

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NIDRA AND KAPHA DOSHA IN AYURVEDIC PHYSIOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

Nidra (sleep) is described in Ayurveda as one of the *Trayopastambha*, essential for maintaining health and sustaining life. The process of sleep is governed primarily by *Kapha* Dosha and the predominance of *Tamas*. *Kapha*'s attributes such as heaviness, stability, and unctuousness play a key role in sleep initiation and maintenance. This article explains the physiological relationship between Nidra and Kapha Dosha, its mechanism, influencing factors, and clinical relevance. Understanding this relationship helps in holistic management of sleep-related disorders like *Anidra* and *Atnidra*.

KEYWORDS: Nidra, Kapha Dosha, Tarpaka Kapha, Trayopastambha, Anidra, Atnidra.

INTRODUCTION

According to Ayurveda, Nidra is a physiological phenomenon that happens naturally when the mind and senses distance themselves from their respective things. Sleeping well promotes immunity, mental toughness, emotional stability, and physical health (Ojas). Because Kapha's inherent characteristics encourage calmness and relaxation, it is the primary regulator of sleep among the three doshas. According to classical writings, aberrant sleep patterns caused by altered Kapha have an impact on general health. Thus, it is crucial to comprehend the Nidra-Kapha interaction in Ayurvedic physiology.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The conceptual review used in this article is based on: • Classical Ayurvedic books such as Ashtanga Hridaya, Sushruta Samhita, and Charaka Samhita

- Nighantus and conventional commentary
- Textbooks, journals, and contemporary Ayurvedic literature
- A comparison with current knowledge of the physiology of sleep

Relevant Sanskrit terminology like Nidra, Kapha, Trayopastambha, and Tarpaka Kapha were used to gather information.

DISCUSSION

1. The Ayurvedic concept of Nidra

Nidra is thought to be necessary for:

- Dhatus poshana (tissue nutrition)
- Strength (Bala)
- Complexion (Varna)
- Mental health (Sukha)
- Lifespan (Ayushya)

According to Charaka, Shrama (weariness) and the dominance of Tamas and Kapha cause sleep.

Physiological Basis

- The body and senses relax into a state of rest;
- Ojas and Kapha nourish the mind and encourage deep sleep;
- The mind separates from sensory objects

2. Kapha Dosha and its Relevance to Sleep

Kapha Gunas Contributing to Sleep

Guna	Effect on Sleep
Guru (heavy)	Induces drowsiness
Snigdha (unctuous)	Calms nervous system
Manda (slow)	Reduces mental excitation
Sthira (stable)	Maintains continuous sleep
Shita (cold)	Slows down metabolic activity
Picchila (sticky)	Helps in mental stability

These attributes make Kapha the primary dosha responsible for sound sleep.

3. Mechanism of Sleep Induction (Nidra Utpatti)

Ayurveda clarifies

- In the evening, Kapha Chaya (accumulation of Kapha) naturally takes place.
- A steady rise in serenity and heaviness.
- The reduction of motor and sensory activities.
- The brain's tarpaka kapha lubricates and nourishes nerve tissues.
- The natural result of Kapha predominance is sleep.

Therefore, it is easiest to fall asleep during Kapha Kala (6 PM to 10 PM).

4. Kapha and Maintenance of Sleep

Kapha preserves the quality of sleep by:

- Manda guna lowering needless brain activity;
- Sthira guna guaranteeing deep, stable sleep.
- Snigdha guna promotes relaxation and mental calmness.

A disruption in these attributes results in fragmented or inadequate sleep.

5. Kapha Imbalance and Sleep Disorders

Sleep disturbances in Ayurveda are often linked to an imbalance of Kapha Dosha. Kapha deficiency can lead to *Anidra* (insomnia), commonly caused by excess Vata or Pitta, mental stress, overthinking, irregular lifestyle, and a reduction of Tarpaka Kapha in the nervous system. Individuals with Kapha deficiency may experience difficulty falling asleep, fragmented or light sleep, and a lack of refreshment upon waking. Ayurvedic management includes therapies such as *Shiroabhyanga* (head massage) and *Abhyanga* (full-body oil massage), administration of warm milk with ghee, *Nasya* therapy, a Kapha-nourishing diet, and the use of *Medhya Rasayanas* like Ashwagandha and Brahmi to restore sleep quality.

Conversely, Kapha excess may result in *Atinidra* (hypersomnia), often triggered by overeating, daytime sleep, or a sedentary lifestyle. This condition is characterized by prolonged sleep, heaviness of body and mind, and general lethargy. Management focuses on reducing Kapha through light, easily digestible foods, regular exercise, *Udvartana* (dry powder massage), and Kapha-pacifying herbs such as Trikatu. Maintaining a balance in Kapha Dosha is therefore essential for

regulating healthy sleep patterns and preventing both insomnia and excessive sleep.

6. Factors Affecting Nidra Through Kapha

- Ahara (diet): Oily, heavy meals raise Kapha → encourage sleep;
- Vihara (lifestyle): Calm surroundings and nighttime routines favor Kapha.
- Kapha Kala (time) The natural time to go to sleep is during kala.
- Manas (mind): The Kapha-dominant mind is calm and steady.

CONCLUSION

Both the induction and maintenance of Nidra depend heavily on Kapha Dosha. Its natural characteristics— heaviness, stability, unctuousness, and slowness—create the perfect internal sleeping environment. Sleep patterns are immediately impacted by any divergence in Kapha, which can result in conditions like excessive sleep or insomnia. Designing customized Ayurvedic treatment regimens for sleep disorders benefits from an understanding of this relationship. Sleep quality and general health can be greatly improved by adopting a Kapha-balancing diet, lifestyle, and therapy approach.

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