

A Role of Varma Manipulation on Trigeminal Neuralgia – A Case Report

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Abstract

Trigeminal neuralgia is characterized by episodic sporadic, sudden, excruciating facial pain especially on one side of the face. It may last from a few seconds to few minutes caused due to a variety of conditions such as blood vessel pressing on the trigeminal nerve, demyelination of trigeminal nerve's myelin sheath, nerve compression from a tumor or arteriovenous malformation as it exits the brain stem. lasts anywhere from a few seconds to as long as two minutes per episode. Present day treatment modality of trigeminal neuralgia involves antidepressants, anticonvulsants and surgical management that are not affordable by common people. The present study is a case report of a typical case of trigeminal neuralgia. The subject was treated with non-pharmacological measure of varma manipulation, a traditional south Indian art. The pressure points named as *Kondai kolli*, *Kambothiri Kaalam II*, *Janni varmam*, *Chunnambu kaalam*, *Annan kaalam*, *Kuththi kaalam*, *Poigai kaalam*, *Porchai kaalam* and *Sevi kuththi kaalam* were manipulated weekly twice in the morning. The symptomatic improvement was recorded after every session. The patient had rapid relief after seven sessions.

Keywords: Trigeminal neuralgia, *Varmam*, demyelination, manipulation

1. Introduction

Varmam is a special branch of Siddha medicine that is popularized in Tamil Nadu especially in the south part of India as a martial art. It is concerned with vital points that contain highly

concentrated flow of vital energy in the located at specific joints, muscular junctions, nerve endings or endocrine glands. [1] Though the channel of pranic energy flow is of utmost importance in several ancient traditions. According to Siddha system, systematic stimulation of *Varmam* points with proper methodology helps in to treat disease by

balancing the three humors, whose imbalance is the root cause of all kinds of diseases.[2] The scientific basis of this varma therapy towards the management of neuro-musculo-skeletal diseases is by regulating the neuro transmitter flow, synaptic transmission and signal pathways. [2] There are 108 *Varma* points in the divided into *Padu Varmam*, 12 in number and *Thodu Varmam*, 96 in number. Some vital points which store enormous energy are called “*Adanga*” which are used in emergency treatment. [3] Hence *Varmam* is a word that refers to static energy and *Kaalam* is a point where the energy is in motion within that point.

Case History

A 60-year old male patient came voluntarily to our hospital in Chennai with severe pain on the left side of the face. The patient was a Chief Surgeon in a popular Medical College and came to the treatment on 13 September 2016. The patient came with complaints of terrible pain in the left half of the face, ear and pain radiating to the jaw, unable to speak, eat, chew and brush for over a year. The patient had controlled this by consulting multiple specialists and taking various types of prescribed medications. While taking medicine the symptoms reduced in their intensity but after a while, kept recurring. So the patient was frustrated and searched for other treatments and finally approached for Varma therapy. The patient was on vegetarian and had no history of smoking and alcohol consumption. The patient had no history of hypertension, diabetes mellites, tuberculosis, asthma and had a history of bypass surgery before 3 years. The patient was a *vadha thegi*, *Naadi* reading shows *vatha kabam*. *Neikuri* shows Snake like appearance that shows *vatha* predominant. These *Varma* manipulations were started on Tuesday, 13 September 2016 after getting informed consent.

Plan of Varma therapy

The *Varma* manipulation was done in an erect sitting position without crossing the legs. The patient came for the treatment weekly twice every Tuesday and Friday. The *Varma* manipulation was systematically done in the

