

Effectiveness of Varmam in the management of Cervical Spondylosis – Literature review.

Mangaiarkarasi P*¹, Mohamed Musthafa M², Siddique Ali TR³

*¹ PG Scholar, ² Head of the Department, ³ Lecturer, Department of Varmam Maruthuvam, Government Siddha Medical College, Arumbakkam, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India..

*Correspondence and offprint requests to: Mangaiarkarasi P
© 2020 BioSci Group, Reverse Publishing Ltd, India.

ABSTRACT

Cervical spondylosis is the most common type of spinal pathology which is more common in middle-aged or senile populations with a high potential to affect physical and mental health. Prevalence of Cervical Spondylosis in the world ranges from 16.7% to 75.1%⁽¹⁾. This review brings elaborate idea about the effectiveness of *Varmam* in the management of cervical spondylosis. Contemporary western treatments offer temporary relief in acute phase associated with high cost and many adverse reactions, when taken for long period. So, there is a need to search an effective therapy to treat Cervical Spondylosis with less or no adverse effects. *Siddha* system of medicine is traditional system of medicine followed in southern India. *Varmam* is one of the special branch in Siddha System of Medicine⁽²⁾. *Varmam* is a traditional non-invasive approach and is very affordable and immediate pain relief is feasible by manipulation of *Varmam* points. it's a highly effective traditional treatment methodology for cervical spondylosis and other painful musculoskeletal conditions. Hence there's a requirement for a treatment procedure which compensates of these lacunae.

KEYWORDS

Siddha, *Varmam*, Cervical spondylosis, *Saganavatham*, NSAID, Traditional treatment.

Received: May 2020. Revised: Jul 2020. Accepted: Aug 2020
© The Author(s) 2020. Published by BioSci Group Publishing Ltd, India.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

For commercial re-use, please contact journals. editorjrbms@biosci.in

To Cite: Mangaiararasi P, Mohamed Musthafa. M, Siddique Ali TR, Effectiveness of Varmam in the management of Cervical Spondylosis - Literature Review, J Res Biomed Sci, 3(3), 2020, 72-76.

INTRODUCTION

In the world Prevalence of cervical spondylosis is ranges from 16.7% to 75.1%⁽¹⁾. 10 million of cases per year are affected by Cervical Spondylosis in India. The prevalence of Cervical Spondylosis is similar for both sexes. Cervical spondylosis is defined as “arthrosis” of the posterior intervertebral joints in the Cervical vertebrae⁽³⁾. In general, the currently available Analgesic, antiarthritic drugs, steroid injection, NSAIDs, muscle relaxants, physiotherapy and surgery for cervical spondylosis causes high cost, many adverse reactions when taken for long period. So, there is a need to search an effective therapy to treat Cervical Spondylosis with less or no adverse effects. Many countries have their own traditional system of medicine. AYUSH (an acronym for Ayurveda, Yoga, and Naturopathy, Unani, *Siddha*, Sowga Rigpa) is traditional system of medicine which has been followed in India. *Siddha* system has its own principles which are based on 96 *thathuvaas*⁽⁴⁾ Vital channels (*naadis*), three humours (*vali, azhal, iyam*), derangement of three humours leads to diseases. *Siddha* system helps to revitalize and rejuvenate the deranged organ. The treatment methodologies of *Siddha* system include *Agamarunthugal* (internal medicines), *Puramarunthugal* (external medicines) and *Pura Maruthuvam* (external therapies) *Varmam* therapy is the one of the special therapies of the *Siddha* system of medicine

VARMAM THERAPY

Varmam means energy which is the basis of whole universe and whole existence in human body the energy is called as *Vaasi* that is life energy like qi in Acupuncture. In human life energy is concentrated in certain vital points they are called *Varmam* points⁽²⁾. The life energy is constantly flowing in particular pathway i.e *naadi*⁽⁵⁾ in human body like meridian in Acupuncture .when the flow is obstructed (or damaged) partially or completely which leads to disease. *Varmam* points located in insertion of bones, muscles, nerves, blood vessels, joints⁽⁶⁾. We would like to give idea about the therapeutic benefits of *Varmam* techniques in reducing pain and discomfort in Cervical spondylosis patients. 9 *Varmam points* are predominantly used for Cervical Spondylosis persistent problem.

