

AYURVEDIC APPROACH TO MANAGE ANIDRA (INSOMNIA) – A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The natural phenomenon of giving adequate rest to the body (*Sharir*) and mind (*Man*) is sleep and *anidra* (Insomnia) is a condition in which patient is unable to sleep properly which adversely affects his daily activities. An improper diet and irregular lifestyle (*Aahar* and *Vihar*) develop cause of *vata prakopa* that travels through *manovahi srotas* causing sleeplessness (*Anidra*). *Ayurvedic* management works on by addressing root causes of disease. *Ayurvedic herbals* like Bramhi, Aswagandha, Jatamansi etc are very useful to balance *vata* and *pitta dosha* and strengthen the nervous system. *Panchkarma* therapies like *padabhyanga*, *shirodhara*, and *shirobasti* etc. are used for internal and external oiling.

KEYWORDS: *Anidra*, Sleeplessness, Insomnia, *panchkarma*.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is a holistic life science. In *Ayurveda* three factors play an important role in the maintenance of a living organism ie. *aahara*, *nidra* and *brahmacharya*. This is termed as *trayoupstambha*,^[1] (sub pillar) (Fig No. 1). Among them *nidra* is an essential phenomenon for the maintenance and restoration of both body and mind for the living beings.^[2]

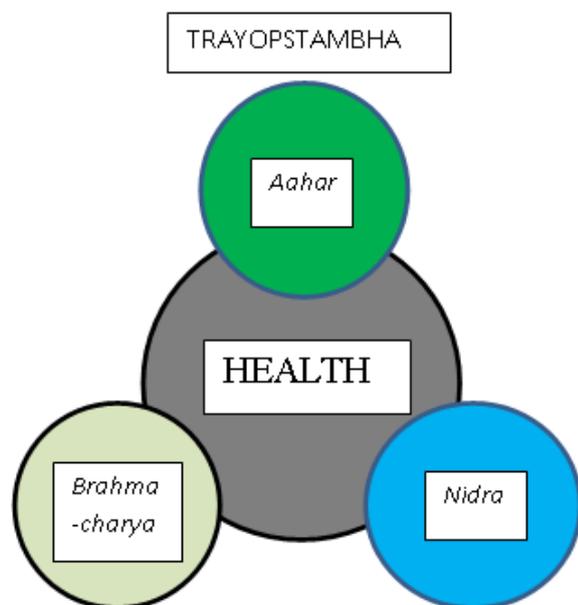


Fig. 1: Trayoupstambha.

Proper sleep plays a vital role in maintaining good health proficiency and state emotional well-being. *Anidra*

(insomnia) is the most common sleep disorder. It is associated with excessive drowsiness, anxiety, irritability and lack of enthusiasm. In modern medicine there isn't any precise treatment for insomnia. If insomnia is treated with hypnotics, anxiolytic, psychotropic and sedative, its hazardous adverse effect cannot be ruled out to be given for a long period. Hence, our *Ayurveda* managements are safe and effective for this disease.

Aims and Objective

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 *anidra*.

Prevalence^[3]

1. According to WHO health survey, about 35% of people in India have reported mild to extreme difficulty associated with sleeping.
2. The Institute of medicine has estimated that 50-70 million Americans suffer from a chronic disorder sleep and wakefulness.
3. More than one half of the adults in United States experience at least intermittent sleep disturbance.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Different *Ayurveda* texts, journals, research papers, articles are referred to study the concept of *ayurvedic* approach to *anidra* (Insomnia) and its usefulness in manifestation and Sequelae of the *anidra*.

Importance of *nidra*

1. Like proper diet, proper sleep is also essential for the maintenance of the body.
2. According to *Acharya Charaka*, the three *upastambha* (sub pillars) i.e. *aahara*, *nidra* and *brahmacharya* play an important role in maintenance of a living organism.
3. Happiness,^[4] misery, nourishment, emaciation, strength, weakness, knowledge, ignorance, sterility,

life and death all these occur depending on the *nidra*.

4. According to *Acharya Kashyapa*, getting good sleep at a proper time and period is one of the characteristics of healthy man.^[5]

Classification of *nidra*^[6]

According to *Ayurveda*, 6 types of *nidra* and their causes are mentioned in Table No.1

Table 1: Types of *nidra* and their causes.

