

AN AYURVEDIC REVIEW ON ANIDRA AND IT'S MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda states that sleep, or Nidra, is one of the three foundations of health and is essential for maintaining mental, spiritual, and physical balance. Anidra, another name for insomnia, throws this balance off, resulting in exhaustion, impaired mental abilities, elevated blood pressure, and a lower standard of living. Ayurveda believes that imbalances in the Vata and Pitta doshas primarily cause anidra, unlike the current use of sleeping pills, which can lead to negative side effects such as dizziness and daytime drowsiness. Ayurvedic texts like Ashtanga Hridaya and Charaka Samhita suggest treating Anidra with modifications to your daily and seasonal habits and using natural remedies like ashwagandha, jatamansi, and brahmi, which are known to help you relax and adapt. Shirodhara and Abhyanga are two more oil therapies that we recommend for mental relaxation and the restoration of doshic balance. This comprehensive approach reveals how Ayurveda may effectively treat insomnia without the need for medications, offering a suitable substitute in today's world.

KEYWORDS: Nidra, Anidra, Traupstambha, Ratricharya, Ayurveda, Dosha imbalance, Treatment of Anidra, Wellbeing.

INTRODUCTION

Overview In Ayurveda, trayaupstambha refers to the three basic physiological necessities for life sustenance: Aahar (meal), Nidra (sleep), and Brahmacharya (Celibacy). Sleep, or Nidra, is one of the most essential components of a healthy life. Acharya Charak says that a person's ability to sleep determines their life and death, strength and weakness, potency and impotence, intelligence and non-intellect, and happiness and grief. Charak tells Nidra and Nidranasha in context of Ninditiya purusha at sutra sthana, which is included in 80 Nanatmaja's Vata vikaras, but there is no explanation of management at either in Chikitsa sthana or elsewhere. In the chapter on garbhavyakaranashariram, Susruta explains that Nidra might have a role in the body's development and nourishment. Getting enough sleep provides energy, endurance, vitality, digestive alertness, awareness, and the capacity to maintain tissue homeostasis. Numerous factors, including vitiation of vata, pitta, and kapha, aging, systemic illnesses, and the aggravation of vata itself, can cause insomnia. Numerous factors, including vatika (constipation), vikara (disorder), excessive work hours, old age and vata aggravation, may contribute to insomnia. Pitta and Vata agitation lead to sleep deprivation. In contrast, indulgences heal physical injuries, tissue loss, and mental exhaustion.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To explore the importance of Nidra.
2. To study the causes of Anidra (Insomnia)
3. To study the various Ayurvedic approaches in the management of Nidra.

PREVALENCE

According to the National Institutes of Health (in 2024), 7% to 19% of adults reportedly do not get enough sleep, 40% reportedly fall asleep during the day at least once a month, and 50 to 70 million Americans have chronic sleep disorders.

NIDANA

Causes of Insomnia in Ayurveda

Insomnia, or Anidra, is influenced by both mental (mansika) and physical (sharirika) factors, with disturbances in doshas like vata, pitta, and kapha. Key causes include

1. Aaharaj Nidan (Eating Habits): Excessive use of substances like smoking, caffeine, alcohol, and spicy foods disrupts doshic balance, leading to insomnia.

2. Viharaja Nidana (Lifestyle): Overexertion, fasting, uncomfortable sleep environments, and excessive screen time can increase vata, reduce kapha, and disturb sleep.

3. Mansika Nidana (Emotional Factors): Emotional stressors like worry (chinta), fear (bhaya), grief (shoka), and anger (krodha) disrupt mental equilibrium, raising vata and pitta doshas.

4. Improper Treatments: Overuse of therapies like vamana and nasya may elevate vata, inducing insomnia.

5. Additional Causes: Aging (Kala), chronic conditions (Vyadhi), individual constitution (prakruti), injuries (Abhigata), and depletion (Kshaya) also contribute to disturbed sleep.

Understanding these factors allows Ayurveda to address insomnia holistically, focusing on restoring doshic balance for effective management. 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.