Therapeutic effect of *Varmam* therapy:

Varmam energy plays an important role in maintaining the physiology of the human body. *Varma Kannadi* exemplifies that the *Varmam* energy helps to protect the physical body.

According to the below verse from *Varma kannadi*, *Varmam* energy protects the human body from disease.⁽⁷⁾

omethuvae varmamuthal karuviellam

Oppanamai thulamathaik kathu nirkum - Varma Kannadi.

Varmam Manipulation Techniques

Before manipulating the points, the therapist should know the dimension of the points. Because depending on these dimensions the usage of finger and manipulation techniques are determined. *Varmam* points can be located using finger measurements. While measuring only the palmar aspect of the finger should be considered. Also fingers of the patients should be used to measure.⁽⁸⁾

One finger measurement = breadth of index finger

Two fingers measurement= breadth of index and middle fingers

Three fingers measurement= breadth of index, middle and ring fingers

Four fingers measurement = breadth of index, middle, ring and little fingers

Five fingers measurement= breadth of index, middle, ring, little fingers and index finger of the other hand.

Erai = breath of Thumb .

Varmam and its pressure value

During therapeutic application *Varmam* points are manipulated gently using the physician's fingers. In order to attain this some basic measures have been handled by our ancestors. This is being termed as ‘*Mathirai*’. The magnitude of this *Mathirai* varies from ¼ unit, ½ unit, ¾ unit and 1 unit^(6,7).

The magnitude of *Mathirai*

The magnitude of the *Mathirai* to be given to the patient depends on the body condition and severity of the disease. Pressure can be given continuously for a specific time or intermittently according to necessity. If given intermittently a gap of 10 seconds in between two successive manipulations are to be maintained.

CERVICAL SPONDYLOSIS

Cervical Spondylosis is defined as arthrosis of the intervertebral joints in the cervical vertebrae with subsequent changes in the bones and soft tissues.

Spondylosis is usually asymptomatic. Symptoms are usually manifested of encroachment of local neural elements such as cervical nerve roots, spinal cord, vertebral artery (or) sympathetic nerves. Symptoms of the cervical spondylosis is pain in the nap of the neck, Radiating pain to the upper limbs, Numbness and weakness in arms, hands and fingers, Giddiness, Chronic sub occipital headache. In *Siddha* system of medicine, the disease “*Saganavatham*” is discussed under the types of *Vatha* diseases and it is correlated with “Cervical spondylosis”⁽²⁾



Fig 1. X- ray of cervical spine (lateral view) showing features of cervical spondylosis

Kaelumey kaluthinki larikku mealung
Kediyana karamirandu mekavae nonthu
Vaalumey sareramellang kanath thirukkum
Valiparukku manangkannu mayakka maakum
Yaelumey erandukannu mericha lunda
Metramaai salanthanu mirugik kaanunth
Theylumey kotinathu porka dukkum
Saganava thathinida therkkang thaney

Methodology of review

Classical text books, various published scholarly articles on *Varmam* and Cervical spondylosis were studied and used as a material to highlight the subject.

The following search terms were used: *Varmam*, *Saganavatham*, Cervical spondylosis.

