



## EFFECT OF *VARMAN THERAPY* ON *UTHIRAVATHASURONITHAM* (RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS) – A CASE REPORT

### Reumatology

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### ABSTRACT

A 36-year-old male from Tarnaka, visited with the chief complaints of pain, severe stiffness, and restricted range of movement of shoulder joints, ankle joints and interphalangeal joints of upper limb in both active and passive movements. He was diagnosed case of Rheumatoid Arthritis which can be equated to *Uthiravathasuronitham*, one of the *Vatha* disease mentioned in *Siddha* system of medicine. The disease varies greatly in the manner and degree to which it may affect a patient's general health, mobility and quality of life. Patient was treated with the *Siddha Varman Therapy* for 23 days. After 23 sessions of therapy reduction in pain, and restricted movement with the improvement in quality of life were measured by using the Visual Analog Scale (VAS) and Health Assessment Questionnaire- Disability Index (HAQ-DI) respectively.

### KEYWORDS

Rheumatoid Arthritis, *Vadha Noikal*, *Aamvata*, Traditional Medicine, Alternative Medicine

### INTRODUCTION

*Siddha* is an ancient Indian system of medicine based on ideologies of permeated religion and rituals & is widely used till today in Southern states of India. It is more than a system of physical medicines. *Siddha* therapy can cure many diseases that are not amenable to treatment by other systems of medicine. Ancient *Siddha* texts have proofs that body has self-healing capacity and is the foremost physician. Any abuse or disbalance upsets the human system leading to occurrence of diseases. The *Yogi Munivar of Siddha Medicine* classified the diseases under three humoral bases: signs, symptomatology and aetiology. *Uthiravatha suronitham* is thought to be such a disease in which all three humours classified under *Vatha* diseases are upset [1][2][3][4][5]. The diseases *Uthiravathasuronitham* has a very close relevance to Rheumatoid arthritis of our modern medicine which is a chronic autoimmune inflammatory disorder in which one's own immune system mistakenly attacks own tissues and is characterized by commonly affecting bilateral joints of the body [6][7][8][9]. Patients having *Uthiravatha suronitham* (RA) are characterized by swelling of the ankle joint, knee joint and other joint, severe pain in smaller joints, morning stiffness and psychological distress.

In *Siddha System of medicine*, *Varman Therapy* is one of the therapies which found to be very effective in musculoskeletal disorders. *Varman* indicates the therapeutic stimulation of specific points where the *Pranic* energy is concentrated [10][11][12]. *Varman* therapy is a drugless, non-invasive, simple therapy used in pain management. The therapy time is less and if given regularly it gives long lasting results.

Herein we report this case study of a patient diagnosed with *Uthiravathasuronitham* and undergone with *Siddha Varman therapy* by adopting the *Guidelines for practice of Siddha Vaidyas*. So, will the *Siddha Varman therapy* affect the pain and the ability to perform daily tasks in a man with *Uthiravathasuronitham* (Rheumatoid Arthritis) from past 2 years within 4 weeks' time period is our study of interest?

### Participant Information

A 36-year-old male patient from Tarnaka, Hyderabad living in USA visited Chakrasiddha Health Centre on 29 November 2021 with the chief complaints of progressively worsening pain in symmetrical interphalangeal joints of upper limb with tenderness and stiffness. Patient was unable to lift and carry small baggage. Patient also complaint of pain in shoulder joint with a restricted range of motion. While walking, patient had severe pain near the heel and ankle joint of both feet along with stiffness. Stiffness is that severe that patient was unable to stretch his body. On examination, the joints were inflamed and tender on pressure.

### History Of Past Illness

After taking detail history of patient, we come to know that patient is a known case of Rheumatoid Arthritis, firstly diagnosed in December

2019. At that time, he had a severe pain in all the small joints of upper and lower limb, shoulder joint of both sides and below the knee in both legs. Pain was intermittent in nature with moderate to severe intensity since July, 2019. When pain become unbearable then he visited to the orthopaedic doctor and got diagnosed with Rheumatoid arthritis in December 2019 with RA factor 50 and put on HCQs 200 mg twice a day. He took medicine for a while but didn't get much relief, so he again visited to the rheumatologist, and he increased his dosage of HCQs up to 400 mg twice a day. With those medicine pain and stiffness got reduced and patient kept taking the medicine for one year and no repeated test were taken during this course of time as the symptoms were pretty much under controlled. Patient being aware of the adverse effect of HCQs for long term, stopped its usage in January 2021 and shifted to Homeopathic treatment. But the pain and stiffness again started flaring up during March-April 2021. Patient's complaints again become unbearable, and he visited to the rheumatologist again in September, 2021. At that time RA factor was 299. Doctor started Prednisolone 5mg daily and leflunomide 20mg daily along with HCQs. Intensity of pain, and tenderness got reduced but not significantly. Other complaints like stiffness, restricted range of motion, gripping issues with weakness, difficulty in stretching the body remains same. Then he got to know *Siddha Therapy* of alternative medicine and consulted in OPD of Chakrasiddha Health Centre. Detailed examination with detailed history were performed. At the time of consultation patient was not taking any medicine and had stopped it 4 days before visiting in OPD.

