

INSOMNIA (ANIDRA): CAUSES, SYMPTOMS & MANAGEMENT IN AYURVEDA**Dr. Premraj Chaudhary*¹, Dr. Pallavi Singh² and Dr. Rohit Ranjan³**¹Associate Professor, Dept. of Agadtantra Evum Vidhivaidhyak, Faculty of Indian Medical System, S.G.T. University, Gurgaon.²Asst. Professor, Dept. of Rasashastra & Bhaishajya Kalpna, Chaudhary Brahm Prakash Ayurved Charak Sansthan, Khera Dabar, New Delhi.³Assistant Professor, Dept. of Samhita Siddhant, Govt. Ayurvedic College, Patna, Bihar.***Corresponding Author: Dr. Premraj Chaudhary**

Associate Professor, Dept. of Agadtantra Evum Vidhivaidhyak, Faculty of Indian Medical System, S.G.T. University, Gurgaon.

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ABSTRACT

Habitual sleeplessness or simply inability to sleep for a minimum period, which is necessary for a sound mental and physical health, is called insomnia (Anidra). Ayurveda recognizes the importance of sleep to health and has considered it as an upstambha of life. Insomnia is the most common sleep problem worldwide and can lead to many psychosomatic manifestations like fatigue, high blood pressure, inability to perform physical and mental activities normally and badly hampers the quality of life. Now a day many people are dependent on sleeping pills and have become habitual to them. Side effects of the sleeping pills like daytime drowsiness, dizziness, difficulty in keeping balance, constipation, loss of appetite etc. are potentially harmful. Hence it is need of the hour to understand the concept of insomnia explained in Ayurveda. Present article comprises of causes, consequences and management of insomnia with the perspective of Ayurveda.

KEYWORDS: Anidra, upstambha, insomnia.**INTRODUCTION**

In Ayurveda, aahar (food), nidra (sleep) and brahmacharya are described as trya upstambha^[1,2,3] i.e. three basic physiological requirement for sustenance of life. Sleep (nidra) is one of the essential factor for healthy life. According to Acharya Charak happiness and unhappiness, proper and improper development, strength and weakness, potency and impotency, intellect and non-intellect, life and death of an individual depend on proper and improper sleep.^[4] Insomnia (anidra) is the perception or complaint of inadequate or poor quality of sleep because of difficulty in falling asleep (sleep onset insomnia), difficulty in maintaining sleep due to frequent or sustained awakenings (sleep maintenance insomnia) or waking too early in morning (sleep offset insomnia). Chronic insomnia leads to severe fatigue, anxiety, depression and lack of concentration.^[5] It is a common sleep disorder and 1.5 times more common in persons aged more than 65 years. Several lifestyle factors such as excessive caffeine consumption, alcohol and drug abuse, smoking, over-work, over exercise, poor sleep habits also play an important role in developing insomnia. Hence, insomnia comes under the category of lifestyle disorder and geriatric disorder both. In Ayurveda, Anidra is considered as a disease belonging to the category of Nanatmaja vatvyadhi^[6] and also as a symptom of various diseases^[7] and psychological disorders.^[8]

Aetio-Pathogenesis

Nidra is due to sharirika dosha kapha and mansika dosha tama (nidra shleshmtamobhava). So any reason which cause decrease in kapha and tamo guna in body leads to anidra. Acharya Vagbhata and Sushruta have mentioned vata-pitta vraddhi in causing nidranasha. It is the outcome of multiple causative factors. Some conditions that commonly leads to insomnia are listed below.^[9,10,11,12]

1. Aharaja nidana (food habits)

Excessive consumption of food materials having qualities such as ruksha, laghu, tikshna guna and substance abuse such as smoking, excessive consumption of caffeine, alcohol and recreational drugs.

