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Clinical Effectiveness of Gua Sha Therapy in Chronic Low Back Pain: A Case Report

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Abstract: Chronic back pain is a big problem for a lot of people. It makes it hard for them to do things. It affects their life. I want to tell you about a patient who had chronic back pain and how he did with Gua Sha therapy. The patient was a 45-year- man who had been hurting in his lower back for a long time. He got Gua Sha therapy six times, over three weeks. We used tests to see how bad his pain was and how hard it was for him to do things. We used the Visual Analog Scale and the Oswestry Disability Index to check on him. Post-intervention assessment revealed a significant reduction in pain intensity and improvement in functional capacity. The findings indicate that Gua Sha therapy may be considered an effective complementary intervention in the management of chronic low back pain.

Keywords: *Gua Sha Therapy, Chronic Low Back Pain, Musculoskeletal Pain, Complementary Medicine, Microcirculation.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Low back pain is a problem that affects a lot of people all over the world. It can really. Make it hard for people to do things. People who sit for a time or do the same movements over and over are more likely to get low back pain. This kind of pain is also common in people who do not sit or stand properly.

Doctors usually try to help people with back pain by giving them medicine, physical therapy or exercise.. Sometimes these things only help a little or do not help for a long time. There is a therapy, from East Asia called Gua Sha. Gua Sha is a way to help people feel better by scraping their skin with a tool. The tool is smooth. It helps get the blood moving and relax the muscles. Gua Sha is used to relieve tension and stimulate circulation. This report presents a case highlighting the therapeutic potential of Gua Sha therapy in chronic low back pain management.

II. PATIENT INFORMATION

A 45-year-old male office worker reported to the outpatient department with complaints of persistent low back pain for the past three years. The pain was described as dull and continuous, with aggravation during prolonged sitting and forward bending. There was no associated radiation of pain, numbness, or bowel and bladder involvement. Previous interventions, including analgesic medications and physiotherapy, resulted in only temporary symptom relief.

III. CLINICAL FINDINGS

Initial assessment revealed a VAS score of 7.5/10, indicating severe pain. Functional impairment was assessed using the Oswestry Disability Index, which showed a score of 36%, consistent with moderate disability. Physical examination demonstrated localized tenderness and increased muscle tone in the lumbar paraspinal and quadratus lumborum muscles, along with restricted lumbar flexion and extension. Neurological examination was within normal limits, and the straight leg raise test was negative.

IV. TIMELINE

The patient visited the OPD on 10 October 2025 for evaluation of chronic low back pain. Following detailed assessment and counseling, Gua Sha therapy was initiated. The treatment protocol spanned three weeks, after which notable improvement in pain and lumbar mobility was observed.

V. THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTION AND ASSESSMENT

The intervention comprised traditional Gua Sha therapy performed using a stainless-steel scraping instrument with sesame oil applied as a lubricant. Treatment was administered over the lumbar and sacral regions. Controlled, unidirectional strokes were applied approximately 10–15 times per area until the appearance of mild petechiae (Sha), signifying adequate stimulation.

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The patient was advised to maintain adequate hydration, perform gentle lumbar stretching exercises, avoid cold exposure for 24 hours after each session, and follow a structured dietary plan aimed at reducing inflammation and supporting musculoskeletal health.

Table 1 Gua Sha Therapy Schedule

S.No.	Gua Sha Therapy Schedule	
	Session Date	***Duration***
1	10/10/2025	25 minutes
2	13/10/2025	20 minutes
3	17/10/2025	25 minutes
4	20/10/2025	20 minutes
5	24/10/2025	25 minutes
6	27/10/2025	20 minutes

VI. RESULTS

At the completion of six Gua Sha therapy sessions, the patient demonstrated marked clinical improvement. Pain intensity reduced from 7.5/10 to 3/10 on the VAS. Functional disability, as measured by the ODI, improved from 36% to 12%, indicating minimal functional limitation. Lumbar range of motion showed significant improvement, and the patient reported reduced stiffness, enhanced flexibility, and improved sleep quality. Mild post-treatment petechiae and soreness were noted, which resolved spontaneously within 48 hours.

VII. OUTCOME ANALYSIS

Table 2 Comparison of Outcome Measures

S. No.	Comparison of Outcome Measures		
	Parameter	**Baseline**	**Post-Treatment**
1	Pain (VAS)	7.5/10	3/10
2	Oswestry Disability Index	36%	12%
3	Lumbar Range of Motion	Restricted	Near normal
4	Subjective Well-being	Poor	Improved

VIII. DISCUSSION

This case report highlights the beneficial role of Gua Sha therapy in reducing pain and improving functional ability in chronic low back pain. The observed effects may be attributed to enhanced local microcirculation, relaxation of myofascial tissues, and modulation of pain pathways. Previous research has demonstrated sustained increases in surface microcirculation following Gua Sha treatment, which may contribute to pain relief and tissue recovery. Additionally, improvements in sleep quality and subjective well-being suggest broader systemic effects of the therapy.

➢ *Patient Consent*

Written informed consent was obtained from the patient prior to treatment and publication of this case report.

IX. CONCLUSION

The present case indicates that Gua Sha therapy is a safe, cost-effective, and beneficial complementary intervention for chronic low back pain. Regular application may help alleviate pain, restore mobility, and improve functional outcomes. Further large-scale clinical studies are required to establish standardized treatment protocols and confirm efficacy.

- *Financial Support and Sponsorship*

✓ None

- *Conflicts of Interest*

✓ The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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