



Review Article

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF *STHAPANI MARMA*: A CONCEPTUAL AND ANATOMICAL REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The science of *Marma* is a fundamental aspect of Ayurvedic anatomy and surgery found detailed descriptions in classical texts mainly in *Brihatrayi*. *Marma* are the vital points where structures like *Mamsa*, *Sira*, *Snayu*, *Asthi* and *Sandhi* meet along with *Prana*. Among the 107 *Marma* described in Ayurveda, *Sthapani Marma* is an important *Urdhwajatrugat Marma* located between the two eyebrows and is classified under *Vishalyaghna Marma*, measuring half *Angula* and mainly composed of *Sira Avayava* with *Vayu* dominance. Classical texts describe that a person may survive if a foreign body (*Shalya*) lodged in *Vishalyaghna Marma* remains in place or falls out naturally after *Paka*, but removal of the *Shalya* may lead to death due to aggravated *Vata*. At *Sthapani marma Ajna chakra* and *Shura nadi* is present. Anatomically *Sthapani Marma* can be corresponds to the Glabella, the midline prominence between the superciliary arches. This region includes important layer-wise anatomical structures from skin and superficial fascia to muscles (procerus, corrugator supercilii), neurovascular elements (supratrochlear nerve and vessels), periosteum, frontal bone, frontal sinus, and deeper intracranial structures like dura mater and frontal lobe.

INTRODUCTION

Marma science is an important component of Ayurvedic knowledge and finds its earliest references in ancient Vedic literature such as the *Rigveda*. The concept of *Marma Sharir* is elaborately described in the *Bhruhatayi*. In this classical text, *Marma* holds great significance, constituting nearly half of the subject matter of *Shalya Chikitsa*. Besides its importance in surgery, the knowledge of *Marma* has also been utilized in traditional martial arts, Ayurveda *Siddha* domain in treating many diseases in human beings, in the handling and control of animals such as elephants and horses in certain parts of India.

Marma refers to the vital anatomical locations mainly comprising of *Mamsa*, *Sira*, *Snayu*, *Asthi*, *Sandhi* and *Prana* (vital force), which together maintain the integrity and functioning of the body [1]. These points are not merely superficial anatomical landmarks but

represent deeper physiological and structural junctions. Due to their vital nature, these points must be carefully protected especially during surgical and therapeutic procedures.

There are total 107 *Marma* points in the human body mentioned by all *Acharya's*. These *Marma* have been classified on different basis such as *Shadang* (six regions), *Parinam* (prognosis), *Pariman* (measurement), *Sankhya* (number), *Rachana* (anatomical structure) and *Panchbhautika Pradhana*. Based on *Shadang bhed Marma* are divided into four groups: *Urdhavajatrugat* (above the clavicle), *Uro-Udargata* (thoracic and abdominal region), *Shakhagata* (located in the extremities), and *Prushathagat* (located on the back). Among these, 37 *Marmas* belong to the *Urdhavajatrugat* group and one of the important *Marma* included in this category is *Sthapani Marma* [2].

Location

भ्रुवोर्मध्ये स्थपनी || Su.sha.6/27

स्थपनी पुनः भ्रुवोर्मध्ये || Ash.hri.sha.4/32

भ्रुवोर्मध्ये स्थपनी | Ash.sang.sha.7/42

In *Sushrut samhita*, *Ashtang hriday* and *Ashtang sangrah* the location of *Marma* is same that is in between two eyebrows [3,4,5]

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Classification of Sthapani Marma**Table 1: The classification of Marma is given on the basis of Shadang, Parinam, Pariman, Sankhya, Rachana and Guna**

Shadang Bhed	Urdhwajatrugat
Parinam Bhed	Vishalyaghna
Pariman Bhed	½ Angul
Sankhya Bhed	1
Rachana Bhed	Sira
Guna Bhed	Vayu pradhana

Viddha lakshan of Sthapani marma**According to Sushrut samhita and Dalhan Teeka**

तत्र सशल्यो जीवेत् पाकात् पतितशल्यो वा नोद्धृतशल्यः॥
Su.sha.6/27

सशल्यः स्वयं पतितशल्यो वा जीवत्युद्धृतशल्यो म्रियत इत्यर्थः ॥
Dalhan Teeka

The person may survive if the *Shalya* is not removed from the *Shalya sthan* or the *Shalya* is fallen of itself by *Paka*. The person will die if the *Shalya* is removed [6].

