

“Physiological aspects of Nidra with special reference to different Dehik Prakriti.”

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ABSTRACT

Background

Ayurveda defines Nidra as a physiological state of rest that rejuvenates the Sharira, Mana and Indriya. Nidra plays a crucial role in maintaining overall health, preventing major diseases, and ensuring both physical and mental well-being. Insufficient sleep is associated with the development of various clinical disorders. In the contemporary era, where lifestyle disorders are on the rise, Nidra stands as a fundamental aspect of health that requires thorough examination.

Aim

This is a review article to emphasize the concept of Nidra and its physiological impact with different Dehik Prakriti.

Materials and Methods

A comprehensive literature review was conducted using available Ayurvedic texts and relevant scholarly articles related to Nidra and sleep.

Conclusion

Various Ayurvedic Samhitas highlight that individuals with different Dehik Prakriti exhibit distinct sleep patterns. Those with Kapha Prakriti are reported to have deep and restorative sleep, whereas individuals with Vata and Pitta Prakriti experience comparatively lighter and reduced sleep.

Clinical Significance

Ayurveda considers Nidra as one of the three fundamental pillars of life (Trayopastambha). Classical texts provide an extensive understanding of Nidra, detailing its classification and physiological implications. Sleep is not merely a passive state but a critical physiological process with a profound impact on overall health. Understanding Nidra and its variations according to Prakriti is essential for early diagnosis and management of sleep disorders, thereby contributing to holistic healthcare.

Keywords: Nidra, Prakriti, Sleep, Physiology, etc

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda views sleep (Nidra) as essential for health and happiness, stemming from a relaxed mind. In Ayurvedic texts, sleep, along with diet (Ahara) and celibacy (Brahmacharya), is likened to the three legs of a stool, forming

a foundation of support. Termed as the three Upasthambha, these factors play a vital role in maintaining overall health and balance according to Ayurvedic principles.

Sleep (Nidra) is a vital, naturally endowed phenomenon that plays a crucial role in maintaining physiological and psychological equilibrium. It is considered one of the three fundamental pillars (Trayopastambha) of life in Ayurveda. As emphasized by **Acharya** Charaka, sleep functions in accordance with the body's innate biological rhythms, also known as the biological clock in modern context. When this natural harmony of sleep is disrupted, it directly impacts overall health and well-being.

Modern scientific literature aligns with this classical Ayurvedic understanding. According to the Encyclopedia of Mental Health, sleep is described as a time-bound physiological state that is essential for the rest and recovery of both body and mind. During this period, sensory perception and motor activity are temporarily suspended, a concept that mirrors the Ayurvedic explanation of sleep being a state of temporary withdrawal from the external environment, allowing internal systems to rejuvenate.

Despite extensive research, sleep continues to be a subject of inquiry in both ancient and contemporary medical sciences. Fundamental questions such as what exactly is sleep, how does it occur, and what are its precise roles in health maintenance and disease management remain areas of ongoing investigation. Various theories—ranging from neurochemical regulation, circadian rhythm synchronization, to psycho-physiological models—have been proposed to explain the nature of sleep and its disturbances. These disruptions can manifest in numerous disorders and have been well-documented in both Ayurvedic texts and modern medical sciences, highlighting the importance of proper sleep in preventing and managing diseases.

Modern science and Ayurveda recognize the significance of sleep for health and well-being. Ayurveda emphasizes the importance of sleep for mental relaxation and overall health. Acharya Charaka discusses sleep extensively, highlighting its benefits and management techniques. Insomnia Disorder, according to Charaka, is associated with imbalanced Vata activity, leading to symptoms like muscle wasting and difficulty breathing. Recent advancements in sleep research's have highlighted the links between sleep deprivation and increased risks of various health issues, including Hypertension, Diabetes, Obesity, Depression, Heart attack, and Stroke. Some researchers are investigating potential connections between inadequate sleep and weakened immune function. Therefore, there is a pressing need to understand the co relation between Prakriti and Nidra .

Aim:

To study, the Physiology of Nidra with special reference to different Dehik Prakriti.

Objectives

To study the relation between Nidra and different Dehik Prakriti.

