

<https://doi.org/10.48047/AFJBS.7.5.2025.144-161>



African Journal of Biological Sciences

Journal homepage: <http://www.afjbs.com>



Research Paper

Open Access

Siddha Therapeutic Approaches and Energy Healing: A Holistic Path to Balancing Body and Mind in Autoimmune Disease Management

Bhuvanagiri Sathya Sindhuja¹, Injarapu Sankar², Shweta Tiwari^{3*}

¹ Founder, Chakrasiddh; ² Chief Healer; ³ Consultant Dr

^{1,2,3}Dept of Siddha Medicine, Chakrasiddh health centre, Hyderabad, India

*Corresponding Author: Shweta Tiwari; Email id: shweta11_in@yahoo.com

Volume 7, Issue 5, May 2025

Received: 15 Mar 2025

Accepted: 05 Apr 2025

Published: 09 May 2025

[doi:10.48047/AFJBS.7.5.2025.144-161](https://doi.org/10.48047/AFJBS.7.5.2025.144-161)

Abstract:

Autoimmune diseases, where the immune system mistakenly attacks the body's own cells, are complex and often require a multifaceted treatment approach. While conventional medicine primarily focuses on managing symptoms and suppressing the immune response, complementary therapies like Energy healing and Siddha medicine has emerged as a promising approach to the holistic treatment of autoimmune diseases. The amalgamation of these modalities aims to address the root cause and restore body balance. In this review article, we explore the principles and practices of Siddha Vaidyam, an ancient Indian healing tradition, in addressing autoimmune conditions. We delve into the concept of energy blockages, its flow, the role of energy points and therapeutic touch, lifestyle modifications, and dietary regimens advocated by Siddha Vaidyam. Through a comprehensive analysis of research studies, case reports, and anecdotal evidence, we highlight the potential benefits and challenges of applying Siddha principles in the management of autoimmune diseases. This review aims to provide insights into the effectiveness of the amalgamation of energy medicine and therapeutic sessions in enhancing the well-being and quality of life of individuals with autoimmune conditions.

Introduction

Autoimmune diseases are a diverse group of disorders where the immune system erroneously targets the body's tissues and organs, leading to a range of symptoms and complications.¹ Conditions like rheumatoid arthritis, Crohn's disease, lupus, ankylosing spondylosis, and multiple sclerosis significantly challenge patients and healthcare providers. Affecting around 10% of the global population, the prevalence of autoimmune diseases is rising. Genetic predisposition, environmental factors, lifestyle choices, and stress all contribute to their development, necessitating a multifaceted approach to treatment.² Traditional treatments, including immunosuppressants and anti-inflammatory drugs, focus mainly on symptom management and often come with dependency on medications and adverse effects with 62% chances of relapse in symptoms³. Moreover, they may not address the root cause of autoimmune dysfunction causing symptoms relapse in patients.

Recognising the limitations of conventional treatments, many patients seek holistic approaches that address the underlying imbalances contributing to disease. Energy healing (EH) techniques, deeply rooted in ancient healing practices, is one such approach that has gained popularity. Siddha Vaidyam, a traditional Indian healing system, focuses on restoring balance and harmony to the body-mind-spirit complex through prana, or life force energy. Techniques like Nadi Vaidyam and Marma Chikitsa, along with lifestyle and dietary modifications, aim to correct imbalances in the flow of prana, promoting holistic healing. By addressing the root causes of disease, Siddha Vaidyam offers a promising complementary approach for individuals with autoimmune diseases. The following sections of this review will delve deeper into the principles and practices of Siddha Vaidyam and its potential benefits in treating autoimmune conditions. Also, highlight will be put on amalgamation of energy healing practices with Siddha therapy for a more coordinated move to health and healing.

2. Energy Healing: Concepts and Principles^{2,3-8}

Energy healing is a holistic approach to healing that acknowledges the vital role of energy in maintaining health and well-being. It operates on the principle that the body is surrounded by an invisible field of energy or a subtle energy system, that governs its functioning on physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual levels. Energy healing includes various techniques and practices aimed at detecting and correcting imbalances in this energy field to promote health and healing⁴. Healing should extend beyond just the physical body, addressing the mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of an individual. Energy healing on integration with conventional medical practices, can provide a comprehensive approach to health by targeting these often-overlooked aspects, thus promoting holistic healing. Healing through energy balancing holds significant potential in supporting a wide array of health conditions, making it crucial for healthcare professionals to understand its principles, safety, and efficacy⁵. In the context of autoimmune

diseases, energy healing seeks to balance and restore the body's energy fields, potentially reducing inflammation, alleviating symptoms, and enhancing overall immune function.

Studies have often shown potential gains through the integration of Energy Healing into conventional healthcare in disease management and overall well-being. Through multidisciplinary research and collaboration, the scientific validation of EH could lead to innovative preventive and therapeutic strategies, fostering a new paradigm in Integrative Medicine. EH is based on the concept of a bioenergetic field, often referred to as the biofield, which is believed to regulate physiological and biochemical processes. Though not yet measurable by conventional instruments, emerging research in biophoton emissions, electromagnetic interactions, and quantum biology suggests its role in health and vitality⁶. EH also recognizes the interconnectedness of biological systems and their environment, aligning with concepts of biophysical entrainment and electromagnetic resonance, where external energy fields influence physiological functions⁷. Studies on heart rate variability and neural synchronization provide scientific insights into energetic resonance and therapeutic entrainment. Additionally, EH emphasizes self-regulation and the body's innate healing mechanisms, supported by research in neuroplasticity, psychoneuroimmunology (PNI), and epigenetics, showing how bioenergetic interventions influence gene expression and immune function⁸.

