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## Research perspectives in Siddha Varmam therapy

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### ABSTRACT

*Siddha system is one of the oldest medical systems in the world. Siddhars, the fore-runners of this medical system served the community with many special therapies and Varmam is one among them. Varmam is the vital life energy points located in the human body. 108 main points have been identified by the Siddhars. The term Varmam also indicates the therapeutic manipulation of specific points in which the pranic energy is found concentrated. Even though Varmam therapy has been in existence for centuries, research in Varmam is still in the toddler stage. Central Council for Research in Siddha has the mandate to do research in Varmam. Standardization is the foremost component in any research. There are no specific guidelines to standardize the Varmam therapy. Just as a therapeutic interventional pre-clinical study, the standardization of Varmam is considered a pre-clinical one. Standardization of Varmam is comprised of mapping of Varmam points, the establishment of a relationship with nadi, standardization of pressure given to Varmam points, standardization of techniques of applying pressure, physiological correlation of Varmam, standardization with respect to bioenergy field and therapeutic grouping of Varmam points. This paper deals with the research perspective of Varmam.*

**Keywords**— Varmam, Siddha

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Siddha system is one of the oldest medical systems in the world dating 2000 or 3000 AD, originating from a southern part of India. Siddhars, the forerunners of this medical system served the community with many special therapies and Varmam is one among them.

Varmam is the vital life energy points located in the human body and was identified as 108 points by the Siddhars. When these points are hit with a particular force directly or indirectly, pathological changes occur in the body. The intensity of the changes depends on the force of hitting that particular point, the duration exposed to the force and the physical strength of the affected person. The effects observed when Varmam point is affected are pain, swelling, bleeding (at the hit site or near the corresponding natural orifice, spasm of the limbs, loss of function of the vital organs, vomiting, protrusion or in-drawing of the tongue, in-drawing or herniation of testicles, protrusion of eyeball, breathlessness, fainting and even death may result.

The term Varmam also indicates the therapeutic manipulation of specific points in which the pranic energy is found concentrated. Manipulation over these points with a particular force for the specific time will release the pranic energy from these points and brings relief to the affected individual by regulating the flow of pranic energy which is obstructed due to the assault on specific points (Varmam points) or due to other causes

Therapeutically the Varmam points are stimulated gently with the fingers. The pressure varies from the  $\frac{1}{4}$  unit,  $\frac{1}{2}$  unit,  $\frac{3}{4}$  unit to 1 unit/2units (unit = Mattirai). Depending on the nature of the illness, weight, and age of the patient, the application may be of pressing, pacing, lifting, braiding, even and gentle clockwise or anticlockwise rotation, pinching, slipping pinch, tapping and gentle stroking.

Standardization is the foremost component in any research. There are no specific guidelines to standardize the Varmam therapy. As a therapeutic interventional preclinical study, the standardization of Varmam is considered as preclinical one.

Central Council for Research in Siddha has formed a Varmam research subcommittee by Scientific Advisory Board (SAB). The subcommittee of Varmam research has to set up the guidelines for standardization of Varmam therapy.

## **2. STANDARDIZATION OF VARMAM**

Standardization of Varmam comprises of the following points:

- Mapping of Varmam points
- Establishment of relationship with Nadi
- Standardization of pressure given to Varmam point
- Standardization of techniques of applying pressure
- Physiological correlation of Varmam
- Standardization with respect to bioenergy field
- Therapeutic grouping of Varmam points

### **2.1 Mapping of Varmam points [1]**

Varmam is a Metaphysical medical science practiced exclusively in South India. As this medical science has been taught in gurukulam tradition, the techniques were kept secret. There are many schools of thoughts in describing the Varmam points in the human body. Hence there is difficulty in locating certain Varmam points. The purpose of standardizing the location of Varmam points in terms of anatomical landmarks is to reduce the error by Varmam physician. So the mapping of Varmam points has to be made by a consensual meeting of Varmam experts.

### **2.2 Relationship of Varmam with Naadi [2]**

Varmam is termed as pranic energy circulates all around the body. The strangulation of this energy is said to turn out a disease. There are ten types of naadi mentioned in Siddha medicine. There is a link between these naadi and Varmam. The severity of Varmam can be elicited by reading the naadi. The mapping of Varmam points along the track of this naadi has not been done so far. The course of this naadi plays a vital role in the location of Varmam. Hence the location of Varmam points in accordance with the track of naadi and its relationship has to be decided

### **2.3 Standardization of Pressure given to Varmam points**

Even the application of pressure to Varmam points have been explained in Siddha literature as “Mathirai”, the exact value of the mathirai has not been evaluated in terms of different Varmam physicians. The value of pressure elicited on the Varmam points holds the key to alleviating the disease. Therefore the value of pressure in terms of Pascal has to be recorded by different Varmam experts and a consensual decision has to be made on the pressure to be applied on each individual points. Finger Tactile Pressure Sensor System (USA) is a device which will record the pressure elicited to each point. It has a glove with a pressure sensor which will transmit through the wireless port to the base station where you can store the data. As the pressure standardization is prime in standardization the sanction of this device will helpful in starting this process quickly.

### **2.4 Standardization of techniques of applying pressure on Varmam points [3]**

There are 32 types of techniques in applying pressure to Varmam points. But which technique has to be applied for particular Varmam points has not been studied yet. The practice of applying pressure varies with individual Varmam experts. Hence the method of standardization of techniques of applying pressure on Varmam points has to be decided

### **2.5 Physiological correlation of Varmam**

After completion of the above standardization procedures, only the physiological evaluation of Varmam can be initiated. After standardizing mode, method, and location of Varmam points, it can be elicited on the healthy individual as like Phase I study. The physiological variation can be measured. The separate protocol has to be derived in terms of Phase I study of Varmam points. The parameters of physiological evaluation have to be decided.

### **2.6 Standardization of Varmam in terms of bioenergy**

Varmam is termed as pranic energy circulates all around the body. The strangulation of this energy is said to turn out a disease. Since the treatment modality deals with energy the method of eliciting the energy transformation from Varmam physician to diseased individual is not studied yet. The methods of performing Varmam therapy wearing gloves should be assessed. The concept of energy transformation has to be put forth and a consensual decision has to arrive.

### **2.7 Therapeutic grouping of Varmam points [4]**

Varmam has a facet of Martial arts. The points have been described in alleviating trauma. The concept of treating disease has evolved through the practice of Varmam experts. The knowledge of grouping certain Varmam points for treating a particular disease is to be validated. The literary reference of a grouping of Varmam points is not available. This grouping has developed in recent days. Hence the validation of therapeutic grouping of Varmam points has to be determined.

## **3. CONCLUSION**

Research in Varmam is in a primitive stage. The standardization plays a vital role in the evidence-based research in Varmam. However, the open clinical trial can be performed. CCRS has stepped forward in doing an open clinical trial. An open clinical trial on saganavatham (Cervical spondylosis) has been initiated. A multi-disciplinary approach is needed to elevate Varmam to a higher level of research.

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