



UNIQUE JOURNAL OF AYURVEDIC AND HERBAL MEDICINES

Available online: www.ujconline.net

Review Article

CRITICAL REVIEW ON THE CONCEPT OF INSOMNIA IN AYURVEDA

Kamath Nagaraj¹, Chaudhary Shivani², Lal Sarika³

¹Dean Innovations -Skill Development & Associate Professor, Department of Kriya Shareera, Sri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara College of Ayurveda & Hospital, Hassan, Karnataka, India

²Assistant Professor, Department of Prasooti Tantra & Stree-roga, Eva College of Ayurveda, Gujarat, India

³Final year PG Scholar, Department of Agada Tantra, Sri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara College of Ayurveda & Hospital, Hassan, Karnataka, India

Received 17-10-2022; Revised 15-11-2022; Accepted 13-12-2022

DOI: 10.46791/UJAHM.2022.100608

*Corresponding Author: Dr. Nagaraj Kamath

Associate Professor, Department of Kriya Shareera, Sri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara College of Ayurveda & Hospital, Hassan, Karnataka, India

Email: nagaraj.kamath1989@gmail.com, Mobile: 08722921048

ABSTRACT

Sleep is a natural phenomenon and gift for all living human being. Properly and in timely taken sleep brings happiness, nourishment, strength, virility, knowledge and life to the organism. Properly enjoyed sleep brings happiness and longevity in human beings as the wisdom brings about *Siddhi* in *Yogis*. It is evident from the descriptions found in *Ayurvedic* classics regarding *Nidra* that it is an important as well as essential phenomenon of life which affects the body and mind equally in a favorable way when it occurs routinely and sufficiently during life span of a person. Sometimes a person does not get proper and sufficient *Nidra* or sleep then his health gets affected adversely and such a condition is known as *Anidra* or *Nidranasha*. *Anidra* or *Nidranasha* is described as a disease under *Nanatmaja Vata Vyadhi*. *Nidranasha* are malaise, heaviness in head, yawning, laziness, languor, dizziness, indigestion; stupor and *Vataj Rogas* may be manifested due to *Nidranasha*. In the treatment of *Anidra*, drugs having *Vata Pitta Shamak*, *Vedanashamak*, *Nidrajanak* effects and pacifying effect on mental activities are prescribed. In-Not, Somnus-sleep. Means prolonged inability to obtain due sleep. Insomnia is characterized by: Difficulty in initiation of sleep, Disturbances during sleep, Reduction in duration of sleep with early morning awakening. It can be managed by removing the exact causative factor. Behavioral and psychological ailments along with sleep education and sleep hygiene provide better improvement in the patients of sleep disorders and insomnia..

Keywords: *Nidra*, *Anidra*, Insomnia, *Ayurveda*, *Nidranasha*.

INTRODUCTION

Nidra literally denotes the word sleep and according to *Ayurvedic* classics it is one of the “*Traya Upastambha*” (three subtripods) of life. For the maintenance of life it has equal importance as diet. It is described under four natural instincts for human being. Since the evolution of the civilization the thinkers of various countries in the world have tried to study about sleep, its nature and causes. In India, from the *Vedic* and *Upanishad* period, the *Yogis* have been studied the *Yogic* phenomena pertaining to various stages associated with *Atma*. They have termed these stages as *Jagritavastha* (waking phase), *Swapnavastha* (dream phase), *Susuptavastha* (sleep Phase) and *Samadhi Avastha* (the conscious sleep phase) having detachment from the external world in different degrees. Sleep is the non-deliberate absence of thought waves or knowledge. Dreamless sleep in an inert state of consciousness in which the sense of existence is not felt. In sleep, the body and mind including the sense organs enjoy the bliss rest and recreation¹.

Sleep is a good indicator of healthy life. The person enjoying sufficient sleep does not suffer any disease early. It is observed that all living creatures enjoy sleep to keep the body and mind fit not only in life time but also in fetal life. Body in the womb enjoys better rest and comfort when mother sleep during pregnancy. In *Ayurveda* sleep is considered as an important fact for health and longevity, happiness, Misery, nourishment, emaciation, strength, weakness, virility, sterility knowledge, ignorance all these depends upon proper and improper sleep. Inadequate sleep causes number of ailment in the body. So, it is evident that sleep is fundamental requirement of every living human being. When people are deprived of adequate sleep for a longer period, they often suffer from illness².