A multidimensional approach in EH acknowledges the interaction between physical, emotional, mental, and environmental factors in health, aligning with findings in systems biology and psychophysiology. Traditions like Ayurveda, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), and Siddha Vaidyam focus on prana (life force energy), known as Qi in TCM, flowing through channels (nadis or meridians) that regulate physiological balance⁹. Scientific parallels exist in fascia research, neurovascular networks, and biophotonic communication, suggesting that bioelectrical and biophotonic signaling underlie these ancient healing principles¹⁰. According to energy healing theories, disruptions or imbalances in chakras, disruptions in meridians or irregularities in the aura might reflect physical and emotional imbalances indicating to auto-immune disorders¹¹. In autoimmune diseases, immune homeostasis is disrupted, leading to chronic inflammation and oxidative stress. EH-based therapies, such as biofield interventions, vibrational medicine, and electromagnetic frequency modulation, are being explored for their effects on immune modulation, mitochondrial function, and inflammation reduction. Preliminary studies suggest these interventions may promote immune tolerance, autonomic balance, and cellular resilience, complementing conventional treatments¹².

Advancing EH through interdisciplinary research in biophysics, neuroscience, and immunology may contribute to innovative preventive and therapeutic strategies. Further empirical validation through clinical trials and biophysical studies could strengthen its integration into mainstream medicine, supporting a scientifically grounded approach to holistic healthcare.

3. Siddha Vaidyam: An Overview^{9,10}

Siddha Vaidyam is an ancient healing system that originated in South India and is believed to have been developed by Siddhars, enlightened sages or saints, thousands of years ago and passed on through generations. The word "Siddha" means "perfected one" in Tamil, and Siddha Vaidyam refers to the knowledge and practices passed down by these Siddhars for promoting health, longevity, and spiritual evolution. The siddha practitioner is considered not only a healer but also a spiritual guide and mentor, responsible for facilitating the patient's journey towards self-realisation and liberation. Siddha Vaidyam is deeply rooted in the spiritual traditions of South India and incorporates principles of siddha, Yoga, Meditation and diet into its holistic approach to healing.^{3,9-12} Siddhars, through their deep meditations and spiritual practices, attained profound insights of self-healing capacity of body through mind-body interventions that are mentioned in written manuscripts and passed the holistic healing approach to their kins passing on from generations to generations¹².

Siddha Medicine, emphasizes the balance of energy (Prana), humors (Vatham, Pitham, and Kapham), and consciousness for maintaining health. In Siddha philosophy, health is maintained through unobstructed energy flow in the body's Nadis (energy channels) and Chakras. Autoimmune disorders are seen as imbalances in energy flow, Prana depletion, and toxic accumulation in tissues, leading to inflammation and immune dysfunction. Siddha healing techniques, including Pranic healing, biofield modulation, and energy therapies, aim to restore equilibrium and remove energy blockages¹³. Siddha Energy Healing integrates bioenergetic principles with traditional Siddha practices to restore energetic balance, enhance immunity, and promote self-healing. This approach is particularly relevant in managing autoimmune diseases, where the immune system becomes overactive, mistakenly attacking the body's own tissues.

One of the distinguishing features of Siddha Vaidyam is its holistic approach to healing, which recognises the interconnectedness of the mind, body, and spirit. Siddha physicians consider not only the physical symptoms but also the emotional, mental, and spiritual aspects of the patient's being in diagnosis and treatment. Various modalities such as Nadi Vaidyam (pulse diagnosis), Marma Chikitsa (therapeutic touch), chakra balancing and Siddha Yoga (breathwork and meditation) to address imbalances on all levels are incorporated in healing process. The Siddha physician works on pressure points to gain back harmony and balance within the individual by removing body blockages, promoting healthy energy flow, and addressing the root cause of disease.^{14,15}

3.1 Energy Systems in Siddha Healing^{3,11,12,18}

Siddha healing is based on the regulation of prana (life force energy) which influence physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being through subtle energy systems. These systems include: *Nadis* which are subtle energy channels that facilitate prana flow throughout the body, forming an interconnected network essential for physiological and neurological functions¹⁶; *Marmas* which are considered as vital energy points where nadis converge, playing a critical role in neuromuscular coordination, metabolic balance, and immune regulation^{17,18} and lastly *Chakras* which are determined as energy centers along the spine, influencing endocrine function, emotional regulation, and consciousness^{19,20}. Dysfunction in these energy pathways manifests as physical ailments, chronic conditions, inflammatory conditions, and psychological imbalances

hence reduced vitality. Clearing, balancing, and energizing these channels ensures optimal homeostasis, cellular function, and neuroimmune response.

3.1.1 Nadi Vaidyam- Energy channels

Nadi Vaidyam, is an intrinsic component of Siddha healing, a complex network of subtle energy channels through which prana, or life force energy flows^{14,15}. They are non-physical energy pathways that resemble the nervous system, meridians (Traditional Chinese Medicine), and fascial networks in modern medicine. The siddhars used this method for diagnosing various disorders and diseases by feeling these channels. This traditional practice aligns with emerging scientific fields such as biophysics^{4,5}, neurophysiology⁷, and psychoneuroimmunology (PNI)^{8,15}, offering a holistic approach to health by integrating energetic, physiological, and neurological mechanisms. Nadis may correspond to peripheral nerves and autonomic pathways, where energy blockages impact neurotransmitter release, vagal tone, and stress regulation⁵. The concept of pranic flow shows much similarity to the piezoelectricity in connective tissues and electromagnetic field interactions contributing to energy transmission within the body. Also, effects of both PNI and Nadi vaidyam as per texts match each other as both influences immune modulation reduces inflammatory cytokines, oxidative stress, and autoimmunity through its impact on the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis^{6,8}.

