

Conceptual Study of ANIDRA according to Ayurvedic Aspect

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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.

INTRODUCTION

In Ayurveda, aahar (food), nidra (sleep) and brahmacharya are described as tryaupstambha^{1 2 3}.ie. 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 Nanatmajavatvyadhi^[6] and also as a symptom of various diseases^[7] and psychological disorders^[8]

KEYWORDS : Anidra , Upastambha , Insomnia

Objective

The present Research aims to provide on in depth conceptual study of ANIDRA review of anidra, it's etiological factor , pathogenesis , clinical manifestation, consequences and management strategies from ayurvedic perspective

Material and method

1. Study Design

The present study is a conceptual and literary review study conducted to analyze the concept of Anidra described in Ayurveda and correlate it with insomnia in modern medicine.

2. Materials

The materials used for the present study were collected from classical Ayurvedic texts, modern medical literature, and published research articles related to Anidra and insomnia.

A. Ayurvedic Classical Texts:

Nidra as Trayopastambha

Nidana (etiological factors)

Samprapti (pathogenesis)

Lakshana (symptoms)

Chikitsa (management)

B. Modern Textbooks

Modern medical literature related to insomnia, sleep physiology, and sleep disorders were also reviewed.

C. Research Articles

Ayurvedic journals

Institutional libraries

These articles helped in understanding recent studies on insomnia and Ayurvedic management of Anidra.

3. Methods

The collected literature was systematically reviewed and analyzed.

The methodology included:

Collection of references from classical Ayurvedic Samhitas regarding Nidra and Anidra.

Compilation of Nidana, Samprapti, Lakshana, and Chikitsa mentioned in different texts.

Comparative analysis with modern concepts of insomnia.

Interpretation of Ayurvedic principles in the management of sleep disorders.

Aetiopathogenesis

The aetiopathogenesis of Anidra mainly involves vitiation of Vata and Pitta dosha, along with increase in Raja guna and depletion of Tama guna, which are responsible for mental activity and sleep respectively. Various Manasika (psychological) factors like Chinta (worry), Bhaya (fear), Krodha (anger) and Sharirika (physical) factors such as improper diet, excessive activity, and irregular lifestyle contribute to this condition.

AharajNidan (Dietary Factors)

Improper dietary habits play an important role in the development of Anidra (insomnia). Excessive intake of foods having Ruksha (dry), Laghu (light) and Vata-provoking properties, irregular meal timings and unhealthy eating patterns disturb normal sleep. [8]

ViharajNidan (Lifestyle Factors)

Various improper lifestyle practices contribute significantly to insomnia. Excessive smoking (AdhikaDhumpana), prolonged night awakening (Ratri-jagarana), excessive physical exertion (AdhikaSharirikaShrama), and excessive mental activity (Ativyayama or Ati-vyavaya) disturb the balance of the body and mind. Daytime sleeping (Diwaswapna), irregular daily routine, and sleeping in an uncomfortable or unsuitable environment (AsukhaShayya) may also interfere with normal sleep patterns. Suppression of natural urges (Vegavidharana) and exposure to stress or fatigue further aggravate VataDosha, ultimately leading to the manifestation of Anidra. [8-11]

ManasikNidan (Psychological Factors)

Mental and emotional disturbances are important etiological factors in the causation of insomnia. Dominance of Rajas and Tamasguna, mental stress, anxiety, fear, anger, grief, excessive thinking, and emotional instability disturb the equilibrium of the mind (Manas). These psychological factors impair the natural induction of sleep and may produce conditions like Manasantapa (mental distress) and Nidranasha [10]

Improper Chikitsa (Improper Therapeutic Measures)

Improper or excessive therapeutic procedures may also become causative factors for Anidra. Ati-Vamana (excess emesis), Ati-Virechana (excess purgation), excessive bloodletting (Ati-Raktamokshana), excessive

physical exercise, and overuse of smoking therapy may aggravate VataDosha and deplete bodily strength. (ATIKARSHANA)^[12]

Kala: Time or circadian rhythm plays a vital role in the regulation of sleep. Normally, the body develops a natural tendency to sleep during the night due to physiological and hormonal changes. However, disturbance in the time schedule, night shifts, or irregular sleeping patterns disrupt this natural rhythm and contribute to insomnia.