Nidra is the natural instinct of human being and its definition cannot be simply expressed in a concise form. It is a question from the time immemorial and what is the sleep, how it occurs and what is the role of sleep-in health and treatment of diseases. Scientists have tried to think over the phenomenon of sleep. But *Ayurvedic* literatures considered it as the essential

function of every living human being and included it into three sub tripods of life. Brief descriptions regarding *Nidra* are found in different *Ayurvedic* Classics. According to *Patanjali*, sleep is the mental operation having the cognition of absence for its grasp. The commentator *Vyasa* made it clear that, the sleep is a state of unconscious, but the consciousness remains about his own unconsciousness. According to *Manduka Upanishad*, in which state mind is free from external activities and will not see any dreams is called *Susuptavastha* or *Nidra*³. Sleep is a natural phenomenon and gift for all living human being. According to *Maharishi Charaka*, properly and in timely taken sleep brings happiness, nourishment, strength, virility, knowledge and life to the organism. Properly enjoyed sleep brings happiness and longevity in human beings as the wisdom brings about *Siddhi* in *Yogis*. *Maharishi Sushruta* described that those who take proper sleep-in proper time will not suffer from diseases, the mind of these persons will be peaceful, they gain straight and good complexion, and virility, there body will be attractive. In *Yogaratanakar* it was described that sleep at night time makes for the balance of the body constituents, alertness, good vision, good complexion and digestive power⁴.

It is evident from the descriptions found in *Ayurvedic* classics regarding *Nidra* that it is an important as well as essential phenomenon of life which affects the body and mind equally in a favorable way when it occurs routinely and sufficiently during life span of a person. Sometimes a person does not get proper and sufficient *Nidra* or sleep then his health gets affected adversely and such a condition is known as *Anidra* or *Nidranasha*. *Anidra* or *Nidranasha* is described as a disease under *Nanatmaja Vata Vyadhi* in *Ayurvedic* classics. It is a state of improper or absence of sleep, usually known as insomnia in modern science. Now-a-days it is a common problem in our society, arises due to rat race of modern era and different stressful conditions. The description of *Anidra* or *Nidranasha* as a disease is found in *Ayurvedic* literature from *Samhita* period. It is described as diseased condition in *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Sangraha*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*, *Bhela Samhita*, *Harita Samhita*. *Ayurvedic* texts from medieval period like *Madhavkar*, *Bangasena*, *Bhava Prakash* have also used the term *Nidranasha* but not described in detail about the condition⁵.

In the *Charaka Samhita*, *Acharya Charaka* explained the *Nidra* and *Nidranasha* in context of "*Ashtou Ninditiya Adhyaya*." *Nidra* is *Pushtida* along with other beneficial effect and *Jagarana* or *Nidranasha* does the emaciation of the body. *Charaka* included *Nidranasha* under eighty types of *Nanatamaja Vikara* but had not explained it in *Chikitsa Sthana*. *Acharya Sushruta* explained this under the chapter of *Garbha Vyakarana Shariram* might be because *Nidra* plays a role of nutrition and development of the body. He also explained the *Vaikariki Nidra* and *Nidranasha* in the same chapter along with *Chikitsa*. *Maharishi Vagbhatta* in *Ashtanga Sangraha* mentioned about *Nidranasha* in *Viruddhanna Vigyaniya Adhyaya* where he explained about *Tryopastambha*. He used the term *Aswapna* for *Nidranasha* and described it under eighty types of *Nanatmaja Vata Vikaras*. He had not considered any *Nidra Vikara* due to *Pitta* and describes *Nidradhikya* under twenty types of *Kaphaja Vikaras*. *Acharya*

Sharangdhar quoted *Nidranasha* in *Vata Nanatmaj Vikar* and *Alpanidra* as one of the *Pitta Nanatmaja Vikar* and *Atinidra* under *Kapha Nanatmaja Vikara*. So, it can be concluded that all *Acharyas* considered the importance of *Nidra* along with its physiology and treatment of *Nidranasha*⁶.