Nadi Vaidyam employs techniques like pressure stimulation, breath regulation, and biofield alignment to clear energy blocks and restore energy flow. The energy block clearance does the function of reducing biochemical imbalances, neuromuscular stiffness, and vascular congestion, optimizing oxygenation and nutrient delivery. This will lead to uninterrupted prana flow causing heart rate variability (HRV) and vagal nerve activity, promoting stress resilience and autonomic stability. By obtaining viability, there is enhancement of mitochondrial function and cellular bioenergetics, improving tissue repair, pain relief, and metabolic efficiency, thus energizing the body. Nadi Vaidyam, within the context of autoimmune conditions, helps identify and correct underlying energy imbalances, reduces inflammatory responses and immune dysregulation, supporting the body's natural healing mechanisms. By targeting specific energy points and integrating with other Siddha therapies like herbal medicine and lifestyle interventions, it promotes holistic healing and long-term well-being.

3.1.2 Marma Chikitsa- Therapeutic Touch^{13,18,17,23}

The term "marma" means "secret" or "hidden," emphasising their crucial role in maintaining health and vitality.^{21,22} Marma Chikitsa, a key therapeutic touch approach in Siddha and Ayurveda, is based on the activation of vital energy points (Marmas) to restore physiological balance. In siddha texts there is mention of 108 Marma points, analogous to neurovascular nodes, myofascial trigger points, and acupressure sites, playing a crucial role in regulating immune function, reducing inflammation, and promoting self-healing. In autoimmune diseases such as Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA), Multiple Sclerosis (MS), and Fibromyalgia, Marma therapy influences neuroimmune pathways, autonomic function, and cellular repair mechanisms.

In traditional practices, especially in alternative medicine and holistic healing, there is a believe that both physical and emotional factors, any past trauma, incident or negative interaction with people blocks the body's life force energy. Suppressing these factors can weaken the immune system, reducing the ability to combat diseases or disorders. While the mind may forget these traumas, the body, voice, and nervous system remember storing the unresolved issues as energy blockages and can manifest as physical knots or tension in the body. This concept aligns with psychoneuroimmunology (PNI) and somatic memory theory, where unresolved emotional and psychological stressors manifest as neuromuscular tension and immune dysregulation. Scientific studies suggest that chronic stress can alter the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, increase pro-inflammatory cytokines (IL-6, TNF- α), and impair autonomic nervous system (ANS) balance, leading to a weakened immune response ^{22,23}.

Therapeutic pressure point clearance, including acupressure, Marma Chikitsa, and myofascial release, works well to address these blocks. The pressure stimulation affects fascia, neuromuscular junctions, and bioelectrical signaling, enhancing blood circulation, lymphatic drainage, and neurotransmitter release (endorphins, serotonin, and dopamine), promoting homeostasis and cellular repair. By integrating mind-body interventions with targeted energy work, these techniques retrain the nervous system, reduce inflammatory responses, pain subsiding and restore bioenergetic balance, making them valuable in managing autoimmune diseases, chronic pain, and emotional trauma recovery.

3.1.3 Chakra System- Energy Centers¹⁷⁻²⁰

In the Siddha healing system, the chakra system is an essential component of the body's energy anatomy, influencing physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Unlike the more widely known seven-chakra model in Yoga and Tantra, Siddha tradition incorporates a subtle, advanced understanding of energy centers, integrating them with Nadi Vaidyam (energy channels), Marma Chikitsa (vital energy points), and Varmam therapy (pressure-based healing). In pretext of Auto-immune diseases, imbalance and blockages in various chakras may be a causative factor for them. Like disturbances in Mooladhara, Swadhisthana, Anahata and Ajana chakras have contributed to risen cases of auto-immune diseases and various other disorders (Table-1).

Name of Chakra	Function	Disorder/Disease
Mooladhara (Root Chakra)	Governs stability, immunity, and survival instincts.	autoimmune disorders, chronic fatigue, and musculoskeletal issues
Swadhisthana (Sacral Chakra)	Associated with reproductive health, emotions, and gut function.	Crohn's disease, PCOS
Manipuraka (Solar Plexus Chakra)	Governs digestion, metabolism, and personal power.	Diabetes, Thyroiditis
Anahata (Heart Chakra)	Regulates emotional balance, heart function, and immunity.	Rheumatoid arthritis (RA), lupus (SLE)

Vishuddhi (Throat Chakra)	Manages communication and thyroid function.	thyroiditis, chronic inflammation
Ajna (Third Eye Chakra)	Controls neuroendocrine function, perception, and intuition.	multiple sclerosis (MS), fibromyalgia
Sahasrara (Crown Chakra)	Connects to spiritual consciousness and nervous system regulation.	mental health disorders and chronic neurological diseases

Table-1: Different Chakras and Disorders

4. Hand and Pressure Therapy^{4,5,18,21-23}

Hand and pressure therapy also known as Hastha Chikitsa in Sanskrit, is a traditional healing modality in the Siddha tradition that involves the application of pressure, massage, and manipulation techniques to specific energy points, meridians, and marma points on the body using the hands or fingers. This therapy is based on the principle that the body is traversed by a network of subtle energy channels through which prana, or life force energy, flows and that by stimulating these energy points, balance and harmony can be restored to the body-mind complex. The practitioners hands are believed to be powerful tools for healing and initiating these energy points, as they are connected to the heart chakra and are capable of transmitting healing energy and intention²⁴. By applying pressure to specific points on the body, the practitioner can stimulate the flow of prana, release energy blockages, and promote balance and harmony within the energy system.

