



EFFICACY OF VARMAM THERAPY IN THE MANAGEMENT OF LUMBAGO

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ABSTRACT

Varmam therapy does not produce any side or adverse effects and is easy to administer in any part of the world and does not required any equipment. In varmam therapy, mild to moderate pressure is applied to the body. An open clinical trial was conducted in 40 patients. All the patients were subjected to symptomatic analysis. Varmam therapy was given for the period of 3 months, twice a week. Varmam therapy played a vital role in alleviating the lumbago owing to L4-L5 intervertebral disc prolapse and L4-L5 intervertebral disc degeneration with disc bulge or protrusion which are referred to as incomplete herniation of nucleus pulposus. Varmam therapy enabled the majority

of the victims to regain normalcy Thus, this paper highlights the therapeutic effect of varmam therapy in the management of lumbago.

KEYWORDS: Varmam, siddha, lumbago, outcome.

INTRODUCTION

Lumbago is a general term which denotes acute or chronic pain in the lower back. Pain in the muscles and joints of lower back. Low back pain affects approximately 60-85% of adults during some point in their lives. Acute low back pain can lasts anywhere from a few days to a few weeks, while chronic low back pain lasts longer than 3 months. Fortunately, for a large majority of individuals, symptoms are mild and transient, with 90% subsiding within 6 weeks but patients with chronic back pain owing to severe lumbar cord compression are advised surgical treatment as a last measure. Hence, appropriate management through varmam therapy has the potential to reduce the number of people with disabling long term lumbago.

Aetiological Factors

Repetitive strain injury(RSI), sciatica, spinal stenosis, spondylitis(inflammation of joints between the spinal bones), spondylosis (a degenerative disorder that causes loss of normal spinal structure and function), malnourished and severe traumatic arthritis, traumatic vertebral disorders, fibromyalgia, kidney and bladder problems, pregnancy, pelvic inflammatory disease, endometriosis, ovarian cysts, uterine fibroids and carcinoma of spinal cord are some of the causes for lumbago- low back pain.

Varmam Therapeutic Textual Evidences in the Management of Lumbago

Lumbago owing to lumbar intervertebral disc prolapse and intervertebral disc degeneration with disc bulge between L4-L5 level cases were included in this study. These condition described as “Pooraga El-Visaimaral” in the book “Varma Kaandam, verse 550”, “Padakkiyam vatham” in the book Vatha Nithanam-800,verse 310 and “Thandaga vatham” in the book Yugimuni vaithya chindamani, verses 288-289. Treatment is also described in varmam literature. As per the Varma Kaandam, verse 557, if there is any pain and deformity observed in the lumbar region, it shall be carefully observed by palpation and then the nerves involved shall be corrected accordingly.

AIM

To study the effects of varmam therapy in the management of lumbago.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Fourty patients who attended TVR&TC, during 2018 were studied. Only varmam points were stimulated and the treatment continued. The subjects were grouped into three, by age.

Table 1: Number and type of patients in each group.

| Patients with lumbago in | Group I(age 20-40 years) | Group II(age 41-60 years) | Group III(age above 60 years) |
|---|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Inter vertebral disc prolapse between L4-L5 level | 3 cases | 3 cases | 0 |
| Inter vertebral disc degeneration L4-L5 level with disc bulge | 13 cases | 11 cases | 10 cases |

Table 2: The duration of illness-lumbago were given below.

| Duration of illness | No. of cases |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Below 1 year | 9 |
| 1 year-5 years | 3 |
| 5 years -10 years | 17 |
| Above 10 years | 11 |

The above table indicates the average duration of illness - lumbago included in the study were 5 to 10 years.

Study Design

Type of study: Open, single non comparative clinical trial

Level of study: OPD

Study center: Thirumoolar Varmam Research and Therapy Centre(Unit of Arts Research Institute), Coimbatore.

