



Case Report

Blood pressure normalizing effect of *Talahridaya marma* therapy: A case report

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ABSTRACT

Ancient Ayurvedic literature described 107 vital regions of the body and considered them as a seat of *prana* (life force) and collectively termed them as *marma*. The applied aspect of this concept, *marma chikitsa* or *marma* therapy, is gaining popularity as it is being practiced by many clinicians in which these *marma* are stimulated in different ways to treat different diseases.

Hypertension is one of the major disorders affecting majority of the world population. In spite of available antihypertensive therapies, the hypertensive population of not only the older age group, but also of that of young adults is increasing. Blood pressure normalising effect of *marma* therapy is observed by clinicians practicing *marma* therapy due to its holistic effect on the body. Clinical data regarding efficacy of this therapy is very sparse and hence, its application in different diseases remained unexplored till date.

This case report is of a young hypertensive male whose blood pressure significantly improved with *Talahridaya marma* therapy. This patient was detected with raised blood pressure on repetitive examinations. The volunteer was subjected to *Talahridaya marma* therapy where his classical *Talahridaya marma* point on left upper limb was physically stimulated in controlled way for 10 days and the patient was also taught to perform the therapy on himself. The blood pressure was recorded, both before and after giving the therapy on each day. The volunteer showed significant improvement in his blood pressure recordings.

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1. Introduction

Marma are the vital points of the body described in Ayurveda that, when injured, may lead to pain, disability, or even death depending upon the type of *marma* involved. There are 107 *marma* points in the body [1], and have been elaborately described in *Sushruta Samhita*. These *marma* points have been described classically as the seat of *prana* [2,6] and are also classified according to their anatomical structures, location in the body, numbers, traumatic consequences, and size. As per Ayurvedic literature, these *marma* regions are the confluence of *mamsa* (muscles), *sira* (vessels), *snayu* (ligaments and tendons), *asthi* (bone), and *sandhi* (joints) [2]. It advised that these sites of the body must be protected from any physical injury or trauma. Acharya Sushruta has indirectly

utilized these *marma* regions for the treatment of many diseases through *siravedh* (venipuncture) near the *marma* which clearly depicts that these regions of the body are having a special property of vitality which can be utilized for the treatment of diseases and may also prove to be fatal if these regions are traumatized during the procedure.

In recent years, the applied aspect of this concept, i.e., *marma chikitsa/therapy*, is drawing attention and gaining popularity as these vital sites are being directly utilized by Ayurvedic physicians to obtain therapeutic goals by controlled physical stimulus on them. The controlled stimulation of each *marma* is different from other and is done by using hands only. The basic logic behind the use of these *marma* regions rest on the theory of *panchamahabuta* and *triguna*, the fundamental constituents of all physical forms. It is hypothesized that *marma* has holistic effect as their stimulation directly affect *prana* (life force) which in turn influence all the three *doshas*, *nadis*, and *chakras* bringing homeostasis and subsidence of ailments [7,8.] Testing of this hypothesis in different ailments is yet

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to be done. Although, a few studies have been conducted, clinical data regarding efficacy of this therapy is very sparse [9] and hence, its application in different diseases remained unexplored till date.

Hypertension is one of the major disorders affecting majority of the world population. In spite of available antihypertensive therapies, the hypertensive population of not only the older age group, but also of that of the young adults is increasing. The clinicians had observed *Talahridaya marma* therapy to be beneficial for most diseases of the cardiovascular system like hypertension, hypotension, palpitation, etc, and various diseases of CNS like hysteria and epilepsy disorder. This therapy may also prove beneficial in diabetes mellitus, thyroid dysfunction, and other endocrinal imbalances [3]. However, due to the lack of documental evidence, the possibility of the effectiveness of this therapy is still an area to be explored.

Talahridaya marma are four in number in the body, two in upper limb and two in lower limb. In upper limb *Talahridaya marma* is situated in the mid of the palm at the line joining the middle finger (Fig. 1). This *marma* can also be located as the region where the middle finger gets approximated with palm when an individual clenches fist. In the lower limb, *Talahridaya marma* is situated in the center of the sole in a straight line drawn from the root of the middle finger. The traumatic results of this *marma* site can cause extreme pain and death as per Ayurvedic literature [3–5].

The corresponding author is researching and practicing *marma* therapy for the last 8 years and has done doctoral thesis on clinical application of *marma* therapy [4]. This case was registered while screening volunteers for the study exploring effect of *Talahridaya marma* therapy on blood pressure which is continuing in the institute's department.

2. Case description

2.1 Patient information

The patient was a 23 year-old healthy male and is a BAMS student in Faculty of Ayurveda, Institute of Medical Sciences (IMS), Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh (India). The volunteer had no past medical or surgical history, and had a well-built physique, with a height of 171 cms and weight 71 kg.

2.2 Present medical history

During data collection for an ongoing research study with registration no - CTRI/2019/12/022,255 in the Department of Rachana Sharir, Faculty of Ayurveda, IMS, BHU, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh (India), the volunteer was screened for his blood pressure that initially came high (174/100 mmHg). After 10 min of interval,



Fig. 1. *Talahridaya marma* of upper limb.

repeat measurement of blood pressure was done thrice and each time the volunteer had raised blood pressure, the average of which was 171/97 mmHg. Blood pressure was measured by AccuSureTS Blood pressure Monitor Model No: TMB-1112-A. Approved Mark: IND/09/13/141. The volunteer was clinically asymptomatic and was advised to undergo a laboratory test (CRP-C-Reactive Protein) in the pathology lab of Sir Sundar Lal Hospital, BHU, Varanasi, which resulted negative, to rule out any inflammatory response in the body. The volunteer was advised to consult in medicine OPD but he insisted to try *marma* therapy for the management of the raised blood pressure.