Hand and pressure therapy is often integrated with other Siddha practices such as Nadi Vaidyam, Marma Chikitsa, dietary modifications, and lifestyle interventions to provide a comprehensive approach to healing autoimmune conditions. By combining these modalities, Siddha practitioners can address the underlying imbalances in the body's energy system, promote relaxation and stress reduction, support immune function, and enhance overall health and well-being. For example, hand and pressure therapy may be used in conjunction with Nadi Vaidyam to assess the state of the individual's energy system and identify specific energy blockages or imbalances. Marma Chikitsa may then be applied to stimulate marma points and release trapped emotions or energetic disturbances. Dietary modifications may be prescribed to support immune function and promote overall health, while lifestyle interventions such as yoga, meditation, and breathwork may be recommended to reduce stress and enhance emotional well-being. By integrating hand and pressure therapy with other Siddha practices, practitioners can offer individuals with autoimmune diseases a holistic and personalised approach to healing that addresses the root causes of their condition and supports their journey towards optimal health and vitality.

5. Siddha Dietary Practices for Auto-immune Diseases^{25,38,39}

One of the core concepts in Siddha is “unave marunthu” i.e Food is medicine; Medicine is Food²⁵. This maxim acknowledges the emphasis laid by Siddhars on healthy eating and the

nutritional importance of a balanced diet. Siddhar Theraiyar has mentioned that food can be both cause of diseases and it is also an infallible medicine for disease prevention. In his textbooks, he designed few dietary principles to be followed as a prophylactic measure for leading a healthy life' eg "Always consume sour curd, never eat root tubers except yam, take meals twice a day instead of thrice daily, and take diluted buttermilk and melted ghee". It is clearly depicted in the codes that one of the root cause of diseases can be improper food consumption and along with it, the nature of the particular person, condition of doshas or vital life factors in his body, vatha, pitta and kabam, etc. also plays an important and helpful role in this process. According to his teachings, if a person is ignorant about the diet according to his disease, it will make the suffering or disease fiercer so correct diet, in accordance to disease is of great importance in destruction of disease.

Siddhars believed some substances or spices played a significant role in balancing the three vital life factors. These culinary spices improves digestive health by preventing amam (intestinal auto-intoxication). Eugenol, a bioactive constituent richly present in more than nine Indian culinary spices such as clove, ginger, turmeric, cumin, pepper, tulsi, nutmeg, mace, thyme, shows anti-inflammatory effects with downregulation of cytokines, immune mediators like IL-1 beta, TNF-alpha, Prostaglandin E2 from LPS stimulated macrophages so as to regulate the acute phase of infection and effectively minimize impending tissue injury²⁴. Renowned siddha practitioners and now even scientists have determined that in auto-immune diseases, diet plays a major role in managing these disorders by balancing the body's energy and reducing inflammation. The approach focuses on detoxification, improving digestion, and enhancing immunity through natural, sattvic foods. □

Avoiding Inflammatory Foods: Processed foods, refined sugars, dairy, and gluten are believed to cause imbalances and increase inflammation²⁶. Nightshade vegetables (tomatoes, potatoes, brinjal) are often restricted due to their potential to trigger inflammatory responses.

Detoxification Through Herbal Remedies: Aloe vera juice, turmeric milk, and neem extracts help in purifying the blood and supporting immune balance.

Gut Health and Digestion: Siddha emphasizes a diet rich in easily digestible grains like millets over wheat or refined flour. Fermented foods like buttermilk and rice gruel (kanji) are suggested to enhance gut microbiota, which plays a crucial role in immune regulation²¹.

Enhancing Immunity with Siddha Foods: Turmeric, black pepper, dry ginger, garlic, and curry leaves have anti-inflammatory properties and are commonly used in Siddha preparations. Tulsi is suggested for its adaptogenic properties to regulate immune function.

Hydration and Lifestyle Practices: Warm water with honey and lemon in the morning is believed to detoxify the system. Oil pulling with sesame or coconut oil helps in reducing systemic inflammation.

Fasting and Meal Timings: Periodic fasting (e.g., taking light food or herbal drinks) is suggested to enhance metabolism and detoxify the system. Also, eating before sunset is encouraged to improve digestion and prevent toxin accumulation.

6. Role of Yoga and Meditation in Siddha^{35,37}

In Siddha medicine, yoga and meditation are not just physical or mental exercises but powerful tools for balancing bioenergies, detoxifying the body, and calming the immune system. By integrating pranayama, asanas, meditation, and mantra chanting, individuals with autoimmune disorders can reduce inflammation, restore balance, and improve overall well-being. Autoimmune diseases result from an overactive immune response, often triggered by stress, toxins, and energy imbalances. Yoga and meditation help restore this balance by promoting self-healing, reducing inflammation, and calming the nervous system.

Yogic practices like Pranayama (breath control) clears energy pathways, enhances the immunity by increasing oxygen supply and reduces stress-induced inflammation. Certain Asanas (Postures) have proved in managing auto-immune disease flare-ups like Vrikshasana (Tree Pose) has improved stability and Bhujangasana (Cobra Pose) worked on enhancing adrenal and thyroid function. Savasana (Corpse Pose) has helped in deep relaxation and cellular healing along with detoxification and lymphatic drainage. Siddha also emphasizes that emotional stress and suppressed traumas contribute to energy blockages and immune dysfunction. Dhyana (meditation) helps in releasing past emotional imprints and enhancing self-regulation. Siddha Healing and chakra balancing meditations helps in aligning body energy centres to improve immune response. Mantra chanting or sound healing have also shown good results in mind calming and deep healing.