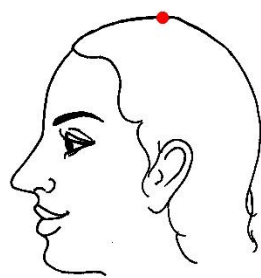
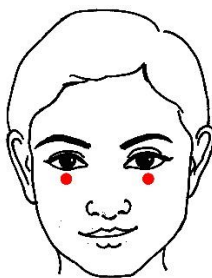
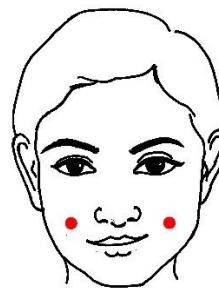
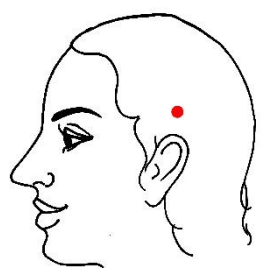
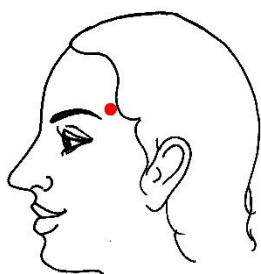
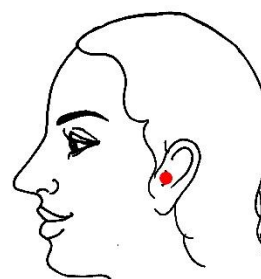
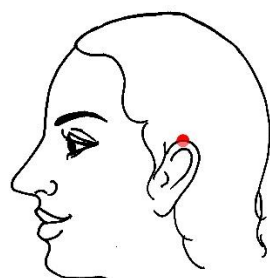
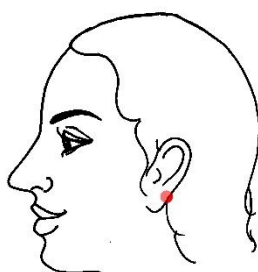
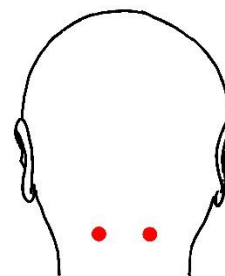
same order regularly at fixed days. The procedure was explained clearly to the subject and the informed consent was obtained.

Varma pre-treatment procedures

According to textual concept of *Varma* therapy are certain rules and regulations before rendering the *Varma* points. They have to regard the body of the patient as our own, respect the opposite genders. Fingernails should be cut in both hands as *Varmam* points in the body should not be touched by the fingernails. One should not give pressure on *Varma* points using any objects such as iron or wooden pieces and should avoid conversing with others while rendering *Varmam* treatment. The patient may sit or lie down while rendering treatment. The *Varmam* treatment can be applied to patients with their clothes on. The *Varma* points are manipulated by the therapists or by themselves, daily or weekly twice. But, depending on the need of the patient and the intensity of the ailment, it can also be administered daily. For in-patients, this treatment can be administered once in six hours daily (4 times every day). *Varmam* treatment works in harmony with other forms of medicines and their applications. While rendering *Varmam* treatment, one need not discontinue the medicines prescribed by other physicians. After rendering *Varmam* treatment to each patient, it is necessary to touch the wall or any other wooden object before treating the next patient. This is to avoid the body heat from one patient to another. There are not any dietary restrictions for *Varmam* treatment.

Varma manipulation techniques

The *Varma* points such as *Kondai kolli*, *Kambothiri kaalam II*, *Janni varmam*, *Chunnambu kaalam*, *Annan kaalam*, *Kuththi kaalam*, *Poigai kaalam*, *Porchai kaalam* and *Sevikuththi kalam* was *Varma* points were manipulated by giving a mild pressure with the medial side of the thumb / middle three fingers ($\frac{1}{4}$ *Maathirai*) twice a week. The patient was advised to take a *sattvic* diet, meditation and *pranayama* to enhance the result and asked to avoid exposure to cold and forceful wind.

Figure -1. Diagrammatic representation of Varma points*Kondaikolli**Kambothiri kaalam II**Janni Kaalam**Sunnanmbu Kaalam**Annan Kaalam**Kuthi Varmam**Poigai Kaalam**Sevikuththi Kaalam**Porchai Kaalam*

