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### *Ayurvedic approaches to female infertility: A comprehensive review.*

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#### Abstract

Infertility, defined as the inability to conceive after twelve months of regular unprotected intercourse, affects approximately 10–15% of reproductive-age couples globally. While assisted reproductive technologies have progressed, they are frequently associated with significant financial costs and psychological stress. In *Ayurveda*, infertility (*Vandhyatva*) is primarily attributed to the vitiation of *Vata Dosha*, particularly *Apana Vayu*, and the dysfunction of *Shukra Dhatu*. **Marma Chikitsa**, a therapy described in classical treatises like the *Sushruta Samhita* and *Charaka Samhita*, involves the stimulation of vital anatomical points to restore physiological and neuro-hormonal balance.

This review evaluates classical *Ayurvedic* descriptions and contemporary scientific literature (2000–2024) regarding the role of *Marma* therapy in infertility management. The objectives include examining *Ayurvedic*

and contemporary perspectives on *Vandhyatva*, exploring the practical application of **Marma Chikitsa** in reproductive health, and analyzing evidence of its effectiveness. Research indicates that stimulating the *Nabhi*, *Guda*, *Kukundara*, and *Adhipati Marmas* may enhance pelvic circulation, regulate the hypothalamic–pituitary–ovarian axis, and alleviate stress.

Clinical findings suggest improvements in menstrual regularity, ovulatory cycles, and conception outcomes. **Marma Chikitsa** appears to be a **safe, non-invasive, and holistic intervention**. Integrating this traditional therapy into current infertility protocols could benefit those seeking supportive treatments. However, well-designed randomized controlled trials and standardized protocols are necessary to further validate its clinical efficacy.

**Keywords:** Infertility, *Vandhyatva*, *Marma Chikitsa*, *Apana Vayu*, *Ayurveda*

## Introduction

Infertility is a significant global reproductive health issue<sup>1,2</sup>. Modern lifestyle stressors, endocrine imbalance, and environmental factors contribute substantially to its prevalence<sup>12, 13</sup>. Ayurveda conceptualizes successful conception through the harmonious interaction of *Ritu* (fertile period), *Kshetra* (healthy reproductive organs), *Ambu* (adequate nutrition), and *Beeja* (viable gametes)<sup>3</sup>. Among its various interventions, **Marma Chikitsa** a therapeutic practice involving the stimulation of vital energy points (*Marmas*) holds particular significance. *Marmas* are defined as anatomical locations where muscles, veins, ligaments, bones, and joints meet, serving as seats of life energy (*Prana*). Proper stimulation of specific *Marmas* is believed to balance *Vata Dosha*, enhance *Shukra Dhatu* (reproductive tissue), improve neuroendocrine functions, and relieve stress, which plays a pivotal role in unexplained infertility.

As described in the *Charaka Samhita*:

“ऋतुक्षेत्राम्बुबीजानां सम्यग्योगात् गर्भसंभवः”  
(Cha. Sha. 2/4)<sup>3</sup>

Proper union of season, field, nourishment, and seed leads to conception.

*Marma* points are defined in the *Sushruta Samhita* as vital anatomical sites where muscles, vessels, ligaments, bones, and joints converge<sup>4</sup>.

“मर्माणि नाम तत्स्थानं यत्र प्राणास्तिष्ठन्ति” (Su. Sha. 6/17)<sup>4</sup>

*Marmas* are those locations where *Prana* resides.

Regulation of *Apana Vayu* is essential for reproductive function<sup>3,6</sup>:

“अपानवायुर्गर्भधारणे कारणम्” (Cha. Sid. 1/16)<sup>3</sup>

*Apana Vayu* is responsible for conception.

### Aim

To explore and review the role of *Marma Chikitsa* as a holistic and integrative therapeutic approach for the management of infertility, highlighting its conceptual framework, mechanisms, and potential benefits.

### Objectives

1. To study the concept of infertility in *Ayurveda* and its correlation with *Marma Chikitsa*.
2. To review classical references and modern perspectives on the application of *Marma* therapy in reproductive health.
3. To analyze the probable physiological and psychological mechanisms by which *Marma Chikitsa* may contribute to fertility enhancement.
4. To evaluate existing literature and case studies supporting the efficacy of *Marma Chikitsa* in infertility management.

5. To propose *Marma Chikitsa* as a complementary and alternative intervention for infertility within an integrative healthcare framework .

## Materials and Methods

A qualitative narrative review approach was adopted. Classical *Ayurvedic* texts including the *Ashtanga Hridaya* were analyzed for references related to *Marma* points and reproductive physiology<sup>5</sup>. Contemporary biomedical literature was retrieved from PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar (2000–2024) using keywords such as “*Marma* therapy,” “*Ayurveda* and infertility,” and “integrative reproductive health.” Relevant review articles, clinical studies, and conceptual papers were included<sup>7–10</sup>.

## Results

The reviewed literature suggests that *Marma* stimulation may improve pelvic microcirculation, modulate hormonal pathways, and reduce stress through hypothalamic–pituitary–adrenal axis regulation<sup>7–9</sup>. Clinical studies have reported improvement in menstrual patterns and ovulatory function<sup>9</sup>.

## Discussion

*Marma* therapy is postulated to restore the flow of *Prana* and balance *Tridosha*, particularly *Vata*<sup>3,4</sup>.

“प्राणभूतानि मर्माणि” (Su. Sha. 6/16)<sup>4</sup>

*Marmas* are vital for sustaining life.

Neuroendocrine regulation and stress alleviation mechanisms may contribute to reproductive benefits<sup>7,8</sup>. However, methodological limitations and small sample sizes in existing studies highlight the necessity for rigorously designed trials<sup>10,13,14,15</sup>.

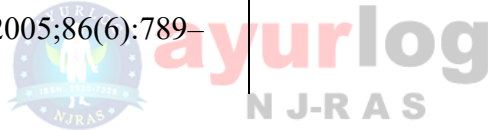
## Conclusion

*Marma Chikitsa* represents a holistic, non-invasive complementary approach for infertility management. Its integration into evidence-based reproductive healthcare warrants further large-scale, controlled clinical investigations<sup>10,14</sup>.

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