Vikara: Certain diseases and pathological conditions may disturb sleep. Chronic pain, fever, respiratory disorders, psychological illnesses, and neurological diseases may either directly cause insomnia or aggravate existing sleep disturbances.^[10]

Prakriti: Individual constitution also influences sleep patterns. Persons having VataPrakriti are generally light sleepers and tend to remain more alert (Jagaruka). Sattvika individuals may require comparatively less sleep, whereas persons with TamasikaManasaPrakriti often experience excessive sleep.^[13 14]

Vridhhi–kshaya

KaphaKshaya – Since Kapha provides heaviness and stability required for sleep, its reduction results in inability to fall asleep easily.^[15]

VataVridhhi – Increase in Vata due to irregular lifestyle, fasting, excessive movement, or mental stress causes restlessness and difficulty sleeping.^[16]

Causes of insomnia in day to day life :-

1. Psychological Causes

Stress (work pressure, exams, family problems)

Anxiety and overthinking

Depression (linked with early morning awakening)

2. Lifestyle & Daily Habits

Excessive mobile/laptop use before bed (blue light exposure)

Irregular sleep schedule (sleeping late, waking at different times)

Daytime sleeping (naps), especially long naps

Late-night work or studying

3. Diet & Substances

Caffeine (tea, coffee, energy drinks), especially in evening

Smoking (nicotine) – stimulates brain

Alcohol – disturbs sleep cycle despite causing initial sleepiness

Heavy meals or spicy food at night

4. Physical Factors

Lack of physical activity

Chronic pain (backache, joint pain)

Hormonal imbalance

Medical conditions

5. Environmental Factors

Noise, bright lights, uncomfortable bed

Extreme temperature (too hot or cold)

Frequent disturbances during sleep

6. Medications

Some drugs (like steroids, antidepressants, BP medicines)

Overuse of sleeping pills → dependency → worsens insomnia

Purvarupa:-

अव्यक्तं लक्षणं तेषां पूर्वरूपमिति स्मृतम्॥च. चि.28/19

This is Vata predominant Vyadhi, so Avyakt is Purvarupa. [5 21]

Lakshan- [17 18 19]

Clinical Features of Insomnia

निद्रानाशादङ्गमर्दशिरोगौरवजृम्भिकाः।जाड्यग्लानिभ्रमापक्तितन्द्रा रोगाश्च वातजाः॥६४॥ अ. ह. सु. 7/64

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. Shirogurava (headache and heaviness in head)
3. Jrambhika (day time drowsiness, yawning)
4. Apakti (indigestion)
5. Bhrama
6. Glani
7. Tandra
8. Vatajroga

RUPA	CHARAK	SUSHRUT	A.HRIDHAY	A.SANGRAHA
Jrumbha	+	+	+	+
Angamarda	+	+	+	+
Tandra	+	+	+	+
Shirorog	+	-	-	-
Shirogurav	-	+	+	+
Akshigaurav	+	+	-	-
Jadya	-	-	+	+
Glani	-	-	+	+
Bhrama	-	-	+	+
Apakti	-	-	+	+
Vataroga	-	-	+	+

Classification of Nidra-

According to ayurveda^[25 26]

तमोभवा श्लेषसमुद्भवा च मनःशरीरश्रमसम्भवा च
आगन्तुकी व्याधनुवर्तिनी च रात्रिस्वभावप्रभवा च निद्रा || च. सु. 21/58

Charaksamhita	Sushrutasamhita	Ashtangasangraha
1. Tamobhava	1. Vaishanavi	1. Tamobhava
2. shleshmasamudhbhava	2. Vaikarika	2. Aamaya khedaprabhavja
3. Mansharir shramasambhava	3. Tamsi	3. Chittakheda prabhavja
4. Agantuki		4. Agantuki
5. Vyadhianuvartini		5. Kaphaprabhavaja
6. Ratriwabhavprabha		6. Dehakhedprabhavaja
		7. Kalaswabhavaja