Materials And Method

The literature review was compiled from available Ayurvedic texts such as Samhitas (Charak Samhita, Sushrut samhita, Ashtanga Hridaya, Astanga sangraha, Sharangdhar Samhita). The search for articles was also conducted on online databases including PubMed and Google Scholar with keywords - physiology of Nidra and sleep. And four such relatable articles were found whose insights were useful while reviewing our topic.

Etymology of the Term 'Nidra':

द्रा कुत्सायाम गतौ^[1]

The Sanskrit word '**Nidra**' is a feminine noun derived from the root verb '**Dra**', combined with the prefix '**Ni**'. According to classical Sanskrit grammar, '**Dra**' carries meanings such as undesirable, to run, or to make haste, while '**Gatau**' implies movement or leading. When combined, the term reflects a state that is considered undesirable or one from which there is a tendency to withdraw—hence the name '**Nidra**', denoting sleep.^[2]

The grammatical derivation follows the rule '**Ataschopasarge**', a sutra from Panini's grammar, which allows the formation of this compound word.^[3] The prefix '**Ni**' in Sanskrit implies a downward motion or a lowering,

and it is linguistically related to the English word ‘nether’, as in netherworld, indicating a state of descent or inactivity. The suffix ‘**Dra**’ is thought to be etymologically connected to the English word ‘drowsy’, which describes a state of semi-consciousness, reduced alertness, or calm inactivity—attributes closely associated with the condition of sleep.^[4]

Additionally, as referenced in the *Shabdakalpadruma* (a classical Sanskrit lexicon), ‘**Nidra**’ also implies a condition that may invite ridicule or contempt from others, likely due to its association with unawareness or vulnerability during the sleeping state.^[5]

निद्रा निन्दनम निन्दतेऽनयाइतिवा ।

निन्दते इति ।

निदि कुत्सयाम्निन्देर्नलोपञ्च उणां ।

इति रुक्नलोपञ्च ।

Synonyms of ‘Nidra’ :

Various classical texts in Sanskrit literature and Ayurveda have described multiple synonyms for **Nidra**, each highlighting different aspects of the sleep state.

According to the **Amarkosha**^[5], a renowned Sanskrit thesaurus, four primary synonyms are listed:

1. **Shayanam** – the act of lying down or resting
2. **Swapah** – a state of sleep or unconsciousness
3. **Svapnah** – the dream state
4. **Samvesh** – the condition of being enveloped or immersed (in sleep)

In the **Vaidyaka Shabda Sindhu**, three additional synonyms are mentioned:^[6]

1. **Sambhashah** – often interpreted as internal dialogue or mental withdrawal
2. **Suptih** – the actual act of sleeping or slumber
3. **Swapanam** – dreaming or the experience during sleep

The lexicon **Vachaspatyam** provides more poetic and symbolic names for Nidra, portraying it through metaphorical and divine representations:^[7]

1. **Rudrapatni** – consort of Rudra, symbolizing a divine force
2. **Kalagni** – associated with the destructive fire of time
3. **Singhyogini** – a mystical or tantric form
4. **Abhimanini** – the possessive or prideful one
5. **Kali** – linked with the goddess Kali, often representing darkness or stillness
6. **Tamasi** – signifying darkness or inertia, a quality of Tamas

Acharya Sushrut, in his classical treatise, also provides synonymous terms for sleep:^[8]

1. **Shayanam**
2. **Swapah**
3. **Sushupti** – deep sleep or the state of complete unconsciousness
4. **Vaishnavi Maya** – an illusion or cosmic play associated with Lord Vishnu, indicating the illusory nature of the sleep state

In the *Charaka Samhita*^[9], the word **Bhutadhatri** is used poetically as a synonym for Nidra, meaning “the nourisher of all beings,” highlighting the rejuvenating and nurturing role of sleep in maintaining life and health.