According to Astang sangraha and Shashilekha teeka

तयोः सशल्यः पाकात् पतितशल्यो वा जीवेन्नोद्धृतशल्यः॥ast.
sang. sha7/41

तयोर्विद्धः सन् सशल्यो जीवति। पाकाद्वा स्वयंपतिते जीवति। उद्धृतशल्यो न जीवति॥ Shashilekha teeka

The person may survive if the *Shalya* is not removed from the *Shalya sthan* or the *Shalya* is removed itself by *Paka*. The person will die if the *Shalya* is removed [7].

According to Astang Hridaya and Hemadri teeka

वायुर्मांसवसामज्जमस्तुलुङ्गानि शोषयन्।
शल्यपाये विनिर्गच्छन् श्वासात्कासाच्च हन्त्यसून्॥Ash.hri.sha.4/
56

हि-यस्मात्, तत्र-व्यधे, शल्यापाये वायुर्विनिर्गच्छन्-
निर्यान्, मांसादीन् शोषयन् श्वास कासाभ्यां प्राणान् हन्ति। तत्र च हे
तौ शतप्रत्याः। निर्गमेन हिहेतुना मांसादीनां शोषणं भवति।

Hemadri teeka

The aggravated *Vata* does *Shosha* or dries up the *Mamsa, Vasa, Majja, Mastulung* of the body. When the *Shalya* is removed, this disturbed *Vata* moves outward and produces *shwas* and *Kasa* and ultimately destroys person [8].

Functional aspect of Sthapani Marma with respect to Nadi, Prana, Chakra

Sthapani Marma is located at the midpoint between the eyebrows, which also corresponds to the site of the *Ajna Chakra*. In traditional Indian culture, the practice of applying a bindi for women and a Tilaka for men is believed to provide gentle stimulation to this *Marma* point, thereby enhancing an individual's

intellectual and cognitive abilities. This region is considered a vital centre where all the sensory organs (*Indriyas*) are interconnected. The *Shura Nadi* is described as extending from the *Kanda* region to the midpoint between the eyebrows.

The *Ajna Chakra*, often referred to as the “third eye centre” or the “command centre,” is associated with the nervous system and higher mental functions. Meditation focused on this *Chakra* is believed to grant accomplishment in various actions (*Karya Siddhi*) and the benefits of the lower *Chakras*. *Sthapani Marma* is regarded as the seat of wisdom (*Buddhi*), while the *Ajna Chakra* governs intellect, intuition, insight, and spiritual strength. Controlled stimulation of *Sthapani Marma* is thought to regulate the flow of *Prana*, thereby supporting and enhancing the functioning of the nervous system.

Anatomical consideration of Sthapani marma

The probable anatomical location of *Sthapani marma* can be taken as Glabella which is a cephalometric landmark located just above the Nasion. It appears as a median bony prominence that connects the two superciliary arches and corresponds to the raised area between the eyebrows [9].

The structures that come under Sthapani marma from superficial to deep are following

- **Skin**
Thin, sensitive skin of the glabellar region.
Rich in sensory nerve endings.
- **Superficial Fasia**
Loose connective tissue contains small vessels and nerves.
- **Muscles**
Procerus muscle and corrugator supercillii muscle.
- **Neurovascular Structures**
Supratrochlear nerve (branch of ophthalmic nerve).
Supratrochlear artery and vein (branch of Ophthalmic artery).
- **Deep Fascia/Periosteum**
Covers frontal bone which acts as protective layer over bone.
- **Bone**
Frontal bone (glabella region)
Lies anterior to frontal sinus.
- **Frontal Sinus (deep relation)**
It is air filled cavity within frontal bone.
- **Intracranial Relation**
Deep to frontal sinus: dura mater and frontal lobe of brain is present.

Functional correlation with higher centers linked with *Ajna Chakra* concept.