2. Viharaja nidana(Activities)

- Excessive dhuma sevan
- Over indulgence in vyayama (physical activity), vyavaya (sexual activity), upvasa (fasting) cause vata-vriddhi and kapha kshya.
- Uncomfortable and unusual sleeping environment (asukha shayya).
- Excessive indulgence in any work either mental or physical causes deviation of mind from sleep such as excessive computer work or watching television.

Acharya Charak has summarized this in the term Karya.

3. Mansika nidana (Emotional factors)

Emotional disturbance such as chinta, bhaya, shoka, krodha are also causative factors of anidra. Primarily, these cause derangement of manodoshas, leading to imbalance in sharirika dosha in later stage. Chinta, bhaya, shoka cause vata vriddhi and krodha cause pitta prapoka.^[13] Acharya Sushruta has used the term manastapat for these factors.

4. Chikitsa apchara (improper treatment modalities)

Atiyoga of vama, virechana, nasya and raktamokshan can induce anidra by vitiating vata dosha.^[14]

5. Other factors

1) Kala or kalasheela kshaya

The term 'kala' is used here for two meanings. First meaning is time factor. When usual period for sleep is lapsed, person will not be able to get sleep. Insomnia develops as a result of persistent or recurrent disruption in normal sleep pattern. Second meaning is age factor. Vata vriddhi in older age make them more prone to suffer from anidra.

2) Vikara/vyadhi

Vikara mean pathological state, in various diseases (psychiatric, neurological, chronic medical illness), anidra (lack of sleep) is chief complaint because of pain and discomfort. This type of insomnia is secondary insomnia. eg- depression, restless leg syndrome, arthritis, hyperthyroidism.

3) Prakarti (constitution)

According to Ayurveda, amount of sleep required to maintain a state of health depends largely upon an individual's prakruti. Vata and pitta prakruti peoples are more prone to this sleeping disorder.

4) Abhigata

Any external injury causes vitiation of vata dosha, which leads anidra. Pain in injury is also responsible for anidra.

5) Kshaya

Mainly for kapha kshaya. By advancement of ageing, internal biological clock that regulates sleep, creeps slightly forward, compelling older people to go to sleep earlier and to wake earlier.

According to modern science, sleep disorders are associated with an impairment of melatonin production. Melatonin produced by pineal gland at night, plays a role in regulation of sleep-wake cycle and diminished melatonin secretion may cause insomnia.^[5]

Classification of Insomnia

As according to time period.^[5]

1. Transient insomnia - lasting from a night to a week and is usually caused by events that alter normal sleep pattern, such as travelling or sleeping in an unusual environment.
2. Short term insomnia- lasts about two to three weeks and is usually attributed to emotional factors such as worry or stress.
3. Chronic insomnia- occurs most of the night and lasts a month or more.

Insomnia can also be classified as according to its nature of origin.^[15] Such as

1. Primary Insomnia – It is caused by its own set of causative factors, where vata dosha takes a primary role in the manifestation of the disease. Anidra explained under vata nanatmaja vyadhi can be considered as primary insomnia.
2. Secondary Insomnia- Anidra due to various physical and psychological disorders. Certain medications like decongestants, bronchodilators, beta blockers and long term use of sleep medication also induce insomnia.

Clinical Features of Insomnia^[16,17]

Cardinal feature of insomnia is loss of sleep. Due to lack of quality and quantity of sleep symptoms that usually appear in a person are-

1. Angamarda (body ache and heaviness of body)
2. Shirogaurava (headache and heaviness in head)
3. Jrambhika (day time drowsiness, yawning)
4. Apakti (indigestion)
5. Bhrama
6. Glani
7. Tandra
8. Vataj roga

Management of Insomnia^[18,19,20]

1. Nidana parivarjana

Before starting medication for insomnia any other pathological condition (psychiatric, neurological, chronic illness) may be ruled out first and if present should be treated accordingly. Other factors discussed above should be avoided.

