



Siddha Medicinal herbs and effective formulations used in Indian martial art-Varma therapy

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Abstract

India is home to countless arts which have flourished since time immemorial. Siddha medicine is one such scientific medicine which thrived in the southern parts of India. The sages who discovered this system of medicine were collectively called Siddhars. Due to various foreign occupations, this art was hidden by the people of South India. Some medicinal herbs are used in the preparation of Varma medicines which help in the speedy recovery of the patient. The written evidence of this art continues to be preserved in the form of palm leaf manuscripts. The Indian herbs present in medicinal formulations like Varma porridge, is described in this article.

Key words: Siddha medicine, Varma therapy, Indian medicinal herbs. Palm leaf manuscripts.

Introduction:

Varma medical system is a specialty of Siddha medicine. It has been in existence for the past 3000 years. The Varma medicine is still alive and flourishing in southern parts of India. It is taught in traditional Gurukulam style to only a handful of students. Of the varma manuscripts available today, most are written in the language “Tamil” spoken in the southern parts of India. Varma is a component of traditional massage, medicine, and martial arts in which the body's pressure points (*varma* or *marma*) are manipulated to heal or cause harm. The healing application called *Varma vaidhiyamurai* is used to treat patients suffering from paralysis, nervous disorder, spondylitis and other conditions. Its combat application is known as *varmaadi* or *marmaadi*, meaning "pressure point striking. Medical treatment in the southern part of India is identified with [siddha](#) medicine, the traditional [Dravidian](#) system of medicine. The [Siddha](#) medical system, otherwise known as *Siddha vaidyam*, is attributed to sage [Agastya](#).

Folklore traces *varmakalai* to the god [Shiva](#) who is said to have taught it to his son [Murugan](#). While disguised as an old man, *Murugan* passed the knowledge of *varmam* to the sage [Agastya](#) who then recorded it and disseminated the skill among his students. We get a detailed description from Siddha medicine of VARMAM and it is 108 in number. Marma or Varmam are the vital points in human body which may be a joining place of two bones or two muscles or a muscle with a bone or a passage of arteries/veins/nerves. The particular points can act as trigger points and giving pressure to these points in particular way are using to cure many diseases. Even though varma is a martial art, there are some supporting medicines to help in the improvement of the patient. They are classified into *Varma-aga-marundugal* (Internal Medicines) and *Varma-pura-marundugal* (External medicines).

Types of Varma medicines:

There are two types of medicines. Some of the effective medicines are as follows

1. Varma puramarundugal (External medicines)
2. Varma agamarundugal (Internal Medicines)

Varma pura marundugal

1. Varma nasiyam
2. Varma sannu pugai
3. Varma Ottradam
4. Narambu tettral poochu
5. Sadaivali poochu
6. Murivennai
7. Vasavennai
8. Purai ennai
9. Mudamirukki ennai
10. Kurunthotti ennai
11. Kaayatirumeni ennai

Varma aga marundugal

1. Varma tirikadugu kanji
2. Pazaya varma kanji
3. Amukkira kudineer
4. Kukkuda kudineer
5. Seenapaavu kudineer
6. Varma chooranam
7. Varmaani kuligai
8. Varmasanni kuligai
9. Sippisarvaanga nei
10. Varma vallarai nei
11. Kandankathiri nei
12. Varma vaasadi lehium

The herbal ingredients in these formulations are highly effective in controlling the disease symptoms of the patient,

1. Name of the medicine: Vasavennai

Ingredients: (all equal quantities)

1. *Citrus acida juice*
2. *Aloe vera juice*
3. *Coconut oil*
4. *Castor oil*
5. *Hemidesmusindicus powder*

Method of preparation of Vasavenna

The juices and powder are added to boiling Oils in a open vessel. The mixture is cooked for 30 minutes till the oil is boiled fully and the juices are mixed completely in the oil. Then this oil is applied to the ailing patient daily three times for one week.

Dosage: 100 ml oil.

Energy boosting gruel Varma kanji is helpful to improve the overall energy level of the patient. As a food supplement it can be used in all age groups, to increase stamina, vigor and vitality.

Reference: Siddha traditional text –“*Varmasuthiram*”, ver.95, 96.

2. Name of the medicine; Varma kanji

Ingredients: (all equal quantities)

1. *Trigonella foenum*
2. *Aegle marmelos*
3. *Cuminum cyminum*
4. *Cardiospermum helicacabum*
5. *Centella asiatica*
6. *Glycyrrhizaglabra*
7. *Sidacardifolia*

Method of preparation of Varma gruel;

All the ingredients are tied in a small muslin cloth. This bolus is added to boiling Rice in an open vessel. The gruel is cooked for 30 minutes till the rice is boiled fully and the ingredients of the bolus are mixed completely in the rice. Then this gruel is administered orally to the ailing patient daily three times for one week.

Dosage: 100 ml gruel.

Reference: Siddha traditional text –“*Varmakannadi 500*” ,ver.325,326.

