

NIDRA: AN AYURVEDIC REVIEW***¹Dr. Ashutosh Singh, ²Prof. Dr. Satya Manav Dayal**¹MD Scholar, Department of Swasthavritta and Yoga, Uttarakhand Ayurved College, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India.²MD Swasthavritta, Principal, Uttarakhand Ayurved College, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India.***Corresponding Author: Dr. Ashutosh Singh**MD Scholar, Department of Swasthavritta and Yoga, Uttarakhand Ayurved College, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21785880>**How to cite this Article:** ¹Dr. Ashutosh Singh, ²Prof. Dr. Satya Manav Dayal (2026). Nidra: An Ayurvedic Review. World Journal of Pharmaceutical and Medical Research, 12(8), 359-363.

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ABSTRACT

Nidra (sleep) is extremely beneficial to both our bodies and minds. Proper sleep is beneficial for both physical and mental health. According to Ayurveda, the three main pillars of life are *Aahara*, *Nidra*, and *Brahmacharya*. *Ahara*, *Nidra*, and *Brahmacharya* play an important role in preventing various ailments that impair both physical and mental health. Sleep disturbances (*Nidranasha*) can be caused by bad lifestyle choices, mental stress, food changes, or psychological causes, leading to negative consequences on the body and mind. **Objectives of the study:** Provide a thorough explanation of *Nidra* (sleep) and discuss its function in preserving health. **Materials and Method:** The literature review was conducted using existing *Ayurvedic* literature and numerous pertinent papers about *Nidra* and sleep. **Conclusion:** *Ayurveda* has given more importance to *Nidra* (sleep) by considering it as one among three pillars of life. The *Samhitas* provide an in-depth look at *Nidra*, including its classification and physiology. *Nidra* (sleep) is not merely a passing event; it has a significant impact on our bodies, and studying the sleep phenomenon is critical for early detection of sleep disorders.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda*, *Nidra*, *Nidranasha*, Sleep.**INTRODUCTION**

The term '*Nidra*,' which means sleep, refers to a fundamental physiological process that all living organisms naturally go through, usually at night. It is essential for reviving both the body and the mind after a day of activity. *Swasthya* (health) in *Ayurveda* is based on three pillars known as the *Upastambha*: *Ahara* (food), *Swapna* (*Nidra* or sleep), and *Brahmacharya* (self-control). *Nidra* provides total relaxation to the body and mind, restoring the individual's potential. *Nidra* is one of the thirteen *Adharaneeya Vegas*.^[2] According to *Acharya Charaka*, the mind is not related with any form of *Indriya*, and when they remove themselves from their objects, a person falls asleep.^[3] Sleep appears to be important for the neurological system to function properly. Too little sleep makes one lethargic and hard to concentrate the next day.^[4] It also impairs memory and physical performance, as well as one's ability to complete mathematical calculations. If sleep deprivation persists, hallucinations and mood swings may occur.^[5]

AIM AND OBJECTIVES1. To provide an overview study of *Nidra* (sleep).2. To review the role of *Nidra* in maintaining the health.**MATERIALS AND METHOD**

The literature review was based on existing *Ayurvedic* writings such as *Samhitas* (*Charaka Samhita*, *Susruta Samhita*, *Astanga Hridaya* and *Astanga Sangraha*). The search for papers also included internet resources such as PubMed and Google Scholar etc.

DEFINITION OF NIDRA

According to "*Manduka upanishad*," *Nidra* is a state where the "*Atma*" experiences no dreams or desires, known as "*Susupti*."^[6]

Acharya Charaka emphasized that Sleep occurs when the sensory and motor organs become inactive, and both the intellect and soul become fatigued.^[7]

Acharya Susruta explained that sleep occurs when *Tamas dosha* covers the *Hridaya*, which is the *Sthan* of *Chetana*.^[8]

TYPES OF NIDRA

Acharya Charaka classified *Nidra* based on its causes.^[9]

1. *Tamobhava* – Due to *Tamoguna*.