2. Aahar chikitsa

- Use of madhur rasa pradhan dravyas like meat of humid and aquatic animals, shali dhanya with dadhi, milk especially buffalo milk (mahis kshiram swapanajanam), sneha etc. all these food articles being responsible for kapha vriddhi are useful in treating anidra.
- Incompatible, indigestible, hot spicy food article and excessive consumption of coffee, tea, soft drink, alcohol and smoking should be avoided.
- Fruits like grapes, preparation of jaggery and sugar, alcohol are also indicated in nidranasha.

3. Vihara chikitsa

- Living active life both mentally and physically, practicing yoga and meditation like pranayama,

surya namaskar, tadasana, padamasana relive stress and calm mind.

- Practice of Shiroabhyang (massage of scalp) and Padabhyang (massage of plantar region), as mentioned in dincharya also do benefit in anidra. Sanvahan (gently pressing the body) also induces sleep.
- Patient may be advised to do some light physical activities before going to bed.
- Regular sleep time pattern should be followed. Day time sleeping should be avoided.
- Comfortable bed and nice environment of bedroom as according to person's choice also induce sleep. Bedroom should not be used for watching television.
- Pleasant music is also useful to induce sleep.

3. Aushadh chikitsa

Panchkarma chikitsa followed by shaman chikitsa should be advocated. Following Panchkarma procedures are beneficial in Anidra as according to the need of the patient.

- 1) Abhyanga (body massage), padabhyanga, shiroabhyang
- 2) Utsadan, udvartan
- 3) Netra tarpan , karna tarpan
- 4) Shira and mukh lepa
- 5) Shirodhara with medicated oils like Narayana taila, Himsagar taila
- 6) Pichu with Kshirabala taila/Himsagar taila
- 7) Takra dhara

Shaman Chikitsa^[21,22,23]

Drugs are used both in single as well as in compound forms. Mainly mind relaxing drugs having Medhya, Rasayana, Nidrajanan, Vatshamak, Balya properties are used in the treatment of insomnia.

Single drugs

- 1) Sarpagandha churna- It is a powerful tranquilizer and induces sleep.
- 2) Ashvagandha churna- 3 gm churna is used two times in a day with sugar and ghrita before meal. It vitalizes our mind and improves memory. It refreshes our nerves and relaxes them.
- 3) Jatamansi churna- Its dose is 500 mg to 1 gm two times in a day with milk after meal. It is a sedative herb, used to tranquilize a patient. It relaxes the nervous system. It has been found to increase levels of neurotransmitters like serotonin and is good for memory too.
- 4) Vacha churna- Dose is 500 mg-1 gm BD. It is an efficient mind calming herb which cures tension, emotional stress and depression.
- 5) Brahmi churna/svarasa- Dose is 1-2 gm BD/10 ml BD with milk and sugar.
- 6) Mandukparni churna/Svarasa- Dose is 1-2 gm BD/10 ml BD with milk and sugar.
- 7) Shankhapushpi churna/Svarasa- Dose is 1-2 gm BD/10 ml BD with milk and sugar.

Brahmi, Mandukparni, Shankhapushpi are calming and tranquilizing herbs used widely as brain tonic. Owing to their property of decreasing stress and anxiety, these drugs are also used in the treatment of insomnia.

Compound formulations

Mansyadi kvatha, Brahmi vati, Sarpagandhadi vati, Manasmitra vatak, Mahakalyanak ghrita, Smritisagar rasa, Nidrodyasa, Vatkulantak rasa, Sarasvatarishta, Ashvagandharishta, Brahmi ghrita, Brahmi rasayana, Medicated oils like Himsagar taila, Narayana taila, Kshirabala taila for panchkarma procedures.

CONCLUSION

Ayurvedic medicines used in the treatment of insomnia, mainly acts by rejuvenating or nourishing brain cells and complete nervous system rather than causing side effects like tingling, dizziness, peripheral neuritis associated with allopathic sleeping pills. So, Ayurveda has a great potential and can be a promising alternative in insomnia. Various measures provided in Ayurveda whether by avoiding causative factors or with administration of drugs in single or compound form can certainly manage anidra (insomnia).

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