Varmam points for Saganavadam

Nine *Varmam* points was selected for this study in *Saganavadam* mentioned below⁽¹⁰⁾

- Mudichu Varmam*
- Kaakattai Kaalam*
- Kaisulukki Varmam*
- Sippi Varmam*
- Savvu Varmam*
- Kaimootu Varmam*
- Manipanthaga Varmam*
- Koli Kaluthu Varmam*
- Kavuli Varmam*

DISCUSSION

The Cervical region problems that are encountered frequently in the population are caused by multiple factors such as repeated and heavy workload and technological devices such as computers, poor posture, and structural disorders. The main complaint of patients with cervical region problems is pain. Pain has a negative effect on the functional state of the person and also prevents active participation in life. Patients with chronic pain also suffer from other problems that disturb the quality of life such as sleep disorders, emotional stress, and social isolation. Cervical spondylosis is a chronic problem. More than half of their chronic pain patients used some form of complementary or alternative therapy in addition to their traditional treatment, when given the choice between traditional treatment and alternative therapy,

Table 1. Comparison of symptoms between *Siddha* and modern aspect.

<i>Siddha Aspect</i>	<i>Modern Aspect</i>
<i>Kaluththin keelaraikku mael</i>	Pain in the neck
<i>Karamirandu migavae nonthu</i>	Cervical radiculopathy
<i>Sareeramellag kanaththirukkum</i>	Muscle spasm tenderness
<i>Manng kannum mayakkamaakum</i>	Giddiness

Table 2. Varmam points and its scientific correlations

-Name of the	Anatomical location	Technique	Pressure type	Time and frequency
--- <i>Mudichu Varmam</i> --	over the spinous process of C7	The middle three fingers will be placed over the point, pressed and clock wise rotation given 3 times and fingers are moved towards the right shoulder joint with gentle pressure and front support given to the patient. ii. The middle three fingers will be placed over the point, anti-clockwise rotation given 3 times and fingers are moved towards the left shoulder joint with gentle pressure and front support to the patient. iii. Place middle three finger over the point rotation given clock wise 3 times and anti-clockwise rotation given 3 times then the fingers are moved down the dorsum with gentle pressure along the spine.	$\frac{1}{4}$ <i>Mathirai</i>	10 seconds and 3 times
<i>Kaakattai kalam</i>	In the supra clavicular fossa.	Press and release three times with middle three fingers in that location.	$\frac{1}{4}$ <i>Mathirai</i>	10 seconds and 3 times
<i>Kaisulukki Varmam</i>	4 inches below C7 & 3 fingers lateral to vertebral column near the medial border of scapula.	Fix the middle of the thumb opposing bilaterally, applying gentle pressure move medial and lateral.	$\frac{1}{4}$ <i>Mathirai</i>	10 seconds and 3 times
<i>Sippi Varmam</i>	One inch below the <i>Kaisulukki Varmam</i> Place the pulp of thumb and give $\frac{1}{4}$ <i>Mathirai</i> press towards the scapula.	Fix the center portion of the thumb and apply deep pressure and move upward.	$\frac{1}{4}$ <i>Mathirai</i>	10 seconds and 3 times
<i>Savvu Varmam</i>	4 inches below the anterior axillary fold along the medial border of arm.	Press and release using thumb.	$\frac{1}{4}$ <i>Mathirai</i>	10seconds and 3 times
<i>Kaimootu Varmam</i>	Center of the Cubital fossa	Fix both thumbs in this point, with $\frac{1}{4}$ <i>Mathirai</i> pressure. Move towards the side of the elbow joint, fix the finger there and ask the patient to flex the elbow.	$\frac{1}{4}$ <i>Mathirai</i>	10 seconds and 3 times
<i>Kavuli Varmam</i>	Web area between thumb and index finger.	Press with thumb and move upward.	$\frac{1}{4}$ <i>Mathirai</i>	10 seconds and 3 times
<i>Manipanthaga Varmam</i>	Centre point of ventral aspect wrist joint	Press and release three times with thumb	$\frac{1}{4}$ <i>Mathirai</i>	10 seconds and 3 times
<i>Koli Kaluthu Varmam</i>	Medial and lateral point of wrist.	Ask patient to extend the upper limb completely, hold the point firmly by thumb and index finger with $\frac{1}{4}$ <i>Mathirai</i> pressure. Ask the patient to rotate the hand clockwise and anti-clockwise three times. Then with $\frac{1}{4}$ <i>Mathirai</i> pressure, move thumb from the radial side to ulnar side along dorsal aspect.	$\frac{1}{4}$ <i>Mathirai</i>	10 seconds and 3 times

the traditional treatment strategy was preferred. A variety of patient populations, including those with chronic diseases and those requiring palliative care, could benefit from a non-invasive, easily performed intervention.⁽¹¹⁾