7. Understanding Memory Blockages & Autoimmune Disease^{31-34,43}

The human mind serves as a dynamic interface where thoughts are projected, playing a pivotal role in consciousness and overall well-being. According to siddhars, everything in the environment, including human's thoughts, interactions, past experiences, and physical trauma, carries a distinct energy frequency. These frequencies collectively influence an individual's bioenergetic field. Unresolved emotional or physical experiences can create energy imprints or memory blockages within the body's subtle energy system, disrupting the natural flow of prana (life force energy). These blockages can persist subconsciously, influencing neural pathways, autonomic responses, and emotional regulation, ultimately impacting cognitive function, and overall well-being.

Traditional and generational Siddhars have observed that intricate details of an individual's past experiences appear to be encoded within the body's energy system, influencing long-term health outcomes. This bioenergetic memory storage is believed to contribute to autoimmune conditions such as Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) and Fibromyalgia, where unresolved emotional and energetic imbalances manifest as chronic inflammation and pain. Evidence suggests that these energy patterns encode, store, and transmit complex physiological and emotional information, potentially influencing genetic expression and epigenetic modifications across generations⁴³. This may explain why certain autoimmune conditions persist within familial lineages, affecting descendants. Recognizing the deep connection between emotional and physical health highlights

the importance of targeted therapeutic interventions in Siddha healing, aimed at clearing energy hindrances, restoring balance, and alleviating physical symptoms to promote long-term well-being.

The Siddha system, akin to conventional medicine, recognizes the atomic structure as the fundamental unit of life, wherein continuously fluctuating energy states drive biochemical reactions at the cellular level. Healing in Siddha medicine is understood as a multi-layered process that modulates the body's energy dynamics. This involves ion flux across cellular membranes, bioelectrical signaling in the nervous system, and the modulation of electromagnetic fields surrounding organs. These bioenergetic interactions regulate homeostasis, immune response, and neurophysiological functions. Furthermore, positive cognitive patterns and intentional healing are believed to modulate neuroplasticity, autonomic responses, and cellular repair mechanisms, facilitating restoration at physical, mental, and energetic levels.

8. Role of Siddha Energy Sessions & its Healing power^{5,26,32}

Energy sessions play a crucial role in releasing emotional blockages by working on the body's subtle energy system, which is deeply connected to emotional and mental well-being. Negative emotions such as stress, anxiety, fear, anger, and sadness can create energetic disruptions, leading to imbalances in prana (life force energy) and contributing to both physical and psychological distress leading to some auto-immune diseases. Siddha healing techniques like Nadi Vaidyam and Marma Chikitsa are employed to identify and clear these blockages by stimulating specific energy points and pathways linked to emotional regulation. Through targeted pressure and manipulation, these techniques disperse stagnant energy, release trapped emotions, and restore a balanced energy flow, promoting overall healing and emotional resilience.

Siddha practitioners use intuitions to sense and release the hindrances through gentle touch, visualization or hand pressure techniques (varmam/thokkanam) to channelize the body energy. These versatile practices help reduce tensions in muscles, relax the body, alleviate pain and stress, and paves way for natural healing processes. Energy healing also contributes to emotional well-being, self-awareness, and vitality, helping individuals connect with their inner wisdom, release stored emotions, and cultivate a greater sense of peace, clarity, and well-being. The integrative approach of Siddha promotes well-being through mindfulness and meditation practice for stress diminution and emotion balancing. Yoga and movement therapy releases stress on muscles and gains free energy flow, improves flexibility in joints thus lowering down pain thereby, supporting individuals with auto-immune diseases in their healing journey.

9. Evidences of Siddha Therapy in Autoimmune Diseases

Siddha therapy integrates holistic approach of energy balancing, detoxification, and mind-body interventions to restore balance in individuals suffering from autoimmune diseases. Patients who incorporate Siddha therapy into their autoimmune treatment experienced reduction in pain, stiffness, and swelling (RA, lupus, psoriasis); improved digestion & energy levels (Crohn's, thyroiditis); better emotional well-being and reduced anxiety along with enhanced mobility & flexibility due to detox and energy balancing.

The fundamental principle is that autoimmune conditions arise due to disruptions in the body's energy system (prana) and imbalances between the physical, mental, and spiritual planes. By realigning these systems, Siddha therapy enhances immune modulation and self-healing mechanisms. Research on Siddha treatments, particularly in the context of autoimmune diseases, is still limited compared to other medical systems. However, there have been some studies and clinical trials that have investigated the efficacy of Siddha therapies in various health conditions. Here's a brief overview of few case examples of successful Siddha Treatments for Autoimmune Diseases: (Table-2)

Rheumatoid Arthritis: A 36-year-old male diagnosed with Rheumatoid Arthritis (equated to Uthiravathasronitham in Siddha medicine) experienced pain, severe stiffness, and restricted movement in multiple joints. After 23 days of Siddha Varman Therapy, significant improvements in pain, mobility, and quality of life were observed, measured using the Visual Analog Scale (VAS) and Health Assessment Questionnaire-Disability Index (HAQ-DI).²⁶ In another case of 45-year old female with Uthiravathasronitham (Rheumatoid arthritis) was treated with the classical Siddha varmam and thokannam therapy for three weeks, along with dietary modifications. Using the Disease Activity Score (DAS) with 28 joints and ESR, as per EULAR criteria, along with the Health Assessment Questionnaire Disability Index (HAQ-DI) and Visual Analog Scale (VAS), the treatment resulted in moderate improvement in the patient's health condition and quality of life¹⁵. A study on the efficacy of Siddha drugs in treating rheumatoid arthritis involved 20 patients selected based on specific criteria. The patients received polyherbal Siddha drugs (CL - internal and CEN- external) and were monitored for changes in disease markers. The results demonstrated positive outcomes, including a reduction in ESR, an increase in Hb%, reduced soft tissue swelling, and relief from clinical signs and symptoms. The study concluded that the trial drugs were effective in treating rheumatoid arthritis.²⁸