PURVARUPA

Purvarupa is not described for Anidra in any Ayurvedic classics.

RUPA

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-Shirogaurava (headache and heaviness in head), Angamarda (body ache and heaviness of body), Jrambhika (day time drowsiness, yawning), Apakti (indigestion), Bhrama, Glani, Tandra, Vataj roga.

SAMPRAPTI

Sankhya: Ayurveda classifies Anidra (insomnia) into two types, caused by either vata or pitta imbalances.

Vikalpa: In vata-induced Anidra, the qualities of chala (movement) and laghu (lightness) keep the mind active, leading to sleeplessness.

Pradhanya: When vata predominates in Anidra, symptoms of vataja disorders emerge without pitta involvement, emphasizing the importance of identifying the dominant dosha.

Bala: The strength of Anidra, or its severity and duration, helps gauge the condition's prognosis by assessing symptom intensity.

Kala: Time affects both sleep and Anidra. Charaka notes that Nidra occurs naturally at night, while sleeping during the day or staying awake at night disrupts this balance, influencing Anidra.

SAMPRAPTI GHATAKA

1. Dosha - Vata and Pitta (vridhhi), kapha (kshaya)
2. Dushya – Rasa
3. Srotodusti prakara- Atipravitti
4. Adhithana- Hridaya

5. Agni- Jatharagni

UPADRAVA

Ashtanga Sangraha explains that the aggravated Vata is caused by Anidra producing Kapha kshaya. Reduced and dried Kapha lodges in the walls of Dhamani, leading to Srotorodha.

This ultimately leads to a level of exhaustion so severe that the patient's eyes remain wide open, resulting in watery secretions. This dangerous exhaustion is known as Sadhya and lasts for up to three days, after which it transitions into Asadhya.

UPASHAYA AND ANUPASHAYA

As upashaya and anupashaya are not described in texts, they can be evolved. Mamsasevana, madya, ksheera and ksheeravikaras, abhyanga, utsadana, tarpana, and snehasevana, etc., may be considered as upashaya of Anidra. whereas Rukshanna, Yavanna, Dhoomapana, Krodha, Shoka, etc. may be considered as its anupashaya of Anidra.

SLEEP DISTURBANCE AND ITS IMPACT ON HEALTH

Sleep is one pillar of optimal health. These essential habits may be overlooked because many people tend to take them for granted. Insomnia can lead to many disorders, like body aches, heaviness in the head, yawning, weakness, and drowsiness. Some diseases due to disorders of sleep are weight gain, cardiovascular disease, breast cancer, diabetes mellitus, and even death.

MANAGEMENT OF ANIDRA

Our Ayurvedic texts do not outline a specific line of treatment for Anidra. Depending on the treatment mentioned, in different contexts, Anidra can be mainly divided into two types.

1. Bahya Chikitsa

2. Abhyantara Chikitsa.

We would again divide Abhyantara Chikitsa into (a) Ahara Pradhana Chikitsa and (b) Aushadha Pradhana Chikitsa.

Our ancient acharyas placed significant emphasis on Bahya upacharas like moordhni taila and abhyanga, as well as manasika upacharas like manonukulavatavarana and manonukulavishayagrahana. They also elucidated therapeutic measures and specific aharas for Anidra patients. We can divide all these therapeutic measures in different contexts into the following groups: Bahyau pachara, Manasika nidana, Ausadha upachara, and Ahara upachara. Integrating the wisdom of Ayurveda and ancient scriptures into our daily lives can enhance our understanding of sleep and its importance. Practices like Yoga Nidra, mindfulness meditation, and conscious relaxation techniques offer practical tools for improving sleep quality, reducing stress, and promoting holistic health.

CONCLUSION

It is commonly accepted that six hours of sleep in the middle of the night and remaining awake during the first and last halves of the day are examples of regulated sleep and wakefulness. The benefits and worth of sleep, as well as its crucial role in maintaining health, are extensively covered in Ayurvedic writings and subsequent literature. As we can see from the previous review, various Acharyas in Ayurveda have described anidra, and the way they are treated varies depending on the type and Acharya.

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