Nidana

Excessive hunger, thirst, mental and physical misery, excessive happiness, sadness, excessive coitus, fearness, anger, worry, eagerness, excessive use of moisture less dietetics are the extra factors mentioned which may cause sleeplessness. The *Vata* and *Pitta* provoking *Ahara Vihara*, excessive *Langhana* causes *Anidra*. fasting, excessive exercise, sadness fearness, worry, *Kapha*, *Kshaya* etc. are the cause of *Nidranasha*. *Chinta*, *Krodha*, *Shoka*, *Manobhigata* are said to be important causative factors for *Nidranasha*. During anger, grief, fear there is vitiation of *Vata Dosha* in an increasing manner which in parallel sense can be denoted as over activity of autonomic nervous system and then results in *Nidranasha*⁷.

Samprapti

Anidra is not described as a separate disease in *Brihatrayi*, so is *Samprapti* is also not explained. However, it can be framed on the basis of *Dosha*, *Dushya* etc. involved. During the description of *Nidra Utpatti*, *Acharya* have mentioned that *Sharirika Dosha Kapha*, *Manasika Dosha Tama*, *Chetana Sthana Hridaya* and *Sanjnyavaha Srotas* are responsible for it. Hence it is evident that *Vata* and *Pitta dosha*, *Mana* has it is situated in *Chetana Sthana Hridaya* play important role in the formation of *Anidra*. So, the vitiation of these factors leads to the disease *Anidra*. Elimination of *Doshas* from the body and head by the process of purgation, emesis, anxiety, smoke, physical exertion, bloodletting, fasting and uncomfortable bed have been mentioned as the *Nidana* (Etiological factor) of *Anidra*. In these conditions *Vata Dosha* gets vitiated. *Vayu* is the prime factor that controls the *Mana*. Now vitiated *Vata Dosha* increases the *Chala Guna* of *Mana* and thus *Mana* becomes unstable. Fear and anger which are also mentioned as *Nidana* of *Anidra*, vitiate *Pitta Dosha*. This vitiated *Pitta Dosha* due to its *Ushna Guna* produces *Manovikshep* (Unstability of Mind). An unstable *Mana* cannot restrain itself from its *Vishaya* and if *Mana* remains engaged with its *Vishaya* process of *Nidra* cannot take place. Vitiated *Vata Dosha* produces reciprocal decrease of *Kapha Dosha*. This relative *Kapha Kshaya* produces *Anidra*. Predominance of *Satva Guna*, which is the cause of awake fullness and suppression of *Tamoguna*, which is the cause of *Nidra* also produces *Anidra*. Old age usually causes *Anidra* by nature⁸.

Rupa

The knowledge of *Rupa* is essential for proper identification of the disease and its prognosis. It is the result of intermingling of morbid factors with the bodily tissues. The signs and symptoms of *Anidra* are only described by *Maharishi Vagbhatta* directly where as *Maharishi Charaka*, *Sushruta* and *Bhava Mishra* have described symptoms due to restraint of sleep. According to *Maharishi Vagbhatta* signs and symptoms of *Nidranasha* are malaise, heaviness in head, yawning, laziness, languor, dizziness, indigestion; stupor and *Vataj Rogas* may be manifested due to *Nidranasha*⁹.

Chikitsa

One should pay special attention to the better management of physical and mental disturbances by *Nidan Parivarjana* and adopting suitable and convenient wholesome regimes. *Maharishi Charaka* has recommended some specific treatment for *Nidranasha*. According to him massage, unctious, bath, intake of soup of domestic marshy, aquatic animals, *Shali* rice with curd, milk, unctuous substance, alcohol, psychic pleasure, smell of scents and hearing of suitable music, application of soothing ointments to the head and face, comfortable bed and home, proper time brings sleep to those who are suffering from sleeplessness. *Acharya Vagbhata* has also narrated many regimes for sleeplessness. He advocated for milk, Sugarcane juice, soup of domestic and marshy aquatic animals, food stuffs prepared from jaggery and rice, curd of buffalo milk massage, head anointment, sleeping in scented and well decorated room, intake of milk and ghee. Along with above measures one can get sound sleep by remaining very happy and cheerful all the time. When we treat *Anidra*, we give drug having *Vata Pitta Shamak*, *Vedanashamak*, *Nidrajanak* effects and pacifying effect on mental activities¹⁰.