Definition of Nidra

According to the Mandukya Upanishad, Nidra refers to a state in which the Atma neither dreams nor harbours desires, a condition known as Susupti.^[10]

यदा तु मनसि क्लान्ते कर्मात्मानः क्लमान्विताः | विषयेभ्यो निवर्तन्ते तदा स्वपिति मानवः॥३५॥

[चरकसंहिता सूत्रस्थानम् - २१. अष्टौनिन्दितीयोऽध्यायः]

According to Acharya Charaka and commentators like Chakrapani and Gangadhar, when both the mind and soul become tired or inactive, and the sensory and motor organs also become inactive, then a person naturally falls asleep.^[11] Similarly, Acharya Sushrut explained that sleep takes place when Tamas envelops the Hridaya, the centre of consciousness.^[12] Sleep can be defined as a temporary state of unconsciousness, from which an individual can be awakened by appropriate sensory stimuli.^[13]

Mechanism of Nidra

Acharya Sushrut claims that Hridaya is the location of Chetana's seat. A surplus of Tamo Guna causes people to sleep, whereas an excess of Satva Guna causes people to become aware of their internal and external environment.^[14] As explained by Acharya Charak, people go into a state of sleep when their minds, senses, and motor organs worn out and separate themselves from Atma.^[15] According to Ashtanga Sangraha, when a person falls asleep, their mind loses its sense organs due to exhaustion and their Manovaha Srotas accumulate with Sleshma.^[16] According to Acharya Sharangadhara, Nidra results from the aggravation of Kapha-Doṣha and Tamogūṇa.^[17]

In Modern Terms

The brain is the primary site of the most noticeable physiological changes that occur during sleep. The brain uses far less energy when we sleep than when we are awake, especially when we are in non-REM sleep. The brain restores its supply of adenosine triphosphate (ATP), the chemical used for the short-term storage and transportation of energy, in areas that are less active. This decrease has a substantial effect on total energy consumption because the brain uses 20% of the body's energy when in a peaceful wakeful state. Humans secrete growth hormone in little spurts when they sleep in sluggish waves. Furthermore, prolactin secretion is linked to all forms of sleep, including rest during the day.^[18]

The brain's hypothalamus contains a collection of nerve cells called the suprachiasmatic nucleus (SCN), which is home to our body's biological clock. The hormone melatonin, which promotes drowsiness, is secreted under the control of the SCN. The circadian rhythm is the process by which the SCN instructs the brain to create more melatonin when there is less light present. As a result, the cycle of sleep and wakefulness aligns with the natural cycle of day and night.

Types of Nidra

Ayurvedic text

Ashtanga Hridaya remarks about four types of sleep. They are; Mithya, Atiyoga, Hina and Samyak yogaroopa.^[19]

Ashtanga Sangraha comments about seven types of sleep. They are; Kala swabava, Amayaja, Chittakedodbava, Dehakedodbhava, Krodhodbava, Agantubava and Tamobava.^[20]

Three categories are recognized by Acharya Sushrut; Vaishnavi, Tamasi and Vaikariki.^[12]

Charak Samhita cites seven types of sleep. They are; Tamobhava, Sleshm-samudbhava, Manah Sharira Sram Sambhava, Agantuki, Vyadhi-Anuvartini, Ratri Svabhava Prabhava.^[21]

Modern text

Sleep is categorized into two main types:^[22]

1. **Non-Rapid Eye Movement (NREM) Sleep** – According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM), NREM sleep is divided into three stages: N₁, N₂, and N₃. The final stage, N₃, is also known as delta sleep or slow-wave sleep. A typical sleep progression follows this sequence: N₁ → N₂ → N₃ → N₂ → REM.
2. **Rapid Eye Movement (REM) Sleep** – This stage occurs when a person transitions back to stage 2 or 1 after experiencing deep sleep.

A full sleep cycle generally lasts between 90 and 100 minutes, and an average night's sleep consists of 4 to 5 complete cycles. Each cycle contains about five phases, with the first four dedicated to NREM sleep before transitioning into the REM stage.

Stage 1: The first stage of Non-REM sleep marks the transition from wakefulness to sleep. This phase typically lasts less than 10 minutes and is distinguished by a slowing heart rate, reduced breathing, minimal eye movement, and muscle relaxation.

Stage 2: This stage of Non-REM sleep is a lighter sleep phase that precedes deeper sleep and lasts around 20 minutes. During this stage, both heart rate and breathing continue to slow down, while the brain begins producing short bursts of rapid, rhythmic activity known as sleep spindles.

Stage 3 (N3): Previously classified as stages 3 and 4, this is the deepest stage of Non-REM sleep, lasting between 20 and 40 minutes. At this point, the heart rate and breathing slow to their lowest levels, and muscles are so relaxed that waking up becomes difficult. This stage is often referred to as delta sleep or slow-wave sleep.