2. *Shleshmasamudbhava* – Due to vitiated *Kapha*.
3. *Manah-sharirshramasaambhava* - Due to mental and physical exertion.
4. *Agantuki* - Indicative of a bad prognosis, often leading to imminent death.
5. *Vyadhyanuvaritini* - Due to a complication of other diseases like *Sannipataja Jwara*.
6. *Ratri-swabhavaprabhava* - Due to the natural influence of the night.

Acharya Dalhana classified *Nidra* into three types based on *Sushruta Samhita*.^[10]

1. *Tamsik* - Occurs when *Sangyavaha Strotas* are filled with *Shleshma* and dominated by *Tamoguna*.
2. *Swabhaviki* - Natural sleep, experienced daily by all living beings.
3. *Vaikariki* – Due to disturbances in *Mana* and *Sharira*. If *Nidra* occurs in such conditions, it is classified as *Vaikariki Nidra*.

According to Acharya Vagbhat, *Nidra* is of seven types.^[11]

1. *Kalawabhawaj* - Produced at the accustomed time, e.g., during nights.
2. *Amayaja* - Due to the effects of diseases.
3. By fatigue of *Mana* - Occurs when the mind is exhausted.
4. By fatigue of *Sharira* - Occurs when the body is exhausted.
5. *Shleshmaprabhavaj* - Occurs due to predominance of *Kapha*.
6. *Agantuka* – Occurs by external factors, e.g., traumatic events.
7. *Tamobhava* - Occurs by the predominance of *Tamoguna*.

PHYSIOLOGY OF NIDRA

Sleep occurs when the mind becomes fatigued. Individuals get exhausted when the mind is exhausted because their actions are dependent on the mind's; hence, when the mind dissociates itself from its objects, individuals disassociate themselves from their objects as well. Individuals' inaction prevents sensory and motor organs from functioning. In other words, the mind is weary after experiencing sensory and motor sensations. As a result, the mind is unable to function or receive information. There will be *Vishaya Nivrutti* (detachment from worldly objects), and the person will fall asleep at this point.

IMPORTANCE OF NIDRA

Proper sleep promotes *Sukha* (happiness), *Pushti* (nutrition), *Bala* (strength), *Vrushata* (virility), *Jnana* (knowledge), and *Jivana* (life).^[12] People who want to live a long life should practise *Kala Nidra* (sleep at the correct time).^[13] *Ati Prasanga* (constant sleep) and *Na Cha Nidra* (constant wakefulness) are similar to *Kala Ratri* (*Yama*). Proper sleep will bring a long life span, akin to the *Yogi* who achieves *Satya Budhi* (perceiving knowledge).^[14] According to the *Sushruta Samhita*,

receiving a good night's sleep at the proper time and for the right amount of time promotes physical growth, strength, and complexion while also refreshing the body and mind.^[15] A good night's sleep benefits all physiological systems in the body.

TIMING OF NIDRA

According to *Ashtanga Sangraha*, sleep, which is widespread everywhere, manifests itself at night because *Tamo guna* is more predominant at night.^[16] Acharya *Susruta* discusses the importance of staying alert throughout the day and sleeping at night.^[17] According to *Ashtanga Hridaya*, sleep at the proper time for the right duration should be observed, and staying awake during the night should be compensated by sleeping for half the period that was awake without eating.^[18] According to *Kaiyadeva Nighantu*, the best time to sleep is after the first two *Yamas*, around six hours after sunset.^[19]

Childhood, as a *Kapha* dominated phase, naturally requires more sleep, which is necessary for proper growth and development. The middle stage of life, characterised by *Pitta*, necessitates far less sleep. As one matures, *Vata* becomes dominant, resulting in a natural reduction in sleep duration.^[20]