DISCUSSION

Sleep is a natural gift for human beings. Good sleep gives freshness and energy to a person and it is also a good indicator of health. The importance of sleep for health and recovery from disease has been recognized intuitively if not scientifically. Nearly all diseased persons are advised for complete rest and good sleep for faster recovery from diseases. Sleep is defined as unconsciousness from which the person can be aroused by sensory or other stimuli. It is to be distinguished from coma which is unconsciousness from which the person cannot be aroused by any type of stimuli.

Sleep can be defined as a state of consciousness that differs from alert wakefulness by a loss of critical reactivity to events in the environment with a profound alteration in the function of brain¹¹.

Most adults sleep 7-8 hours per night, although the timing, duration and internal structure of sleep vary among healthy individuals and as function of age. In some cultures, mid afternoon nap is also taken along with night sleep. Two principal systems govern the sleep wake cycle: one actively generates sleep and sleep -related processes and other times sleep within the 24-h day. Either intrinsic abnormalities in these systems or extrinsic disturbances (environmental, drug or illness-related) can lead to sleep or circadian rhythm disorders. States and stages of human sleep are defined on the basis of characteristic patterns in the electroencephalogram (EEG), the electrooculogram (EOG- a measure of eye movement activity), and the surface electromyogram (EMG) measured on the chin and neck. The continuous recording of this array of electro physiologic parameters to define sleep and wakefulness is termed polysomnography. Polysomnographic profiles define two states of sleep: - (1) rapid eye movement sleep (REM) and (2) non-rapid eye movement (NREM) sleep¹².

In-Not, Somnus-sleep. Means prolonged inability to obtain due sleep. Insomnia without identifiable cause is known as primary insomnia. Patient with primary insomnia often have multiple etiologies for their insomnia, which may evolve over the years. The chief sleep complaint may change over the time, with initial insomnia predominating at one-point, multiple awakenings or non-restorative sleep occurring at other times. This type of insomnia is secondary to other disorders. This insomnia may be associated with mental disorders, neurological disorders and other medical disorders. Insomnia is the condition which is characterized by persistent difficulty in falling asleep or staying asleep despite the opportunity. It is typically followed by functional impairment while awake. Insomniacs have been known to complain about being unable to close their eyes or rest their mind for more than few minutes at a time. In general it is characterized by: Difficulty in initiation of sleep, Disturbances during sleep, Reduction in duration of sleep with early morning awakening. Many sleep disorders can be managed by removing the exact causative factor. Behavioral and psychological ailments along with sleep education and sleep hygiene provide better improvement in the patients of sleep disorders and insomnia. Many patients with insomnia will get the anxiety and tension as the bed time approaches. This is because of the previous experience of poor sleep. Advice of relaxation techniques helps the patients to get the good sleep. By this type of techniques, the patients may increase their confidence in their self-control. Try to ignore irrelevant ideas and thoughts. Non-pharmacological treatment with special focus on good sleep hygiene, temporal control and stimulus control is the treatment of choice. Bio-feedback or short term course of Benzodiazepines or anti-depressants (low dose) may be helpful. Hypnotic drugs are useful for short term treatment of insomnia which is due to acute stress, which is likely to resolve, for example bereavement or separation. They should not be taken for longer than 3weeks. Benzodiazepines such as Temazepam (10-20mg) are most commonly used. It is claimed that tolerance and dependence are likely to develop with some of the newer hypnotic e.g. Zopiclone. Drugs are not so useful when insomnia is a chronic condition. In such cases much can be achieved by educating the patient about healthy sleep and by giving advice about regular exercises and avoiding heavy meals, alcohol and caffeine containing drinks during the evening. Behavioral techniques, such as relaxation exercises and various cognitive strategies to cope with intrusive thoughts are generally helpful¹³.