Varmam therapy is a minimal invasive treatment that uses fingers and hands to stimulate *Varmam* point and maintains the balance of energy. *Varmam* focuses on the balance of *vali*, *azhal* and *iyam* and maintains the function of vital organs through circulation of energy (*Vaasi*) in the body. Proper stimulation of *Varmam* points helps in treatment of diseases. *Varmam* therapy serves as main therapy in the management of neuro-musculo-skeletal diseases menstrual disorders, respiratory conditions etc.⁽⁷⁾ Pain, disability, and quality of life, psychological state, and patient satisfaction were higher in exercise therapy. Exercise plays a large role in alleviating the present symptoms and especially pain.⁽¹²⁾ So, non-pharmacological, minimal invasive treatment methodologies will be very effective in the chronic disease like Cervical Spondylosis.

CONCLUSION

This review begins to establish an evidence base for the use of *Varmam* in relieving symptoms of Cervical Spondylosis. An evidence-base of reliable and valid evaluation is crucial for clinicians. *Varmam* uses a minimal invasive, timely, and effective way to support its effectiveness in relieving of symptoms of cervical spondylosis. Well-designed, randomized controlled studies are needed to determine the utility and efficacy of *Varmam* therapy to manage a variety of symptoms in a number of patient populations.

SOURCE OF FUNDING

The author received no financial support for the research and publication of this article.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research and publication of this article.

REFERENCES

1. Fejer R., Kyvik K.O., Hartvigsen J. The prevalence of neck pain in the world population: a systematic critical review of the literature. *Eur Spine J.* 2006; 15:834–848.
2. Thiyagarajan R, *Siddha* Maruthuvam SIRRAPPU, 5th ed. Chennai: Department of Indian Medicine and Homeopathy; 2017.
3. Mayil Vaganan Natarajan, “Natarajan’s Text Book of Orthopaedics and Traumatology” Seventh Edition 2011 Pg.no-154.
4. Shanmugavelu. M. Noi Nadal Noi Mudal Nadal Thirattu. Volume I, II, 3rd Edition. Chennai: Dept. Of Indian Medicine and Homeopathy; 2003.
5. Kannan Rajaram T. Fundamentals of Varma medicine. 1st Edition, A.T.S.V.S, *Siddha* Medical College, Kanniyakumari, 2007.
6. Kannan Rajaram T. A Text book of *Varmam*. 2nd ed. Kanniyakumari: A.T.S.V.S *Siddha* Medical College; 2017.
7. S. Sugunthan, R. Shailaja and M. Mohamed Musthafa A Review on Fundamental Principles of *Varmam* – An Ancient *Siddha* Medical Science Int J Ayu Pharm Chem e-ISSN 2350-0204
8. Kannan Rajaram T. Varma points and Relieving methods on the basis of finger measurement techniques in Varma therapy. 2nd ed. Kanniyakumari: Centre for Varma Medicine and Research; 2015. p. 2.
9. S.P. Ramachandran “Yugimuni Vaidya Chinthamani 800” Second Edition 2013, Pg.no-106.
10. Clinical *Siddha Varmam* provided by Government *Siddha* Medical College, Chennai, 2020.
11. Chen, Y.-W., & Wang, H.-H. (2014). The Effectiveness of Acupressure on Relieving Pain: A Systematic Review. *Pain Management Nursing*, 15(2), 539–550. doi: 10.1016/j.pmn.2012.12.005
12. Telci EA, Karaduman A. Effects of three different conservative treatments on pain, disability, quality of life, and mood in patients with cervical spondylosis. *Rheumatology International*. 2012 Apr 1;32(4):1033-40.