Table 2: Marma Vastu and its probable Anatomical Structures

Marma Vastu	Probable anatomical structures
Mamsa	Procerus, corrugator supercillii muscle
Sira	Supratrochlear artery Supraorbital artery Supraorbital vein Supratrochlear vein
Snayu	Supratrochlear nerve
Asthi	Frontal bone, 2 nasal bones
Sandhi	Nasion

DISCUSSION

Marma Shastra represents a unique confluence of anatomy, physiology, and surgical principles described in classical Ayurvedic literature. The concept of *Marma* is systematically elaborated in the *Brihatrayi*, particularly in the *Sushruta Samhita*, where it forms a substantial portion of *Shalya Tantra*. The detailed description of *Marma* points highlights their clinical importance, not only in surgical interventions but also in trauma management and prognostic evaluation.

Sthapani Marma, classified under *Urdhwajatrugat Marma*, holds a distinct position due to its anatomical location and functional significance. Situated at the midpoint between the eyebrows, its correlation with the glabellar region provides a clear bridge between classical Ayurvedic concepts and modern anatomical understanding. This convergence supports the view that *Marma* points are not merely theoretical constructs but correspond to vital neurovascular and musculoskeletal junctions in the human body.

From an anatomical perspective, the structures underlying *Sthapani Marma* includes the skin, superficial fascia, muscles such as procerus and corrugator supercillii, and important neurovascular components like the supratrochlear nerve and vessels which indicate its sensitivity and vulnerability. The deeper relations, including the frontal sinus and intracranial structures like the dura mater and frontal lobe, further emphasize the potential severity of injury at this site. This aligns with its classification as a *Vishalyaghna Marma* where improper management, particularly removal of an embedded foreign body, can prove fatal.

Classical descriptions of *Viddha Lakshana* provided by *Acharya Sushruta* and *Vagbhata* demonstrate remarkable clinical insight. The observation that a patient may survive if the foreign body remains in place but may die upon its removal

reflects an understanding of physiological shock, hemorrhage and possibly intracranial complications. The explanation given in Ayurvedic terms aggravation of *Vata* leading to *Shosha* of the *Mamsa*, *Vasa*, *Majja*, *Mastulung* of the body. When the *Shalya* is removed, this disturbed *Vata* moves outward and produces *shwas* and *Kasa* can be interpreted in modern terms as neurogenic shock or acute neurological compromise.

Functionally *Sthapani Marma* is closely associated with higher cognitive and neurological functions. Its linkage with the *Ajna Chakra* integrates Ayurvedic anatomy with *Yogic* and spiritual frameworks. The *Ajna Chakra*, regarded as the "command centre," governs intellect, intuition, and mental clarity. The traditional practices of applying *Tilaka* or *Bindi* may provide mild stimulation to this region, potentially influencing neural activity through sensory pathways. This suggests a psychosomatic dimension to *Marma* stimulation, where physical touch may modulate neurological and cognitive responses.

Many of the diseases related to head like migraine, headache, sinusitis, mental disorders, insomnia, refractive errors can be managed effectively by stimulating *Sthapani Marma*.

The association of *Sthapani Marma* with *Prana* and *Nadi* systems reflects an advanced conceptualization of body regulation. The described connection with *Shura Nadi* and its role in coordinating sensory and motor functions parallels the integrative role of the central nervous system in modern physiology. Controlled stimulation of this *Marma* is believed to regulate *Pranic* flow which may be interpreted as enhancing neural coordination and autonomic balance.

CONCLUSION

Sthapani Marma is an important *Urdhwajatrugat Marma* located between the eyebrows, corresponding anatomically to the Glabella region of the forehead. Classical Ayurvedic texts such as *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*, and *Ashtanga Sangraha* describe it as a *Vishalyaghna Marma* indicating the serious and potentially fatal consequences if a foreign body lodged in this region is removed. Anatomically this area includes important layer-wise anatomical structures from skin and superficial fascia to muscles (procerus, corrugator supercillii), neurovascular elements (supratrochlear nerve and vessels), periosteum, frontal bone, frontal sinus, and deeper intracranial structures like dura mater and frontal lobe. In addition to its anatomical and clinical relevance, *Sthapani Marma* also holds significant functional importance through its association with *Prana*, *Nadi* and *Ajna Chakra*. This reflects a broader Ayurvedic perspective where

physical structures are closely linked with mental and neurological functions. Such an integrative view provides a deeper insight into the coordination of body and mind.

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