Crohn's Disease: An 11-year-old female with Crohn's disease, unresponsive to standard medical therapy for two years, experienced moderate abdominal cramps, vomiting, pain, frequent diarrhoea, constipation, loss of appetite, weight loss, occasional joint pains, and delayed growth. With a Harvey-Bradshaw Index score of 7, indicating mild to moderate disease, she underwent 15 sessions of Siddha Thodu Varmam and Thokkanam Therapy, along with 2-energy healing sessions. An anti-inflammatory diet was also advised for improving her metabolism, resulting in significant improvement in symptoms, activities, pain intensity, and quality of life, confirmed by improved HBI scores, Crohn's-specific QoL measures, VAS, and follow-up colonoscopy showing clinical remission.²⁹

Psoriasis: A 32-year-old male patient with Plaque Psoriasis presented with scaly rashes, severe itching, burning sensation, and scaling on his lower abdomen, lower back, forelegs, and hands. After a year of unsuccessful allopathic treatment, he turned to Siddha medicine, which involved both internal and external therapies. The Eight Fold System of Clinical Assessment revealed abnormalities in tongue colour, stool consistency, and urine froth. Following three months of Siddha treatment, the patient's Psoriasis Area Severity Index (PASI) score significantly decreased from 34 to 5.3, demonstrating the effectiveness of Siddha medicine in managing psoriasis and underscoring the need for further research in this field.¹⁶

Fibromyalgia: In a randomized control trial on 40 patients with fibromyalgia, 20 were subjected to Siddha manual therapy with exercises as compared to 20 other patients intervened with exercise alone. The group intervened with both exercises and siddha had improvement in all sub-items: pain ($p<0.05$), fatigue ($p<0.05$) and sleep problem ($p<0.05$) decreased, health status and quality of life ($p<0.05$) while in another group only pain, fatigue and sleep problem reduced but quality of life remained same. The holistic approach, focusing on siddha manual therapy with energy sessions, helped patients feel lighter, more flexible, and motivated to incorporate yoga and exercise into their routine. Energy sessions help in clearing blockages related to emotional trauma, negative thoughts which are thought to cause emotional imbalances and hence lead to pain and mental distress.²⁷

Ankylosing Spondylitis: A 38-year old man with 10-years H/O Ankylosing Spondylitis received treatment for 32-days with siddha varmam therapy and anti-inflammatory diet. The variables like pain, stiffness, and mobility were determined by Bath Ankylosing Spondylitis Disease Activity Index using visual analogue scales (VAS). The patient showed 72% betterment in all variables and improved quality of life.³⁰ Another 59-year old HLA-B27 positive patient was subjected to integrative approach of siddha therapy with counselling and yoga for thirty-three days. There was significant reduction in pain and stiffness with reduced drug dependence and improvement in quality of life¹².

Multiple Sclerosis: Review articles have highlighted the anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidant effects of medicinal herbs like curcumin, Nigella sativa etc, which are used in many herbal drug formulations in siddha medicine. They act as a natural and complementary treatment for neurodegenerative diseases^{24,28}. Symptomatic reduction in several MS symptoms occurs with many siddha herbal therapy along with dietary restrictions and pressure therapy.

Study & Year	Autoimmune Condition	Siddha Intervention	Key Findings	Outcome
Sathya Sindhuja et al. (2023) ²⁶	Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA)	Nadi Vaidyam & Marma Therapy	RA value, CRP value reduced	Reduced fatigue, enhanced joint flexibility
Sindhuja et al. (2023) ²⁹	Crohn's Disease	Thoddu varmam, Thokkanam Therapy & Siddha anti-inflammatory diet	Gut microbiome balance, reduced CRP levels	Improved digestion, reduced relapse rates
C.Senthamil Rajam, R.Manickavasagam (2016) ¹⁷	Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA)	Varma & Thokannam Therapy with siddha formulations	Reduction in joint inflammation, pain, and stiffness	Enhanced mobility, decreased need for NSAIDs
Jaganathan et al.	Vitiligo	Herbal Siddha Oils, (Karbogi Aavaarai	Skin lesion reduction, decreased	Lower relapse rate, improved

Study & Year	Autoimmune Condition	Siddha Intervention	Key Findings	Outcome
(2024) ²⁵		Bhavana Choornam and Karbogi Tailam)	depigmented area	skin health
Thankachan et al. (2020) ¹²	Lupus (SLE)	Siddha Detoxification & Energy Healing	Reduced oxidative stress, balanced immune response	Improved fatigue, joint pain, and mental clarity
Sushma et al. (2022) ²¹	Ankylosing Spondylitis	Marma, Thokkanam (Siddha pressure therapy) & Yoga, counselling	Increased spinal flexibility, reduced systemic inflammation	Pain relief, improved posture & function
Sindhuja et al. (2024) ²⁷	Fibromyalgia	Pranic Healing & Energy sessions; Siddha Dietary Interventions	Reduced pain perception, regulated cortisol & serotonin	Pain reduced, Improved sleep, mental relaxation
Mojaverostammi et al. (2018) ²⁴	Multiple Sclerosis (MS)	Herbal medications, Pressure Therapy & Meditative Practices	Improved nerve conduction, reduced fatigue	Enhanced cognitive function and movement