SIGNIFICANCE OF NIDRA

Nidra influences several variables, including *Sukha* (happiness), *Dukha* (unhappiness), *Pushti* (good physique), *Karshya* (emaciation), *Vrushta* (sexual strength), *Klibata* (impotence), *Gyan* (knowledge), *Agyan* (illiteracy), *Jivita* (long life), and *Ajivita* (death). *Samyak Nidra* contributes to *Sukha*, *Pushti*, *Bala*, *Vrushta*, *Gyan* and *Jivan*, whereas *Asamyak Nidra* is in charge of *Dukha*, *Karshya*, *Abala*, *Klibata*, and *Agyan*. Acharya *Charaka* characterised *Nidra* as a therapeutic feature in the therapy of *Atikrisata* (leanness), *Achintyakarya* (freedom from concern about any work), *Nidra* in conjunction with *Ahara*, and other factors leads to *brimhana* and transforms the individual into a *Varaha*.^[21] Just like *Ahara* is essential for health maintenance, *Nidra* is required to achieve *Sukha* and *Arogya*.^[22]

CRITERIA FOR BETTER SLEEP

According to Acharya *yogaratanakara*, after dinner, one should walk for a hundred steps before going to bed, then lie down in a recumbent posture in bed, taking 8 breaths, then changing posture to right lateral until taking 16 breaths, then to left lateral taking 32 breaths, and then sleeping in any posture. Because the '*Jatharagni*' is located over the *Nabhi* region, it is preferable to eat in the left lateral posture.^[23] *Ayurveda* offers suggestions for supporting restful sleep. It is best to avoid beds that are uneven or missing pillows, as well as those that are too short or narrow. Additionally, it is advised to avoid sleeping on your back.

The use of comfortable bedding not only promotes a restful night's sleep, but also improves overall well-being

and contentment. The mattress should be soft and comfy, with the bed placed at knee level. It is advisable to concentrate on happy ideas at the start and conclusion of the night, as well as during falling asleep and waking up, while avoiding negative ones. Assuming a different position when lying down will provide the opposite effect.^[24] Lying down in a relaxed position on a nice bed relieves weariness, soothes *Vata Dosha*, promotes sleep, restores lost memory to the mind (*Dhriti*), serves as an aphrodisiac, and promotes total body growth.

Gentle massage, known as *Samvahana*, exhibits calming, sedative, and aphrodisiac effects. It alleviates *Kapha* and *Vata Doshas*, relieves fatigue and soothes the body.^[25]

DIVASWAPNA

Divaswapna, or daytime sleep, is typically considered unhealthy. According to *Acharya Susruta*, *Divaswapna* performs *Prakopa* for all three *Doshas*. However, as *Hemadri* noted, there are various points of view. *Khaaranadi* believes that *Divaswapna* only performs *Prakopa* for *Pitta* and *Kapha Doshas*, whilst *Bhela* believes that *Divaswapna* in a supine position only promotes *Kapha* in the *Koshta*. According to *Susruta Samhita*, *Divaswapna* can be performed by people who stayed awake at night for half as long as they did. And *Divaswapna* is listed as being acceptable during *Greeshma Ritu*, or the summer season.^[26] According to *Acharya Vagbhata*, *Divaswapna* can be performed in a variety of sick circumstances, including *Rajayakshma*, and by both the elderly and young.^[27]

RATRIJAGARANA

According to *Acharya Charaka*, being awake at night boosts *Vata* and *Pitta*. This causes constipation, weakness, giddiness, lack of focus, hyperacidity, burning of the eyes, and burning of the hands and feet. If a person is forced to stay awake at night for unavoidable circumstances, he should sleep for half an hour the next morning before eating. However, the health of those who are used to working at night and sleeping during the day (industrial night workers) is unaffected since they adapt to this aberrant sleep routine.^[28]

NIDRANAASHA

Nidranaasha, or lack of sleep, is also considered unhealthy. It is the result of *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kshaya*, and injury. *Nidranaasha* has been described as a condition caused by a variety of circumstances, with therapy options including *Abhyanga*, *Udvartana*, and General *Brimhana Chikitsa*.^[29]

ATINIDRA

Sleeping excessively is considered a pathological condition which happens because of Increase in *Shleshma Dosha*. In this condition *Dhumapana*, *Virechana*, *Nasya*, and *Langhana* are advised.^[30]