Rapid Eye Movement (REM) Sleep: Occurring about 90 minutes after falling asleep, REM sleep is the deepest stage of sleep. It is marked by rapid eye movements, almost complete muscle paralysis, and a high likelihood of dreaming.

Timing of Nidra

According to Ashtanga Sangraha, since Tamo guna is more abundant at night, sleep, which is common everywhere, manifests at night.^[23] According to Ashtanga Hridaya, it is important to follow the proper sleep schedule for the right amount of time and to make up for any time spent awake at night by sleeping for half of that period without eating.^[24] According to Kaiyadeva Nighantu, the best time to sleep is about six hours after sunset, following the first two Yamas. According to Ayurveda, a healthy person usually sleeps during the night, a phenomenon known as Ratri Svabhava Prabhava. Avoiding sleep in the early and late hours of the night and waking up before daylight are advised.^[25] Childhood, characterized by Kapha dominance, naturally involves longer sleep durations, which are crucial for proper growth and development. During the middle phase of life, governed by Pitta, the need for sleep decreases significantly. As aging occurs and Vata becomes predominant, sleep duration naturally declines.^[26]

Criteria for Better Sleep

Acharya Yogaratnakara recommends walking 100 steps after dinner before going to bed. Initially, one should lie in a recumbent posture, take eight breaths, shift to the right lateral position for 16 breaths, then switch to the left lateral position for 32 breaths before settling into any preferred posture. The left lateral position is ideal for digestion, as 'Jatharagni' is located in the Nabhi region.^[27]

Ayurveda provides guidelines for improving sleep quality, advising against uneven, narrow, or pillow less beds and recommending against sleeping on the back. A soft, comfortable mattress at knee level is ideal. Positive thoughts should be maintained at bedtime and upon waking, while negative thoughts should be avoided.^[28]

Sleeping in a relaxed posture on a comfortable bed reduces fatigue, calms Vata Dosha, promotes sleep, enhances memory (Dhriti), acts as an aphrodisiac, and supports overall body growth. Gentle massage (Samvahana) has sedative and aphrodisiac effects, alleviates Kapha and Vata Doshas, reduces fatigue, and soothes the body.^[29]

Significance of Nidra

Nidra plays a crucial role in determining various aspects of life, including happiness, health, strength, knowledge, and longevity. Proper sleep (Samyak Nidra) promotes well-being, strength, intellect, and vitality, while improper sleep (Asamyak Nidra) leads to unhappiness, weakness, and ill health. Acharya Charaka emphasized Nidra as a therapeutic tool, essential for recovery from leanness, stress relief, and overall nourishment, similar to the importance of food.^[30] Sleep is not just rest but a vital process for maintaining health and well-being.^[31, 32, 33]

Prakriti

शुक्रासृग्गर्भिणीभोज्यचेष्टागर्भाशयर्तुषु यः स्याद्दोषोऽधिकस्तेन प्रकृतिः सप्तधोदिता॥८३॥

[अष्टाङ्गहृदयम् शारीरस्थानम् - ३. अङ्गविभागशारीरोध्यायः]

In Ayurved acharyas explains that Prakriti is formed, based on the dominance of one, two, or all three Doshas (Vata, Pitta, Kapha) during conception. This results in different types of Prakriti known as Dosha Prakriti.^[34] Individuals with balanced Vata, Pitta & Kapha tend to maintain normal health. However, those with a dominance of one or two Doshas (Vatala, Pittala, Sleshamala, or combinations like Vata-Pitta, Vata-Kapha, Pitta-Kapha) are more prone to specific health issues related to their predominant Dosha, despite appearing healthy. For instance, a person with a Vata-dominant Prakriti may experience body part cracking due to Vata's influence, illustrating how the inherent Dosha balance at birth influences one's susceptibility to certain conditions.