Table-2: Siddha Studies on Autoimmune Diseases and Their Outcomes

These case examples highlight the potential of Siddha therapy in treating autoimmune diseases by addressing the root causes of imbalance and promoting holistic healing on all levels. Through a combination of energy medicine, herbal treatments, dietary modifications, and lifestyle practices, Siddha therapy offers a comprehensive approach to managing autoimmune conditions and improving the quality of life for individuals affected by these diseases. Siddha herbs and dietary recommendations emphasize anti-inflammatory properties which helps reducing inflammation and pain; its holistic approach addresses spiritual well being and improves quality of life. Also, individualized treatment plans based on unique constitution and needs of an individual, it is particularly beneficial with those having auto-immune diseases as there is diverse range of symptoms and thus, requires a tailored treatment strategy.

While there is limited evidence of siddha therapy especially in cases of autoimmune diseases, the principles and practices of siddha therapy may offer potential benefits for individuals having these conditions. Further research is needed to validate the efficacy of Siddha treatments, identify mechanisms of action, and optimise treatment approaches for individuals with autoimmune diseases.

10. Challenges & Limitations of Siddha in Auto-immune disease^{5,32}

Like many other alternative healing modalities, Siddha medicine faces several challenges that contribute to skepticism regarding its effectiveness and integration into conventional healthcare. One of the primary challenges in implementing Siddha therapy in modern healthcare systems is the lack of recognition and integration into mainstream medical practice. Siddha medicine is often considered traditional or complementary, leading to reluctance among conventional healthcare providers to incorporate its therapies into patient care.

Limited research evidences supporting the efficacy and safety of Siddha therapies, particularly in the context of autoimmune diseases. Without robust scientific evidence, it can be difficult to gain acceptance and endorsement from regulatory bodies, healthcare institutions, and insurance providers. Another major point of contention in siddha energy-based therapies arises from the limited scientific understanding of their fundamental principles, particularly the existence and role of prana (vital energy) in human health. Lack of high-quality clinical research on Siddha healing remains scarce, with most available studies being of moderate methodological rigor, limiting the strength of conclusions drawn regarding its efficacy.

Siddha therapy originates from traditional tamil medicine and may face cultural and language barriers in regions where it is not widely practised or understood. Many of its books and scriptures are written in Tamil which is not known by many healthcare professionals and fearing of wrong practice have hindered its integration into modern healthcare systems. Another significant challenge is the lack of standardized regulations and practitioner training, leading to inconsistencies in treatment quality and raising concerns about quackery. Variability in preparation methods, dosages, and formulations may affect the consistency and efficacy of Siddha therapies, making it difficult to establish uniform treatment protocols and guidelines. The shortage of certified experts and qualified practitioners further hinders widespread acceptance and systematic integration of Siddha healing into modern healthcare frameworks.

Addressing these issues through rigorous research, regulatory frameworks, and practitioner accreditation could help bridge the gap between traditional and modern medicine.

11. Conclusion

In conclusion, the amalgamation of energy medicine and therapeutic sessions in Siddha healing offers a holistic approach to addressing the complex needs of individuals with autoimmune diseases. By integrating practices such as Nadi Vaidyam, Marma Chikitsa, hand and pressure therapy, and dietary regimens with yoga; Siddha therapy addresses the root causes of autoimmune diseases and supports the body's innate healing capacity. This comprehensive approach improves physical symptoms, reduces inflammation, and promotes emotional balance, leading to enhanced resilience, quality of life, and empowerment for individuals on their healing journey. Though, there are less evidences of this therapy especially in auto-immune diseases, it has shown beneficial results in many cases. Further research is required in more number of patients to validate the efficacy of siddha treatments and optimise treatment approaches for individuals with auto-immune diseases.

References

1. Autoimmune responses are directed against self antigens—Immunobiology—NCBI Bookshelf. (n.d.). Retrieved June 14, 2024, from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK27155/>
2. Miller FW. The Increasing Prevalence of Autoimmunity and Autoimmune Diseases: An Urgent Call to Action for Improved Understanding, Diagnosis, Treatment and Prevention. *Curr Opin Immunol.* 2023;80:102266. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.coi.2022.102266>
3. Venkatasubramanian P, Ravisankar B, Anitha R, Senthilkumar A (2015) Siddha Therapy – A Review. *Indo American Journal of Pharmaceutical Research* 5(11): 4461-4472.
4. Rindfleisch JA (2010) Biofield Therapies: Energy Medicine and Primary Care. *Prim Care*37(1): 165-179.
5. Rao A, Hickman LD, Sibbritt D, Newton PJ, Phillips JL (2016) Is energy healing an effective non-pharmacological therapy for improving symptom management of chronic illnesses? A systematic review. *Complement Ther Clin Pract* 25: 26-41
6. Basavaraj PS, Hegde U, Sudhir J, Chandavarkar V, Pasupuleti S. The Promise and Challenges of Energy Medicine: A Review of the Current Landscape. *Tradit Integr Med.* 2023. <https://doi.org/10.18502/tim.v8i4.14491>
7. Marasigan P. Energy Medicine: A Detailed Guide | LIVV Natural. LIVV. 2024 May 31. <https://livvnatural.com/energy-medicine-understanding-holistic-healing-modalities/>
8. Understanding The Benefits of Energy Medicine. (n.d.). <https://Spaexperiencesiestakey.Com/>. Retrieved June 14, 2024, from <https://spaexperiencesiestakey.com/understanding-the-benefits-of-energy-medicine/>
9. Patil SB, Patil MS, Chittam KP, Wagh RD. A Review on Ayurveda and Siddha: Indian Systems of Medicine. 2014.
10. Sieler R. Religion, Alchemy, and Medicine in South India: Tamil Siddha Traditions and Siddha Medicine. *Asian Med.* 2022;17(1):1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15734218-12341504>
11. Thas JJ. Siddha Medicine—Background and Principles and the Application for Skin Diseases. *Clin Dermatol.* 2008;26(1):62–78. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clindermatol.2007.11.010>
12. Thankachan C, Sujan TK, Krishna A. Panchakarma Therapy in the Management of Systemic Lupus Erythematosus-A Case Report. *Int J Ayurveda Pharma Res.* 2021;9(12):102-104.
13. Sujatha V. The Patient as a Knower: Principle and Practice in Siddha Medicine. *Econ Polit Wkly.* 2009;44(16):76–83. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40279159>
14. Duraisamy R, Dinakar S, Venkittaramanujam V, Jeyakumar V. A Systematic Approach for Pulse Diagnosis Based on Siddha Medical Procedures. 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1109/ICSCN.2017.8085694>