2.3 Past medical history

The patient had no past medical illness and no personal history of alcohol or smoking.

2.4 Family history

There was no family history of hypertension or any other chronic medical disease.

2.5 Technique for therapy

The student was subjected to the controlled physical stimulation of *Talahridaya marma* after informed written consent on the same day. For locating *Talahridaya marma*, the volunteer was asked to flex the middle finger of the left hand and try to touch the depressed area in the line of the middle finger above the thenar eminence which is little tender on applying pressure [5]. This *marma* of the left hand was stimulated by pressing with the thumb by the researcher in coherence to the breath of the volunteer for 12 to 15 times per minute for 3 minutes once daily for 10 days. The readings of blood pressure were recorded pre-therapy and post-therapy each day. In due course, the volunteer was also taught to press the *marma* with the thumb of opposite hand and advised to press this *marma* 12 to 15 times per minute in coherence with breathing for 3 minutes twice daily i.e., in the morning and in evening. After thorough instructions about self-*marma* stimulation, the volunteer was also trained for it and told to continue the therapy after 10 days.

2.6 Observation

On the first day, the average blood pressure before therapy was 171 mmHg systolic and 97 mmHg diastolic and after therapy the blood pressure was 162 mmHg systolic and 102 mmHg diastolic. The blood pressure readings over the next 10 days with therapy are as per Table 1. Here, each reading recorded is an average of three consecutive readings at the same time.

Table 1
Ten days observations of BP measurement before (BT) and after marma therapy (AT).

Date	Systolic BP and Diastolic BP (BT)		Systolic BP and Diastolic (AT)	
24.01.2020	171	97	162	102
25.01.2020	152	98	141	89
26.01.2020	144	87	135	89
27.01.2020	143	86	135	86
28.01.2020	144	86	136	83
29.01.2020	135	89	128	78
30.01.2020	135	86	126	71
31.01.2020	148	88	135	76
01.02.2020	139	89	128	85
02.02.2020	133	79	120	72

3. Discussion

Talahridaya marma is present in bilateral upper and lower limbs. The classical texts of Ayurveda instruct to prevent the *marma* or vital points from being injured. But, in the current era, these *marma* are physically stimulated in controlled way to treat diseases. In this case, *Talahridaya marma* therapy was given to the young patient with accidental discovery of hypertension. With his consent, this therapy was given once a day for 10 days. The *Talahridaya* was identified and pressed in the left-hand along the middle finger and was pressed in a controlled way, 12 to 15 times per minute in coherence with breathing for 3 minutes. This *marma* can also be pressed by the therapy receiver itself with the help of index finger and thumb of the other hand after through instruction. Thus, this therapy was also taught to the patient and regular follow-up was done with the ongoing therapy. The CRP of the patient was tested in the laboratory of Sir Sundar Lal Hospital, BHU and was found to be negative.

During the first day of therapy, the patient felt slight bearable pain on the *marma* area. He was over-cautious while going through the therapy. On first day, there was reduction in systolic blood pressure but the diastolic blood pressure was raised after the therapy. However, on the second day, the pre-therapy blood pressure was lower than the previous day which motivated the researcher to continue the therapy. After 10 days, his blood pressure was completely normalized. The measurements of blood pressure was done daily by the investigator before and after the therapy. From the first day of the therapy, till the last date, he did not have any problem and the blood pressure of the volunteer remained in the normal range. The volunteer is still practicing self-*Talahridaya marma* therapy and his blood pressure is within normal range till the day of reporting this case report. This finding reinforces the hypothesis that *marma* regions of the body are the vital regions having multimodal and multi-dimensional effects due to their influence on *prana* and hence, on *tridsoha* and *triguna* which perhaps brings harmony between the systems of the body [3,5,7].

3.1 Patient perspective on treatment received

On the first screening day for the study, I was not aware of my raised blood pressure as I had no physical complaints. As my consecutive three readings of blood pressure were high, I became a bit tensed. But the investigator and his team counseled me well enough and they advised me to consult in medicine OPD. However, as *marma* science is taught in first-year classes, I was curious about the *marma* therapy and decided to try it on my raised blood pressure. I communicated the same to the consultant and his team after which they demonstrated the *Talahridaya marma* therapy on me. The therapy was comfortable, and I felt slight bearable pain at that point which subsided as the therapy was finished and to my surprise, my blood pressure lowered a bit which motivated me to go for the therapy. I start coming to the department daily to get the

therapy and to learn the therapy which continued for 10 days. I had no complaints either during the therapy or post-therapy. I was happy to see that the readings of my blood pressure gradually came to normal limits. Right now, I am having normal blood pressure. Thanks to the investigator and his team for all efforts and teaching me the therapy which was extremely easy to learn and apply.

4. Conclusion

Talahridaya marma was found to have mild immediate effect and good long-term effect in normalizing the blood pressure of the patient. The therapy was given once daily and it showed significant improvement in both the systolic and diastolic blood pressure. Thus, a further large-scale study is needed to analyze the blood pressure normalizing effect of *Talahridaya marma* therapy.

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None.

Conflict of interest

None.

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