द्विदोषत्रिदोषप्रकृतिलक्षणे - ज्ञातव्या मिश्रचिह्नैश्च द्वित्रिदोषोल्बणा नराः ॥२३॥

[शार्ङ्गधरसंहिता/पूर्वखण्डम्-आहारादिगतिकथनम्]

Great Ayurvedic surgeon Sushrut stated that the Doshas (Vata, Pitta, Kapha), which determine an individual's Prakriti, remain stable throughout life and do not change except in cases of severe decline.^[35]

द्वयोर्वा तिसृणां वाऽपि प्रकृतीनां तु लक्षणैः | ज्ञात्वा संसर्गजा वैद्यः प्रकृतीरभिनिर्दिशेत् ॥७७॥

[सुश्रुतसंहिताशारीरस्थानम् - ४. गर्भव्याकरणशारीरम्]

Effect of Doshas on Nidra

Sleep patterns vary among individuals, as no two people experience identical sleep cycles. Each person has a unique physiological makeup that influences the quality, duration, and characteristics of their sleep.^[36]

तत्र, वातवृद्धौ वाक्पारुष्यं कार्श्यं काष्ण्यं गात्रस्फुरणमुष्णकामि(म)ता निद्रानाशोऽल्पबलत्वं गाढवर्चस्त्वं च; पित्तवृद्धौ पीतावभासता सन्तापः शीतकामित्वमल्पनिद्रता मूर्च्छा बलहानिरिन्द्रियदौर्बल्यं पीतविण्मूत्रनेत्रत्वं च; श्लेष्मवृद्धौ शौक्ल्यं शैत्यं स्थैर्यं गौरवमवसादस्तन्द्रा निद्रा सन्धिविश्लेषश्च ॥१३॥

[Sushrut सूत्रस्थानम् - १५. दोषधातुमलक्षयवृद्धिविज्ञानीयाध्यायः]

Vata Dosha and Sleep

वातस्तु रूक्षलघुचलबहुशीघ्रशीतपरुषविशदः। तस्य रौक्ष्याद्वातला रूक्षापचिताल्पशरीराः प्रततरूक्षक्षामसन्नसक्तजर्जरस्वरा भवन्ति, लघुत्वान्नाल्लघुचपलगतिचेष्टाहारव्याहाराः, चलत्वादनवस्थितसन्ध्यक्षिभूहन्वोष्ठजिह्वाशिरःस्कन्धपाणिपादाः, बहुत्वाद्बहुप्रलापकण्डरासिराप्रतानाः, शीघ्रत्वाच्छ्रीघ्रसमारम्भक्षोभविकाराः शीघ्रत्रासारागविरागाः श्रुतग्राहिणोऽल्पस्मृतयश्च, शैत्याच्छीतासहिष्णवः प्रततशीतकोद्वेपकस्तम्भाः, पारुष्यात् परुषकेशशमश्रुमनखदशनवदनपाणिपादाः, वैशद्यात् स्फुटिताङ्गावयवाः सततसन्धिशब्दगामिनश्च भवन्ति; त एवङ्गुणयोगाद्वातलाः प्रायेणाल्पबलाश्चाल्पायुषश्चाल्पापत्याश्चाल्पसाधनाश्चाल्पधनाश्च भवन्ति॥९८॥ संसर्गात् संसृष्टलक्षणाः॥९९॥

[चरक संहिता विमानस्थानम् - ८. रोगभिषग्जितीयविमानम्]

वातप्रकृतिलक्षणम् -अल्पकेशः कृशो रूक्षो वाचालश्चलमानसः | आकाशचारी स्वप्नेषु वातप्रकृतिको नरः ॥२०॥

[शाङ्गधरसंहिता/पूर्वखण्डम् -आहारादिगतिकथनम्]

तत्र वातप्रकृतिः शीतद्वेषी दुर्भगः स्तेनो मत्सर्यनार्यो गन्धर्वचित्तः स्फुटितकरचरणोऽल्परूक्षश्मश्रुनखकेशः क्राथी दन्तखादी च भवति ॥६४॥ अधृतिरदृढसौहृदः कृतघ्नः कृशपरुषो धमनीततः प्रलापी | द्रुतगति रटनोऽनवस्थितात्मा वियति च गच्छति सम्भ्रमेण सुप्तः ॥६५॥ अव्यवस्थित मति श्लवट्टिर्मन्द रत्न धन सञ्चय मित्रः | किञ्चिदेव विलपत्यनिबद्धं मारुतप्रकृतिरेष मनुष्यः ॥६६॥ (वातिकाश्चाजगोमायुशशाखूष्णशुनां तथा | गृध्रकाकखरादीनामनूकैः कीर्तिता नराः) ॥६७॥

[सुश्रुतसंहिताशारीरस्थानम् - ४. गर्भव्याकरणशारीरम्]