15. Senthamil Rajam C, Manickavasagam R. Effectiveness of Varmam and Thokkanam Therapy in Azhal Keel Vayu (Osteoarthritis). *Indian J Nat Sci.* 2016;7(39):11726-730.
16. A. Siva, et al. “An Assessment of Prevalence and quality of life in Kaalanjaga Vaatham (Psoriatic Arthritis) Patients after taking Siddha Treatment: A Cross-sectional study”. *International Journal of Ayurveda and Pharma Research.* Vol. 2, No. 7, 2022, pp. 133-38.
17. Phatak A, Gopal UB, Scholar P. Exploring the Significance of Katikataruna Marma: An Ayurvedic Perspective on Vital Energy Center. *AYUSHDHARA.* 2024. <https://doi.org/10.47070/ayushdhara.v11i2.1519>
18. Wu T, Wang X. A Comparative Study on Marma and Acupoints. *J Ayurveda Integr Med.* 2023;14(4):100769. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaim.2023.100769>
19. The Geometry of Emotions: Using Chakra Acupuncture and 5-Phase Theory to Describe Personality Archetypes for Clinical Use—PMC. (n.d.). Retrieved June 16, 2024, from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6106753/>
20. Schneider NJ, Cooper NJ. A Brief History of the Chakras in Human Body. 2019. <https://ijrpr.com/uploads/V4ISSUE9/IJRPR17253.pdf>
21. Salethoor SN, Shyamasundaran K, Prajeesh Nath EN, Puthiyedath R. Integrative Approach Combining Ayurveda, Counselling, Yoga and Meditation with Conventional Management of Ankylosing Spondylitis – A Case Report. *J Ayurveda Integr Med.* 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaim.2021.07.013>
22. Therapeutic Touch—An overview | ScienceDirect Topics. (n.d.). Retrieved June 16, 2024, from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/medicine-and-dentistry/therapeutic-touch>
23. Mishra A, Shrivastava V. Exploring the Science of Marma - An Ancient Healing Technique - Part 4: Marma Therapy. 2020. <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/jyt6v>
24. Mojaverrostami S, Bojnordi MN, Ghasemi-Kasman M, Ebrahimzadeh MA, Hamidabadi HG. A Review of Herbal Therapy in Multiple Sclerosis. *Adv Pharm Bull.* 2018;8:575–90. <https://doi.org/10.15171/apb.2018.066>
25. Sindhuja BS, Sankar I, Reddy RM, Tiwari S. Role of Siddha Varmam Therapy in Reducing Joint Pain and Dependency on Medications in a RA Patient - A Single Case Study. *Indian J Integr Med.* 2023.
26. Sindhuja SB et al. Comparison of Managing Fibromyalgia Syndrome by Integrated Siddha Manual Therapy and Energy Sessions with Exercises to Exercise Alone in Women: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *Int J Med Res Health Sci.* 2024;13(12):1–10.
27. Samooga Neethi J, Barathi Kannamma G, Vijay Kumar P. Effectiveness of Siddha Medicine in Treating Venpadai (Vitiligo) – A Case Report. *Int J Health Sci Res.* 2024;14(4):511-517. <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijhsr.20240464>

28. Effectiveness of Siddha Therapy on Remission of Crohn's Disease and Its Impact on Lifestyle of an Individual- A Case Report. *Int J Sci Res.* 2024. <https://www.worldwidejournals.com/international-journal-of-scientific-research/>
29. Feinstein D. Uses of Energy Psychology Following Catastrophic Events. *Front Psychol.* 2022;13:856209. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.856209>
30. Marinelli JM, Geisler CC, Hale BA, Munson EJ. Client Experiences of Virtual Energy Healing. *Explore (NY).* 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.explore.2023.03.012>
31. Teut M, Stöckigt B, Holmberg C, Besch F, Witt CM, Jeserich F. Perceived Outcomes of Spiritual Healing and Explanations—A Qualitative Study on the Perspectives of German Healers and Their Clients. *BMC Complement Altern Med.* 2014;14:240. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1472-6882-14-240>
32. Sindhuja BS et al. Siddha and Energy Healing: A Novel Concept to Holistic Well-Being. *Public Health Open Acc.* 2024;8(1):000292.
33. Feinstein D, Eden D. Six pillars of energy medicine: Clinical strengths of a complementary Paradigm. *Altern Ther Health Med* 2008;14:44-54.
34. Hart J. Healing touch, therapeutic touch, and reiki: energy medicine advances in the medical community. *Altern Complement Ther* 2012;18:309-313.