Sl. No.	Name of the Varma points	Location	Manipulation	Pressure given
1	<i>Kondaikolli</i>	10 fingers above the <i>Thilartha kaalam</i> .	With middle three fingers & lateral movement thrice.	$\frac{1}{4}$ <i>maathirai*</i>
2	<i>Kaambothari Kaalam II</i>	Just below the eye	With middle finger movement from nasal side to temporal side around the eye thrice.	$\frac{1}{4}$ <i>maathirai</i>
3	<i>Janni varmam</i>	Meeting point of maxilla and mandibular bone	Press and release using thumb and middle finger thrice.	$\frac{1}{4}$ <i>maathirai</i>
4	<i>Chunnambu kaalam</i>	3 fingers over the ears	With middle three fingers	$\frac{1}{4}$

			forward and reverse movements thrice.	<i>maathirai</i>
5	<i>Annan kaalam</i>	One finger lateral to the temporal side of the eye	With medial ¼ part of thumb and rotate in both clockwise and anticlockwise directions thrice.	¼ maathirai
6	<i>Kuththi varmam</i>	Just in front of the ear	Front and back movement using thumb and index fingers thrice.	¼ maathirai
7	<i>Poigai kaalam</i>	Joining point of ear and scalp	With middle finger push upwards thrice.	¼ maathirai
8	<i>Porchai kaalam</i>	One finger lateral to inferior occipital fossa	With middle finger an “n” like movement from lateral to medial sides thrice.	¼ maathirai
9	<i>Sevikuththi kaalam</i>	The pit behind the ear	With middle finger push upwards.	¼ maathirai

Table 1. Varmam manipulation therapy – Location of Varma points and its procedure

**Maathirai* – pressure given by the finger during Varma manipulation.

Result

S.No	Sessions	Prognosis
1.	Session-1	Reduction in the intensity of pain around 80%. VAS Pain scale -
2.	Session-2	Radiating pain towards the tooth was reduced. VAS Pain scale -
3.	Session-3	Severe pain was reduced, subject was able to bear the pain. VAS Pain scale -
4.	Session-4	Pain was reduced except for slight intermittent pain. VAS Pain scale -
5.	Session-5	Radiating pain on the face completely reduced. VAS Pain scale -
6.	Session-6	Uneasiness present on the head and the face were reduced. VAS Pain scale -
7.	Session-7	Marked reduction in pain. VAS Pain scale -

Table 2. Effect of varma therapy on symptomatic improvement from Day-1 to Day 7

Discussion

The present study is a case report of a 60 year old male patient with Trigeminal neuralgia. The pain will generally start at the point of the jaw and emanate along the intersection lines, between the ophthalmic branch and maxillary branch and the mandibular branch. It is perhaps the most over the top difficult condition and can bring about melancholy.

[4] This patient approached the hospital voluntarily. The aim of therapy was to relieve the severe sporadic pain with the help of *Varmam* manipulation.

The pressure point of *varmam* manipulation was decided based on the indications as prescribed in the Siddha text on *varmam*. [5] Upon keen analysis on the anatomical situations of these

points it can be well understood that these are the vital centres of *pranic* energy located around the eyes, temporal and occipital regions and also around the maxillary and mandibular regions that coincides with the ophthalmic, maxillary and mandibular divisions of trigeminal nerve. Courses of trigeminal nerve. The trigeminal nerve is the largest of the cranial nerves. It carries motor supply to the muscles of mastication and transmits sensory information from the face, oral and nasal cavities, and most of the scalp.[6] *Kondaikolli* varmam helps to rectify blood related problem and energize the whole body system. *Chunnapukalam* helps to regulate blood circulation in brain, limbs of the body.[7] *Porchai kaalam* relieves pain and balances varmam energy in body. Stimulation of *varmam* points helps the muscles gets relaxed by stimulating nerves which present along the *varmam* points, thereby helps to get relieved from local inflammation and pain. Also relieves stiffness and fasciculation.[8] Application of *pozhimuthu adangal* stimulates *kalai* nerves (major nerve through which *pranic* energy flow in body).[8]

The study results confirm the efficacy of *Varma* therapy towards non-pharmacological management of Trigeminal neuralgia. The study has to be explored in future with large scale therapy and using gold standard diagnostic and prognostic measures like cranial Magnetic resonant Imaging (MRI). [6]

Conclusion

Thus present case study had thrown light on the ancient Tamil language based Varmam medical science which possesses keys to fundamentals of Siddha Medical System especially in the aspects of pain management in neuromuscular diseases. Extensive scientific researches are warranted to evaluate the mechanism and pathway of Varmam energy flow that renders cost effective and simple non-pharmacological measures without side effects.

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