Classification of Insomnia

As according to time period

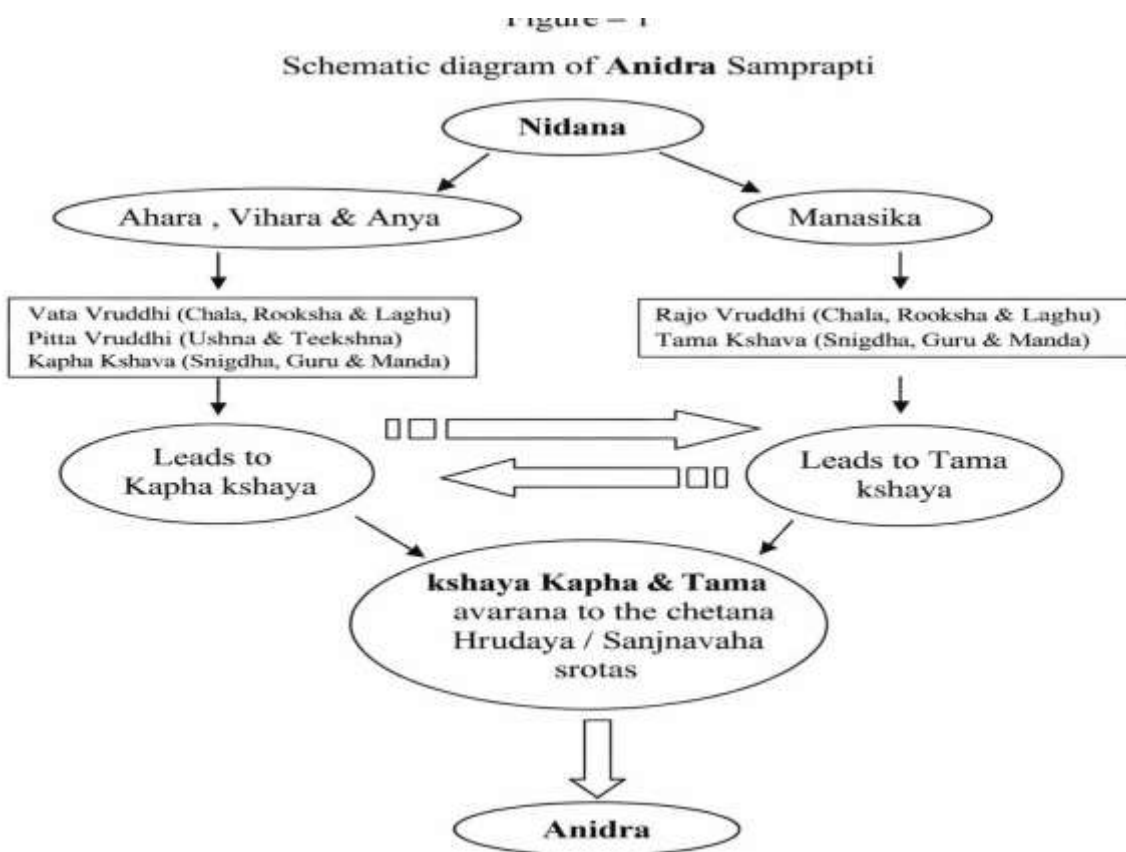
1. **Transient insomnia** - lasting from a night to a weekend is usually caused by events that alter normal sleep pattern, such as travelling or sleeping in an unusual environment.

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.

according to its nature of origin.

1. **Primary Insomnia**– It is caused by its own set of causative factors, where vatadosha takes a primary role in the manifestation of the disease. Anidra explained under vatananatmajavyadhi 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.

Samprapti of Anidra - [20]



Management of Anidra

Ayurvedic management is mainly described under:

1. NidanaParivarjana
2. Ahara (Diet)
3. Vihara (Lifestyle)
4. Panchakarma
5. Aushadha (Medications)

अभ्यङ्गोत्सादनं स्नानं ग्राम्यानूपौदका रसाः।
शाल्यन्नं सदधि क्षीरं स्नेहो मद्यं मनःसुखम्॥५२॥
मनसोऽनुगुणा गन्धाः शब्दाः संवाहनानि च।
चक्षुषोस्तर्पणं लेपः शिरसो वदनस्य च॥५३॥
स्वास्तीर्णं शयनं वेश्म सुखं कालस्तथोचितः।
आनयन्त्यचिरान्निद्रां प्रनष्टा या निमित्ततः॥च. सु. 21/52-54 [22]

Nidanaparivarjana

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.