### Assessment Criteria

For the assessment of pain and quality of life Visual Analog Scale (VAS) [13], and Health Assessment Questionnaire- Disability Index (HAQ-DI) [14] has been used respectively to see the effect in before starting and after completing the treatment.

### Treatment Plan

Treatment started on 29 November 2021 by working and manipulating concerned *Varman Points* i.e energy points (without intervention of any kind of medication) of both shoulders and both hands. Along with that Rheumatoid arthritis specific diet had been advised to the patient too. Patient intimidated that he started the prescribed diet from the very 2<sup>nd</sup> day. On 2<sup>nd</sup> day of treatment *Varman points* of both ankles, both feet along with both shoulders and both elbows were attended. Patient started noticing the difference in only three days of treatment. Patient reported noticeable reduction in morning stiffness and pain, afterwards, stretches by a qualified physiotherapist had been advised to improve the flexibility. Ongoing forward, from the 5<sup>th</sup> day *Varman Points* of all major joints (shoulder, elbow) of upper limb along with small joints of hands and ankle were started attended by the healers regularly and a full-fledged treatment had been started. During regular feedback patient keep mentioning the gradual betterment he had feeling in all the mentioned symptoms. On the 15<sup>th</sup> day of treatment

elbow pain and shoulder pain was almost disappeared with significant flexibility in shoulder joint. Till 15<sup>th</sup> day of treatment intensity of pain in ankles and feet were reduced but mild pain was still there. However, patient was able to walk for a longer time without any pain. So accordingly, focus was more towards reactivating the *Varman points* of ankle and feet followed by stretches. On 23<sup>rd</sup> day of treatment patient got free from all type of pain in ankle and heel as well.

## RESULT

After the treatment of 23 days, the pain scoring in VAS score was reduced from 9/10 to 2/10. The disability was reduced from 1.4 to 0.315 by using HAQ DI scale. Also, in HAQ VAS score pain was reduced from 98/100 to 15/100. The range of movements improved well allowing him to perform his daily activities with ease. Another symptom wise chart which is prepared by the centre itself is given below.

### Chakrasiddh Health Centre Symptomatic Chart

| Symptoms  | Before the treatment             | After the treatment  |
|---|----------------------------------|--|
| Pain in major joints (Both shoulders, both elbows both hands, both ankles, both feet) | Severe and unable to move freely | Pain is reduced by 90%, able to perform all movements in all direction |
| Nature of Pain  | Continuous                       | No pain, only mild pain triggered while performing few movements       |
| Intensity of pain   | Severe                           | No pain  |
| Walking   | 10 -15 minutes (with pain)       | 50-60 minutes (no pain)  |
| Resting Time  | Most of the time                 | Very less  |
| Sitting on ground   | Very difficult                   | Able to sit freely   |
| Bending forward   | Slightly difficult               | Improved   |
| Sleeping  | Used to wake up in between       | No issue, sound sleep  |
| Climbing stairs   | Very difficult                   | Improved a lot. Able to climb easily                                   |
| Stiffness   | Severe stiffness                 | Flexible now   |
| Gripping issue  | Unable to hold things            | Improved   |
| Driving   | Little discomfort                | Improved   |
| Working on Computers  | Stiffness                        | Improved a lot   |
| Others  | Unable to fold elbow             | Improved a lot. Able to fold elbow easily                              |

## DISCUSSION

The case report demonstrates the reduction in pain with improved mobility and quality of life only with manipulating the energy points i.e. *Varman Therapy* mentioned in *Siddha medicine*. It helps the patient in gradual retaining of flexibility and strength. No medical/surgical intervention was given. At present, the patient is free from all signs and symptoms, and he is leading a comfortable life by carefully adding prescribed exercises and his diet in his lifestyle.

## CONCLUSION

Several studies have reported the impact of Rheumatoid Arthritis on quality of life of the sufferers due to poor physical functioning, social interactions, and pain experience they have. In addition to that having long term usage of pain killers and steroids are also having side effects on the other system of the body. So, it can be concluded that *Varmam Therapy* may play an important role in reducing the pain and improving the quality of life without having any intervention of oral drugs and topical gels/oils and so has no side effects. It could also be used as an adjunctive therapy as part of a multidisciplinary integrative approach in reducing the pain and improving the flexibility and quality of life.

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