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Evaluation of varmam therapy in the management of sports injury-tennis elbow (Lateral Epicondylitis)

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Abstract

Varmam, the ancient medical science is a unique gift to mankind with rich traditional knowledge and long history of use. Modern days exercises are done through multi various sports activities. An extreme sport or adventure sport is newer and popular term of certain sport activities perceived as having high level of inherent danger. Among various sports activities, tennis involves a high level of physical exertion. In tennis, the elbow region is stretched to the maximum and likely to get injury. Inflammation of lateral epicondyle known as tennis elbow where the sufferings are more, treatments are challenging and the outcome in most of the cases are not up to the expected levels. Therefore, varmam therapy in the management of sports injury is needed and required for promoting wellness of individual. This paper focus on the efficacy of varmam therapy in the management of tennis elbow.

Keywords: Varmam, siddha, sports-injury, tennis-elbow

Introduction

Varmam therapy prevents illness and enhances both the quality of life as well as life span. Thirumoolar, one of the eighteen Siddha sages, a legend and pioneer of varmam defines medicine as follows:

“One that cures physical ailment is medicine
One that cures psychological ailment is medicine
One that prevents ailment is medicine
One that bestows immortality is medicine”
(Thirumoolar)

The aforesaid definition of Siddhar Thirumoolar is germane to varmam medical science. According to WHO, traditional procedure based therapies like varmam are relatively safe, if they are performed properly by well-trained practitioners?

Role of varmam in ancient sports

Varmam textual evidence Narambu Soothiram (verses 75-76) explains the management of elbow injuries, dislocation or sprain in ancient sports.

ஆகுமிந்த முழங்கையில் பின் குழியில்
அசையாமல் தானிருக்கும் கயறு போல்

(Narambu Soothiram, Verses 75-76)

AIM: To study the efficacy of varmam therapy in the management of tennis elbow.

Materials and Methods

Source of data

Clinical source

Fifteen patients who attended Thirumoolar Varmam and Research Therapy Centre (Unit of Arts Research Institute), Coimbatore during 2018 were studied.

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Only varmam points were stimulated and the treatment continued.

Literary source

From modern text books, classical varmam text books, online sources and various published articles.

Number of cases studied

15 cases were studied.

Chief complaints received

Pain present on the outside of the elbow region and it worsen when holding the object. Difficulty in using elbow region completely while playing tennis game.

The subjects were grouped by sex wise below.

Table 1: Total number of cases included

Cases with Tennis elbow	
Male	Female
3	12

The duration of illness were given below

Table 2: Duration of illness

Duration of illness	No. of cases
1 year	1
2 years - 4 years	13
More than 4 years	1

The above table indicates the average duration of illness included in the study was 2 years to 4 years.

Study Design

Type of Study: Open, single non comparative clinical trial

Level of Study: OPD

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

Total duration of the study: One month

Inclusion Criteria

The patients selected above 20 years of age inclusive of both

sexes who manifested elbow pain – owing to sports injury were included in the study.

Exclusion Criteria

Tuberculosis, any genetic disorders related to bleeding and carcinoma were excluded.

Study Procedure

At the initial visit, a detailed medical history with special emphasis on family history of elbow 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 was done.

Varmam Therapy

The varmam points such as kaimoottu varmam and theetha varmam were applied.

Table 3: Varmam therapy protocol

Varmam points	Effects
Kaimoottu varmam	Relieves elbow pain.
Theetha varmam	Theetha varmam along with kaimoottu varmam acts as an inai varmam.

Follow-up and Assessment

All the patients were advised to take varmam therapy for a period of one month.

Statistical Analysis

Score in Varmam Therapy:

Pupil dilatation, sweating, shivering, drowsiness and sound used as varmam therapy pain scores in this study. In modern science, cozen's test used.

Cozen's test also known as the “resistive tennis elbow test” is also used to check lateral epicondylagia or tennis elbow. The test is considered positive if it produces pain or reproduction of other symptoms in the area of the lateral epicondyle.

Table 4: Clinical improvement of patients.

Varmam therapy score of patient - clinical improvement after treatment	Good Improvement (no pain)	Moderate improvement (very mild pain while playing sports but no pain at rest)	Poor Improvement	No Improvement
	14 cases	1 case	Nil	Nil

Results and Discussion

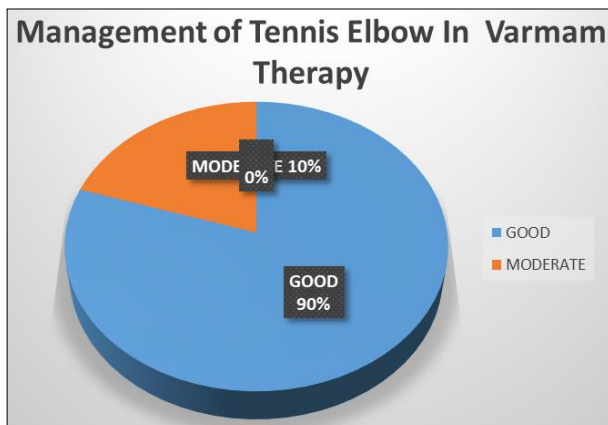


Fig 1: Prognosis after varmam therapy

There were no clinically significant adverse effects reported and observed during the entire study period. According to age wise evaluation of patients, 14 cases showed good response and one case showed moderate response in the management of tennis elbow. Average duration of illness in the study were 2 to 4 years which implies that the tennis elbow can be managed effectively. Thus, varmam proves to be an effective and potential therapy in the management of sports injury.

Conclusion

We could interpret that our ancestors used varmam therapy to manage the sports injury. On deep analysis, it is found that the ancient varmam literatures are treasure holding the secrets to manage sports injuries such as to revive a person from unconsciousness, management of local sprain, dislocation, boosting the energy level of the sports person, etc. Since the varmam therapy does not involve medicines on the spot and

more over takes only a short span of time for treatment, it should be adopted in the management of tennis elbow in this modern era.

Acknowledgement

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