Total duration of the study: 3 months

Inclusion Criteria

The patients selected above 20 years of age inclusive of both sexes who manifested lower back pain –lumbago owing to L4-L5 intervertebral disc prolapse and L4-L5 intervertebral disc degeneration with disc bulge were included in the study.

Exclusion Criteria

Malnourished and severe traumatic arthritis, traumatic vertebral disorders, fibromyalgia, renal and bladder problems, pregnant women, lactating mother, pelvic inflammatory disease, endometriosis, ovarian cysts, uterine fibroids, carcinoma of spinalcord, spondylolisthesis, anklyosing spondylosis, sero negative arthritis, diabetes mellitus, hypertension were excluded.

Study Procedure

At the initial visit a detailed medical history with special emphasis on family history of low back pain, history for its duration, onset, anatomical distribution exaggerating and relieving factors, recurrence and seasonal exacerbation were taken.

Detailed systemic examination done. Local examination to rule out local causes were done.

Score on pain, visual analogue scale(VAS), straight leg raising (SLR) and change of posture given below.

| Score | Score on pain | Visual analogue scale(patient were asked to give score of their pain ranging from 1 to 10) | Straight leg raising (SLR) | Change of posture |
|-------|--|--|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 0 | No pain | For zero | Above 80° | Pain free |
| 1 | Very mild pain on working but no pain at rest | From 1 to 3 | From 60° to 79° | Pain but can perform without support |
| 2 | Moderate pain while working or at rest but tolerable | From 4 to 6 | From 30° to 59° | Painful and need others support |
| 3 | Severe pain not tolerable | From 7 to 10 | Below 30° | Cannot perform |

Varmam Therapy

The varmam points such as kondai kolli and porchai kaalam were applied for the first two days of therapy, then viruthi kaalam, komberi kaalam, kuthikaal varmam, kaalkulachu varmam, uppukutri varmam, padangkaal varmam, poovadankal varmam, jadapiral varmam, ullangkaal vellai varmam were given.

| Varmam points | Effects |
|--------------------------|---|
| Kondai kolli varmam | Stimulates the endocrine glands, helps to maintain optimal brain temperature, stimulates sleep, relieves headache, helps to connect the physical body with the subtle body. |
| Porchai varmam | Acts as an adangal, reduces body pain, improves immunity, controls fits. |
| Viruthi kaalam | Effective in treating leg pain, supplies energy to the hip region. |
| Komberi kaalam | Energies the legs, supplies energy to the hip region, acts as an adangal. |
| Kuthikaal varmam | Provides strength to the legs, reduces pain in the spine. |
| Kaalkulachu varmam, | Provides strength to the legs. |
| Uppukutri varmam, | Energies the legs, provides energy to the hip region, reduces heel pain. |
| Padangkaal varmam, | Regulates blood flow to the foot. |
| Poovadankal varmam | Energies the hip region |
| Jadapiral varmam | Strengthens the legs, releases disc compression in the lumbar and the sacral region. |
| Ullangkaal vellai varmam | Energies the legs, helps to regulate breathing |
| Mudichu-4 | Effective in treating the post operative problems of the spine. |

Followup and Assessment: All the patient were advised to take varmam therapy, twice a week for a period of 3 months. Mudichu-4 were given once in a week, along with the above mentioned varmam points.