CONCLUSION

Nidra is an important as well as essential phenomenon of life which affects the body and mind equally in a favorable way when it occurs routinely and sufficiently during life span of a person. Sometimes a person does not get proper and sufficient *Nidra* or sleep then his health gets affected adversely and such a condition is known as *Anidra* or *Nidranasha*. *Anidra* or *Nidranasha* is described as a disease under *Nanatmaja Vata Vyadhi*. Signs and symptoms of *Nidranasha* are malaise, heaviness in head, yawning, laziness, languor, dizziness, indigestion; stupor. One should pay special attention to the

better management of physical and mental disturbances by *Nidan Parivarjana* and adopting suitable and convenient wholesome regimes. In-Not, Somnus-sleep. Means prolonged inability to obtain due sleep. Insomnia is characterized by: Difficulty in initiation of sleep, Disturbances during sleep, Reduction in duration of sleep with early morning awakening. It can be managed by removing the exact causative factor. Behavioral and psychological ailments along with sleep education and sleep hygiene provide better improvement in the patients of sleep disorders and insomnia.

REFERENCES

1. Dhal Ghanshyam Evaluation on the efficacy of Katibasti, Electrotherapy and Vatari Guggulu in the management of Katishoola (Lumbago), M.D. Thesis, 2004 P.G. Department of Shalya Tantra, N.I.A., Jaipur.
2. Kumar Rakesh, Role of LakshaGuggulu and HaridradiLepa in the management of Sandhigatavata with special reference to osteoarthritis, M.D. Thesis 2005. P.G. Department of Kayachikitsa, N.I.A., Jaipur.
3. Sharma Prof. A.K. Kaya Chikitsa Part III, Published by ChaukhambhaOrientalia, Varanasi, First Edition 2007.
4. Sharma Prof. A.K., The Panchkarma Treatment of Ayurveda including Keraliya Panchkarma; Published by Shri Sataguru Publication, New Delhi; First Edition, 2002.
5. Sharma Dr. Anant Ram, Sushruta Samhita with Sushruta Vimarshini Hindi Commentary, Vol. I, II, III Chaukhambha Surabharti Prakashan, Varanasi, 1st Edition 2001.
6. Singh Prof. R.H. Ayurvediya Nidana Chikitsa Ke Siddhanta; Published by Chaukhamba Amarbharti Prakashan, Varanasi; 2nd Edition, 1991.
7. Singh Prof. R.H.; Kayachikitsa Part II; Published by Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratisthan, Delhi; First Edition, 2001.
8. Tripathi Dr. Indradev; Chakradatta (Vaidyaprabha Hindi Commentary); Published by Chaukhamba Sanskrit Sansthana, Varanasi, 3rd Edition, 1997.
9. Shastri Pt. K.N. and Chaturvedi Dr. G.N.; Charaka Samnita (Vdyotini Hindi Commentary); Published by Chaukhamba Bharti Academy, Varanasi; 22nd Edition, 1998.
10. Ram Kripa, Clinical Evaluation of the Efficacy of Tryodashanga Guggulu and Kati Basti in the management of Gridhrasi Roga (Sciatica) M.D. Thesis, 2006 P.G. Department of Kaya Chikitsa, N.I.A, Jaipur.
11. Guyton & Hall, Textbook of medical physiology, 9th edition, A PRISM Indian edition, Bangalore 9th Edition 1996.
12. Golwalla Aspi F. and Sharukh A. : Medicine for students (A, Reference Book for the Family Physician); Published by Dr. A.P. Golwalla Express Court, Mumbai, 1st Edition, 1951.
13. Harrison: Principles of Internal Medicines, 15th International Edition, Edited by Eugene Braunwald, Anathony S. Fanci, Stephen L. Hauser, Dennis L. Kasper, Dan L. Longo, J. Larry Jameson and McGraw-Hill- Medical Publishing Division Vol.-I.

Source of support: Nil, Conflict of interest: None Declared