outcomes in trauma, sports medicine, and surgery. There is a clear overlap between ancient *ayurvedic* knowledge and modern protective practices.

Conclusion: Understanding *marma* points is vital not only in the traditional *ayurvedic* context but also in modern medicine and sports. Awareness and integration of this knowledge can significantly reduce injury risks and improve patient care and athletic safety. The ancient concept of *marma* holds enduring relevance and offers valuable insights for holistic health protection.

KEYWORDS:

Marma, ayurveda, prana, injury prevention, sports medicine, vital points, surgical safety, trauma management.

INTRODUCTION

Five key human designs that is *mamsa*, *sira*, *snayu*, *asthi*, and *sandhi* is one such particular area made sense of in works of art where this essential power energy is living^[1]. These particular areas are made sense of as an idea of *marma sharir* in works of art.

In the "*sharira sthan*" section of *Sushrut samhita*, *Sushruta* discusses the knowledge of the human body, including concepts like bones, joints, six components of the body, and vital points (*marma*)^[2]. The "*pratyeka marma nirvesha shariram*" chapter provides in-depth information about *marma* points.

Additionally, the paragraph mentions that the details of *marma* points are not only found in *ayurvedic* scriptures but also in other ancient indian texts like the *vedas*, *upanishads*, *itihasas*, and *puranas*^{[3][4]}.

Marma points are crucial areas of the body that, if injured, can cause pain, injury, or even death. These points are where multiple tissues converge, making them vital. There are 107 *marma* points in the human body^[5]. The concept of *marma* likely developed during war time, when

ayurvedic physicians (*vaidyas*) needed to deal with urgent medical needs and injuries.

Acharya *Sushruta* categorized *marma* points based on their location and the types of tissues involved. *Bhavaprakasha* defined *marma* as the intersection of muscles, blood vessels, nerves, bones, and joints where life energy (*prana*) resides, supporting *Sushruta's* view.

Sarangadhara described *marma* as life-sustaining points where *prana* primarily resides. These definitions provide insights into the specific regions where *marma* points are located. While *marma* points are discussed in *ayurvedic* texts, the underlying structures, such as muscles, ligaments, and tendons, are also important to consider^{[6][7]}.

METHODOLOGY:

- Ancient *ayurvedic* texts were consulted and references were gathered.
- Modern medical literature was critically reviewed to understand the concept of *marma* points in a scientific way and its clinical applications today^{[8][9][10]}.

Classification of *marma* according to *tridosha* and *parinama* (effect after injury).

Sr. No.	Type of Marma	Total No.	Mahabhuta	Effect after Injury
1	<i>Sadyo Pranahara</i>	19	<i>Agni</i>	Immediate loss of <i>agni mahabhuta</i> causing death immediate or within one week.
2	<i>Kalantara Pranahara</i>	33	<i>Soma & agni</i>	Immediate loss of <i>agni mahabhuta</i> but gradual loss of <i>soma mahabhuta</i> (i.e. within one month)
3	<i>Vishalyaghna</i>	3	<i>Vayu</i>	These are predominant of <i>vayu</i> . As long as <i>vayu</i> stays inside obstructed by the tip of the <i>shalya</i> the person lives but as soon as it is extracted,

				he dies or if the <i>shalya</i> comes out after suppuration, then also survives.
4	<i>Vaikalyakara</i>	44	<i>Soma</i>	<i>Marma</i> causing disabilities. These are predominant of <i>Soma Mahabhuta</i> , due to firmness and coldness sustains life.
5	<i>Rujakara</i>	8	<i>Agni & vayu</i>	These <i>marma</i> causes pain. They have predominant qualities of <i>agni</i> and <i>vayu mahabhuta</i> .

Role of *marma* in *roga marga* (disease pathway):

Marma points are considered a part of the *madhyama roga marga* (intermediate disease pathway)^[11]. The *adhishtana* (underlying tissue) of these diseases can be assessed by observing physiological changes in the body. Therefore, the involvement of *marma* points in a disease can be determined by considering the type of *roga marga*.

Role of *marma* in understanding prognosis:

Acharya *charaka* and *vagbhata* discussed the relevance of *marma* points in determining the outcome of diseases. They emphasized that diseases should not be located on or near *marma* points for a favorable prognosis. *Dalhana* stated that the *roga marga* should be singular and not in the intermediate pathway.

Role of *marma* in *samprapti* (disease progression):

In disease progression, the *adhishtana* (underlying tissue) plays a crucial role. *Marma* points are the *adhishtana* of the *tridosha* (three *doshas*), *triguna* (three qualities), and *prana* (life energy), making them vital. Injuries to *marma* points can cause tissue loss due to bleeding, leading to *vata* vitiation and severe pain. Increased *pitta* can result in thirst, emaciation,

unconsciousness, excessive sweating, weakness, and body looseness.

Surgical importance of *marma*:

Surgeons must exercise caution during surgeries to avoid injuring *marma* points, as it can cause severe pain, disability, or even death^[12]. Therefore, *marma* points should be avoided during surgical procedures.

Marma in *shastra-ksharadi karma* (surgical procedures):

During surgical procedures involving instruments, alkalis, and fire, great care must be taken to avoid *marma* points. *Sushruta* specifically mentioned this and warned against injuring *marma* points during these procedures, as it can be fatal. He also noted that injuries to areas adjacent to *marma* points can cause symptoms and signs similar to those of direct *marma* injuries.

Importance of *marma* in *panchakarma*:

When examining the indications and contraindications of various *panchakarma* procedures, the significance of *marma* points becomes apparent in diseases located at or near *marma* points (*marma adhistitha roga*)^[13].

Marma points and *panchakarma*:

Among the three primary *Marma* points (*Shira*, *Hridaya*, and *Basti*), *Shira* and *Basti* should be especially protected from

Vata. *Vata* is the primary cause of aggravated *Pitta* and *Kapha Doshas* and is also the root of vital breath. Enema therapy is considered the most effective treatment for protecting these vital points.

DISCUSSION:

The concept of *marma* points is valuable in various types of trauma, surgical procedures, foreign body removal, warfare wounds, animal attacks, and *panchakarma* complications^[14].

Knowledge of *marma* points is crucial in surgery, as injuries to these points can lead to immediate or delayed death or deformities. Surgeons must understand the dimensions and potential harm of *marma* point injuries to make precise incisions during surgical procedures.

Knowledge of Marma points relies on clinical experience. Further exploration of Marma anatomy could lead to more successful treatment methods and surgical techniques beyond trauma^[15].

In modern surgery, incisions are planned considering nerve and blood circulation. While *marma sharir* may not be directly referenced in modern surgery, the focus on avoiding injuries to essential and dangerous structures remains. A good doctor needs not only structural or morphological information about *marma* points but also a deep understanding of gross and microscopic anatomy^{[16][17]}.

CONCLUSION:

The extensive descriptions of *marma* points found in various *ayurvedic* texts from the *vedic*, *samhita*, and *samgraha* periods, along with their significant therapeutic value, highlight their importance as a crucial concept. Even in today's era, *marma* points remain a valuable aspect of *ayurvedic* knowledge.

Marma knowledge and clinical experience:

Knowledge of *Marma* points relies on clinical experience. Further exploration of *Marma* anatomy could lead to more successful treatment methods and surgical techniques beyond trauma.

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