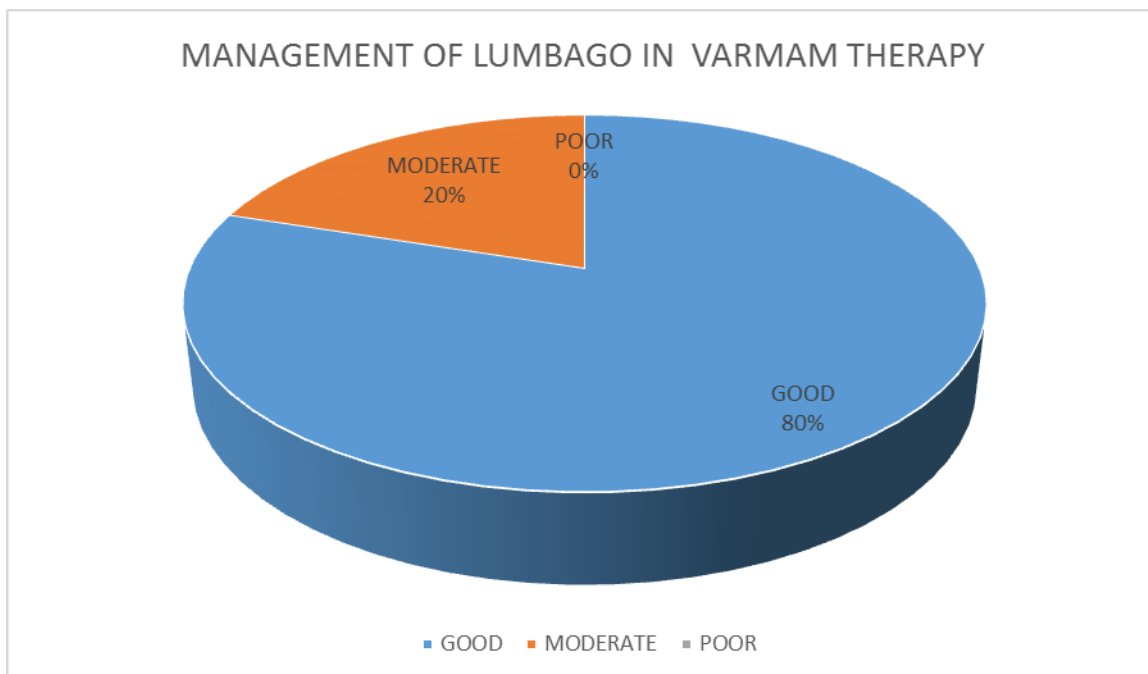
Statistical Analysis

Score on pain, visual analogue scale(VAS), straight leg raising (SLR) and change of posture were made. Based on the clinical observation on the patient, scores of 0,1,2 and 3 were considered as good, moderate, poor and no improvement.

RESULTS

| Clinical improvement of patient after varmam therapy | Good Improvement Score-0 (no pain) | Moderate improvement score-1 (very mild pain on working but no pain at rest) | Poor Improvement Score-2 | No Improvement Score-3 |
|--|------------------------------------|--|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Group I(age 20-40 years) | 9 cases | 7 cases | | |
| Group II(age 41-60 years) | 13 cases | 1 case | | |
| Group III(age above 60 years) | 7 cases | 3 cases | | |

There were no clinically significant adverse effects reported and observed during the entire study period. According to age wise evaluation of patients, Group II(age 41-60 years) showed maximum response in the management of lumbago. Average duration of illness in the study were 5 to 10 years which implies that the chronic lumbago can be managed effectively through varmam therapy. In the subjective evaluation of varmam therapy, 80% (29 cases) found it good, 20% (11 cases) found it moderate and no one shown poor response.



DISCUSSION

Viruthi kaalam, komberi kaalam, porchai kaalam are the most precious varmam points known as adangal. Adangal is a varmam point where in the whole body vital energy is stored. Apart

from this wherever idakalai, pingalai (naadi) or energy channel and vasi (basic vital energy) meets those places are called adangal. Further, adangal points are places which regulate the basic vital force. From the results it was observed that the varmam therapy is effective in the management of lumbago.

CONCLUSION

Patients were relieved from the lumbago(low back pain) from 4th week onwards. Results obtained from the varmam therapy in the study are highly encouraging, safe and free from adverse effects. For those patients who could not afford and those who do not want to undergo surgical methods, varmam therapy is a boon. Further more, in many rural areas surgical facilities are unavailable. Similar case studies in a large number of patients will throw more light on the varmam therapy.

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