3. **Name of the medicine:** *Murivennai*

Ingredients: (all equal quantities)

1. *Ficus bengalensis* juice
2. *Hemidesmus indicus* powder
3. *Sidacordifolia* powder
4. *Wrightia tinctoria* powder
5. *Indigofera aspalathoides* powder
6. *Gingelly oil*
7. *Cows milk*

Method of preparation of *Murivenna*:

The juices and powders are added to boiling *Gingelly Oil* in a open vessel. The mixture is cooked for 30 minutes till the oil is boiled fully and the juices are mixed completely in the oil. Then this oil is applied to the ailing patient daily three times for one week.

Dosage: 100 ml oil.

Reference: Siddha traditional text –“*Varmasuthiram*” ,ver.110.

Some of the Medicinal herbs are given in detail

1. **Botanical name:** *Trigonella foenum graeceum* linn.

English name: Fenugreek seeds

Tamil name: Vendayam

Parts used: Seeds

Action according to Siddha texts; Seeds are diuretic, tonic, carminative and aphrodisiac.

Fenugreek seeds stimulate appetite by their action on the human nervous system.



2. **Botanical name:** *Aegle marmelos* Corr.

English name: Bael fruit

Tamil name: Vilva pazam

Parts used: Fruit pulp

Action according to Siddha texts; the fruit pulp contains mucilage, pectin, sugar, volatile oil etc. Ripe fruit is sweet, aromatic, cooling, laxative and nutritive.



3. **Botanical name:** *Cuminum cyminum* Linn.

English name: Cumin seeds

Tamil name: Seeragam

Parts used: Seeds

Action according to Siddha texts;

The seeds are Carminative, aromatic, Stomachic, stimulant, Cooling and astringent.



4. **Botanical name:** *Cardiospermum helicacabum*

English name: Balloon vine, winter cherry

Tamil name: Mudakkaruthaan

Parts used: Leaves

Action according to Siddha texts; The Leaves are diuretic, Laxative, stomachic and externally rubefacient.



5. **Botanical name:** *Centella asiatica*

English name: Memory plant

Tamil name: Vallarai

Parts used: Leaves

Action according to Siddha texts; The Leaves are used as memory boosters since time immemorial. They act as a tonic to the human Nervous system.



6. **Botanical name:** *Glycyrrhiza glabra*
Linn.

English name: Liquorice root

Tamil name: Adhimaduram

Parts used: Root

Action according to Siddha texts; The Root contains a amorphous compound glycyrrhizin. The root is cooling, expectorant, tonic, diuretic and gentle laxative.



7. **Botanical name:** *Sida cardifolia*

English name: Country mallow

Tamil name: Sittramutti

Parts used: Root and stem

Action according to Siddha texts;

The Root is regarded as Cooling, astringent, tonic, febrifuge and diuretic. It is used as a cardiac stimulant since time immemorial.



Discussion and conclusion

The present study expresses the importance of herbal plants used in the age old Varma treatment, the martial art followed in the Southern parts of India. Plants have the ability to synthesize a wide variety of chemical compounds that are used to perform important biological functions, and to defend against attack from [predators](#) such as [insects](#), [fungi](#) and [herbivorous mammals](#). At least 12,000 such compounds have been isolated so far; a number estimated to be less than 10% of the total. Chemical compounds in plants mediate their effects on the human body through processes identical to those already well understood for the chemical compounds in conventional drugs; thus herbal medicines do not differ greatly from conventional drugs in terms of how they work. This enables herbal medicines to be as effective as conventional medicines.

The use of plants as medicines predates written human history. [Ethno botany](#) (the study of traditional human uses of plants) is recognized as an effective way to discover future medicines. In 2001, researchers identified 122 compounds used in modern medicine which were derived from "ethno medical" plant sources; 80% of these have had an ethno medical use identical or related to the current use of the active elements of the plant. Many of the [pharmaceuticals](#) currently available to physicians have a long history of use as herbal remedies,

The use of [herbs](#) to treat [disease](#) is almost universal among non-industrialized societies, and is often more affordable than purchasing expensive modern pharmaceuticals. The [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) estimates that 80 percent of the population of some Asian and African countries presently uses herbal medicine for some aspect of primary health care. Studies in the United States and Europe have shown that their use is less common in clinical settings, but has become increasingly more in recent years as scientific evidence about the effectiveness of herbal medicine has become more widely available. The annual global export value of pharmaceutical plants in 2011 accounted for over US\$2.2 billion.

Conclusion:

Thus it can be concluded that herbal medicines along with Varma therapy will be more effective in treating the patients in an affordable way.

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7. Laada sutiram
8. Vaagada suthram
9. Varma Suthram
10. Varma Beerangi
11. Naalu Maathirai
12. Sara suthiram
13. Angula saathiram
14. Varma nigandu
15. Naramparai
16. Alavu nool Piramaanam
17. Varma Odivu Murivu Kandasari 300
18. Varma Thoondamani
19. Aksakkural Venba 300
20. Guru naadi saathiram
21. Varma villum visayum