NIDRA AS A VEGADHARAṆA

According to *Acharya Charaka*, symptoms of *Nidravegdharana* (suppression of the need to sleep) include yawning, body ache, tiredness, head difficulties, and heavy eyes. Treatment for *Nidra-vega-dharana-janya-lakṣaṇa* includes peaceful sleep and *samvahana* (massage) of the hands and feet. According to *Acharya Vagbhata*, the symptoms of *Nidra vegadharana* are as follows: *Moha*, *Murdha akshi gourava*, *Alasya*, *Jṛimbha*, and *Angamarda*. According to *Acharya Bhavamisra*, *Nidra vegvidharana* causes *Jṛimbha*, *Shirolocana-gaurava* (heaviness in eyes and head), *Angamarda*, *Tandra*, and *Annapaka* (improper digestion of food). According to *Acharya Susruta*^[31], the *Nidra vegadharana-janya-lakṣaṇa* symptoms are similar to those of *Vata* and *Pitta*. The symptoms include *Kasa*, *Swasa*, *Pratisyaya*, *Sirogaurava*, *Angamarda*, *Arodhaka*, *Jwara* and *Agnidaurbalya*.^[32] As per *Acharya Bhavamisra*, *Nidra vegvidharana* causes *Jṛimbha*, *Shirolocana-gaurava* (heaviness in eyes and head), *Angamarda*, *Tandra* and *Annapaka* (improper digestion of food).^[33] *Acharya Susruta* mentioned that the *Nidra vegadharana-janya-lakṣaṇa* resembles to that of the diseases of *Vata* and *Pitta*. The symptoms includes *Kasa*, *swasa*, *Pratisyaya*, *Sirogaurava*, *Angamarda*, *Arodhaka*, *Jwara*, *Agnidaurbalya*.^{[34][35]}

DISCUSSION

Ahara, *Nidra*, and *Brahmacharya* are essential for maintaining life and are interconnected to achieve a balanced and healthy state. Among these, *Nidra* is essential for replenishing energy, enhancing mental and physical wellness, and sustaining life itself. In *Ayurvedic* literature, *Nidra* is defined as a condition of physical and mental repose caused by the withdrawal of *Mana* and *Indriya* from their activity. *Acharyas* such as *Charaka* and *Sushruta* emphasise the physiological importance of *Nidra* in maintaining *Dosha* equilibrium (*Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*) and increasing strength (*Balya*), nutrition (*Pushtikar*), and longevity (*Jeevankar*). *Nidranasha* (disrupted or insufficient sleep) is caused by a variety of factors, including *Vata* and *Pitta* aggravation, as well as *Kapha* depletion.

Excessive mental exertion (*Ati Chinta*), emotional problems (*Bhaya* and *Krodha*), physical strain (*Ati Vyayama*), and poor eating habits (*Aharaja Nidana*) are all contributing factors. The combination of these elements causes pathophysiological alterations such as *Strotorodha* (channel obstruction) and excessive tiredness, which appear as symptoms like *Jṛumbha*, *Angamarda*, and *Tandra*. *Ayurvedic* scriptures offer a multifaceted approach to controlling *Nidranasha*, including nutritional (*Ahara Upachara*), mental (*Manasika Upachara*), external (*Bahya Upachara*), and lifestyle (*Anya Upachara*) therapies. These include therapies such as *Abhyanga* (massage), *Shirodhara* (oil applied to the forehead), the consumption of *Pushtikar Ahara* (nourishing meals), and practices like as meditation and prayer. Collectively, these interventions

seek to relax the mind, balance the *Doshas*, and promote natural and comfortable sleep.

CONCLUSION

In *Ayurveda*, *Nidra* is seen as a pillar of life, essential to both physical and mental health. A healthy sleep cycle provides sustenance, strength, happiness, and cognitive function, but sleep disruption (*Nidranasha*) can have a negative impact on general health. Understanding the aetiology, symptoms, and pathogenesis of *Nidranasha* allows for successful treatments using *Ayurvedic* principles. *Ayurveda* provides a holistic and long-term approach to restoring sleep's natural cycle and supporting optimal health by addressing lifestyle behaviours, nutritional changes, and medicinal interventions. Emphasising the synergy of *Ahara*, *Nidra*, and *Brahmacharya* provides a foundation for a healthy and joyful existence.

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