Individuals with Vata dominance tend to have irregular and fragmented sleep patterns. Their sleep cycles are often short, and they may experience disturbances such as sleep talking, sleepwalking, or teeth grinding. Their dreams typically have a light, airy nature, often involving flying or floating sensations. Due to their tendency toward light sleep, they wake up easily during the night and may struggle to fall back asleep. Vata-dominant individuals generally require around 6 to 7 hours of sleep for optimal rest.^[37,38,39]

Pitta Dosha and Sleep

पित्तमुष्णं तीक्ष्णं द्रवं विस्रमलं कटुकञ्च | तस्यौष्ण्यात् पित्तला भवन्त्युष्णासहा, उष्णमुखाः, सुकुमारावदातगात्राः , प्रभूतविप्लुव्यङ्गतिलपिडकाः, क्षुत्पिपासावन्तः, क्षिप्रवलीपलितखालित्यदोषाः, प्रायोमृद्वल्पकपिलश्रुलोमकेशाश्च; तैक्ष्ण्यात्तीक्ष्णपराक्रमाः, तीक्ष्णाग्रयः, प्रभूताशनपानाः, क्लेशासहिष्णवो, दन्दशूकाः; द्रवत्वाच्छिथिलमृदुसन्धिमांसाः, प्रभूतसृष्ट्वेदमूत्रपुरीषाश्च; विस्रत्वात् प्रभूतपूतिकक्षास्यशिरःशरीरगन्धाः; कट्वम्लत्वादल्पशुक्रव्यवायापत्याः; त एवङ्गुणयोगात् पित्तला मध्यबला मध्यायुषो मध्यज्ञानविज्ञानवित्तोपकरणवन्तश्च भवन्ति॥९७॥

[चरक संहिता विमानस्थानम् - ८. रोगभिषग्जितीयविमानम्]

पित्तप्रकृतिलक्षणम्-अकालपलितैर्व्याप्तो धीमान्स्वेदी च रोषणः| ज्योतिषां द्र ष्ट पित्तप्रकृतिको नरः ॥२१॥

[शाङ्गधरसंहिता/पूर्वखण्डम् -आहारादिगतिकथनम्]

पित्तप्रकृतिस्तु स्वेदनो दुर्गन्धः पीतशिथिलाङ्गस्ताम्रनखनयनतालुजिह्वौष्ठपाणिपादतलो दुर्भगो वलीपलितखालित्यजुष्टो बहुभुगुष्णद्वेषी क्षिप्रकोपप्रसादो मध्यबलो मध्यायुश्च भवति ॥६८॥ मेधावी निपुणमतिर्विगृह्य वक्ता तेजस्वी समितिषु दुर्निवारवीर्यः | सुप्तः सन् कनकपलाशकर्णिकारान् सम्पश्येदपि च हुताशविद्युदुल्काः ॥६९॥ न भयात् प्रणमेदनतेष्वमृदुः प्रणतेष्वपि सान्त्वनदानरुचिः | भवतीह सदा व्यथितास्यगतिः स भवेदिह पित्तकृतप्रकृतिः ॥७०॥ (भुजङ्गोलूकगन्धर्वयक्षमार्जारवानरैः | व्याघ्रर्क्षनकुलानूकैः पैत्तिकास्तु नराःस्मृताः) ॥७१॥

[सुश्रुतसंहिताशारीरस्थानम् - ४. गर्भव्याकरणशारीरम्]

People with a predominant Pitta Dosha experience relatively moderate yet light sleep. Although they get a sufficient amount of rest, they often compromise on sleep when engaged in work or other activities. Their dreams tend to be intense, vivid, and sometimes aggressive. If they wake up at night, they usually find it easy to go back to sleep unless their mind is overly active or stressed. Those with Pitta dominance typically need 7 to 8 hours of sleep.^[40,41,42]