Dietary Management (Ahara) [24]

Mamsa of AnupaDeshiya animals and birds, Shali rice, curd, milk, and wheat are recommended as they promote KaphaVridhi, which helps in inducing sleep. Intake of Ikshu (sugarcane products), Pishta (flour preparations), Draksha (grapes), and Mishri (sugar candy) is also beneficial.

Lifestyle Management (Vihara) [23]

The patient should maintain a comfortable bed and a calm sleeping environment. Engaging in light physical activity before bedtime may help promote better sleep. A regular sleep schedule should be maintained, and daytime sleeping should be avoided. Maintaining an active lifestyle both mentally and physically is beneficial.

Panchkarma - [24]

- Nasya
- Abhyang (Abhyanga with medicated Vathara oil. This pacifies VataDosh and makes the body strong, grow well, healthy and induce sound sleep)
- Padabhyang (practice of Padabhyang before sleeping can improve eye sight and induce good sleep)
- Utsadan
- ChakshuTarpana
- ShiroLepa
- VadanaLepa
- MurdhaTaila (Pouring oil over the head and massaging oil result in calm sleep)
- Karna Purana
-

ShiroBasti

Discussion

Anidra (insomnia) has emerged as a significant health concern in the modern era, largely due to rapid changes in lifestyle, dietary habits, and psychological stressors. The present study highlights that the etiological factors (Hetu) described in Ayurveda show a remarkable correlation with contemporary causes of insomnia, thereby validating the classical Ayurvedic concepts in present-day clinical practice. Ayurveda considers Nidra as one of the three pillars of life (Trayopasthambha), and its disturbance leads to both physical and ॠ (psychological)

imbalance. In the current scenario, improper dietary habits such as consumption of Ruksha (dry), Laghu (light), and nutritionally deficient food, along with irregular meal timings and late-night eating, directly contribute to Agni dushti and Vataprakopa. These factors can be correlated with modern findings where poor diet and erratic eating patterns disturb metabolic and neuro-hormonal balance, ultimately affecting sleep regulation.

In the present era, Anidra can be clearly categorized as a lifestyle disorder as well as a geriatric condition, given its higher prevalence among elderly individuals. Factors such as excessive caffeine intake, smoking, alcohol consumption, and dependency on sedative medications further aggravate the condition. While modern pharmacological treatments provide symptomatic relief, they are often associated with side effects and risk of dependence. In contrast, Ayurveda offers a holistic and root-cause-oriented approach for the management of Anidra.

The Ayurvedic line of treatment emphasizes NidanaParivarjana, which involves identification and avoidance of causative factors. This principle closely resembles the concept of sleep hygiene in modern medicine. Dietary management (Ahara) includes the use of Kapha-promoting and nourishing foods such as milk, ghee, Shali rice, and Draksha, which help in inducing sleep by promoting Tamasguna and nourishing the body tissues. Lifestyle modifications (Vihara) such as maintaining a regular sleep schedule, ensuring a comfortable sleeping environment, and engaging in mild physical activity help in restoring the natural sleep rhythm.

Panchakarma therapies play a crucial role in the management of Anidra by pacifying aggravated VataDosha and calming the mind. Procedures like Abhyanga (oil massage), Padabhyanga, Nasya, and MurdhaTaila (including Shirodhara) act on the nervous system and help in reducing stress, thereby promoting sound sleep. These therapies may be understood in modern terms as activating the parasympathetic nervous system and reducing stress hormone levels. Additionally, the use of MedhyaRasayana drugs such as Brahmi and Ashwagandha provides neuroprotective, adaptogenic, and anxiolytic effects, contributing to improved sleep quality..

Conclusion

In conclusion, Anidra should be understood as a multifactorial disorder with significant lifestyle and psychological components, and its management requires an integrative approach. Adoption of Ayurvedic principles in daily life can play a crucial role in both prevention and treatment of insomnia, thereby improving the quality of life and promoting holistic health.

it can be concluded that the etiological factors and pathogenesis of Anidra described in Ayurveda have strong parallels with modern scientific understanding of insomnia.

The Ayurvedic approach not only addresses the symptoms but also corrects the underlying imbalance of Dosha, Dhatu, and Manas. Therefore, it offers a safe, effective, and sustainable solution for the management of insomnia, especially in the context of modern lifestyle disorders.

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