Sr. No.	Types of <i>nidra</i>	Cause of <i>nidra</i>
1	<i>Tamobhava</i>	Excess of <i>tamas</i> quality
2	<i>shleshmasamudbhava</i>	Excess of <i>kapha dosha</i>
3	<i>Sharira manah shram samudbhava</i>	Mental and physical fatigue
4	<i>Agantuki</i>	Adventitious
5	<i>Vyadhianuvartini</i>	Sequelae to diseases
6	<i>Ratri swabhava prabhava</i>	Occurring during night physiological sleep

Insomnia

The perception or complaint of inadequate or poor-quality sleep due to a number of factors such as difficulty falling asleep, waking up frequently during the night with difficulty returning to sleep, waking up to early in the morning or unrefreshing sleep.^[7]

Causes of Insomnia

Anxiety, stress and depression are some of the most common causes of chronic insomnia. Anger, worry, grief and trauma are also causes of insomnia.

Symptoms of *anidra* (Insomnia)

Some symptoms are mentioned in table No.2 which is due to the holding up of *nidra* according to *ayurvedic* classics-

Table 2: symptoms of *anidra* according to *ayurvedic* classics.

Sr. No.	Charaka ^[8]	Susruta ^[9]	Aastanga Hridaya ^[10]
1	<i>Jrumbha</i>	<i>Jrumbha</i>	<i>Jrumbha</i>
2	<i>Angamarda</i>	<i>Angamarda</i>	<i>Angamarda</i>
3	<i>Tandra</i>	<i>Tandra</i>	<i>Moha</i>
4	<i>Shiroroga</i>	<i>Shirojadya</i>	<i>Shirogaurava</i>
5	<i>Akshi gaurava</i>	<i>Akshijadya</i>	<i>Akshigaurava</i>
6	-	<i>Angajadya</i>	<i>Alasya</i>

Sleep disturbance and its impact on health

Sleep is one pillar of good health. These essential habits may miss the list because so many people take it for granted. Insomnia can lead to many disorders like body ache^[10], heaviness in the head, yawning, weakness and drowsiness. Some diseases due to disturbed sleep are-

- Weight gain
- Cardiovascular disease
- Breast cancer
- Colon cancer
- Diabetes mellitus
- Even death

3. *Murdhataila*-Anointing the head with oil is of four types-

- *Abhyanga*(massage with oil over the head)
- *Parisheka*(pouring oil over the head)
- *Pichu*(putting a cloth soaked in oil over the head)
- *Basti* (making the oil to stand on the head)

In *Bhavaprakasha*,^[11] and *Astanga samgraha*^[12] one more karma i.e. *Padabhyanga* is also mentioned for sound sleep as *Nidraprasadkar*.

Management of Insomnia (*anidra*)

As per *Ayurveda*, certain *panchkarma* therapies are applied for *Anidra* like-

1. *Abhyanga* – specially *savanga abhyanga* (full body massage)
2. *Akshitarpana*

Best herbal sedative



Ashwagandha



Jatamansi



Pippalimula



Shankhapushpi

Fig. 2: Herbal medicines.

DISCUSSION

Physical and mental fatigue are the main cause of sleep when mind and sense organ gets exhausted, then sense organ cannot conjugate with their objects and this fatigue of mind and sense organs leads to sleep.

Elevation of *tamas* quality and fatigue induces sleep. Heart and brain is the seat of mind. *Sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are qualities of mind *tamas*^[13] quality are responsible for sleep while *rajas* and *sattva guna* are responsible for awakening stage.

CONCLUSION

Anidra means *aswapna*, and *aswapna* includes in 80 types of *vatananatmaja vikara* in *Ayurveda*.^[14]

Food, sleep and celibacy are three sub-pillars of life. Sleep is as important as food; therefore, we must understand concept and its management through *Ayurveda*. Massage, head oil anointing and mildly pressing the body is whole some in loss of sleep.^[15] Various *ayurvedic* approaches such as *panchakarma* therapy like *shirodhara*, *shirobasti*, *shirolepa padabhyanga utsadana* and *karnapurana* are pertinent and applied also. In diet, the patient should take sweet and unctuous food consisting of made of *shali* rice, wheat and rice flour processed with products of sugarcane along with milk, meat soup etc. beside these, *yoga* and *pranayama* are the part of *ayurvedic* management of insomnia (*anidra*). Some *Ayurvedic herbal* medicines are also widely used for this like ashwagandha, bramhi, jatamansi, shankhapushpi, pippalimula etc. (Fig.No.2)

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