Kapha Dosha and Sleep

श्लेष्मा हि स्निग्धश्लक्ष्णमृदुमधुरसारसान्द्रमन्दस्तिमितगुरुशीतविज्जलाच्छः| तस्य स्नेहाच्छलेष्मलाः स्निग्धाङ्गाः, श्लक्ष्णत्वाच्छलक्ष्णाङ्गाः, मृदुत्वाद्दृष्टिसुखसुकुमारावदातगात्राः, माधुर्यात् प्रभूतशुक्रव्यवायापत्याः, सारत्वात् सारसंहतस्थिरशरीराः, सान्द्रत्वादुपचितपरिपूर्णसर्वाङ्गाः, मन्दत्वान्मन्दचेष्टाहारव्याहाराः, स्तैमित्यादशीघ्रारम्भक्षोभविकाराः, गुरुत्वात् साराधिष्ठितावस्थितगतयः, शैत्यादल्पक्षुत्तृष्णासन्तापस्वेददोषाः, विज्जलत्वात् सुश्लिष्टसारसन्धिबन्धनाः, तथाऽच्छत्वात्

प्रसन्नदर्शनाननाः प्रसन्नस्निग्धवर्णस्वराश्च भवन्ति। त एवङ्गुणयोगाच्छ्लेष्मला बलवन्तो वसुमन्तो विद्यावन्त ओजस्विनः शान्ता आयुष्मन्तश्च भवन्ति॥९६॥

[चरक संहिता विमानस्थानम् - ८. रोगभिषग्जितीयविमानम्]

श्लेष्मप्रकृतिलक्षणम्-गम्भीरबुद्धिः स्थूलाङ्गः स्निग्धकेशो महाबलः | श्लेष्मप्रकृतिको नरः ॥२२॥

[शाङ्गधरसंहिता/पूर्वखण्डम् -आहारादिगतिकथनम्]

श्लेष्मप्रकृतिस्तु दूर्वेन्दीवरनिस्त्रिंशद्ग्राहिरिष्टकशरकाण्डानामन्यतमवर्णः सुभगः प्रियदर्शनो मधुरप्रियः कृतज्ञो धृतिमान् सहिष्णुरलोलुपो बलवांश्चिरग्राही दृढवैरश्च भवति ॥७२॥ शुक्लाक्षः स्थिरकुटिलालिनीलकेशो लक्ष्मीवान् जलदमृदङ्गसिंहघोषः | सुप्तः सन् सकमलहंसचक्रवाकान् सम्पश्येदपि च जलाशयान् मनोज्ञान् ॥७३॥ रक्तान्तनेत्रः सुविभक्तगात्रः स्निग्धच्छविः सत्त्वगुणोपपन्नः | क्लेशक्षमो मानयिता गुरूणां ज्ञेयो बलासप्रकृतिर्मनुष्यः ॥७४॥ (दृढशास्त्रमतिः स्थिरमित्रधनः परिगण्य चिरात् प्रददाति बहु | परिनिश्चितवाक्यपदः सततं गुरुमानकरश्च भवेत् स सदा ॥७५॥ ब्रह्मरुद्रेन्द्रवरुणैः सिंहाश्वगजगोवृषैः | तार्क्ष्यहंससमानूकाः श्लेष्मप्रकृतयो नराः) ॥७६॥

[सुश्रुतसंहिताशारीरस्थानम् - ४. गर्भव्याकरणशारीरम्]

Kapha-dominant individuals enjoy deep, restful sleep and often feel heavy and sluggish upon waking. Even though they do not require excessively long sleep durations, they have a tendency to oversleep if undisturbed. This can lead to a feeling of lethargy upon waking. People with a Kapha constitution generally need 8 to 9 hours of sleep to maintain balance and well-being. [43,44,45]

DISCUSSION

Nidra is a fundamental aspect of health, recognized as one of the three pillars of life in Ayurveda, alongside Ahara and Brahmacharya. In the modern era, sleep has gained significant attention due to its crucial role in maintaining physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Ayurveda emphasizes Nidra not merely as a passive state but as an active and restorative phase necessary for sustaining life and promoting overall health.

The Ayurvedic classics, including Charaka Samhita, Sushrut Samhita, and Ashtanga Hridaya, provide a detailed understanding of Nidra. These texts classify sleep based on its causative factors and effects on the body and mind. Charaka Samhita categorizes sleep into physiological (Swabhavika Nidra), pathological (due to imbalance of Doshas like Tamobhava, Kaphaja Nidra), and sleep induced by external factors (like drug-induced sleep). Sushrut further describes the physiological role of sleep in tissue repair, mental clarity, and metabolic balance.

From a physiological perspective, Nidra is considered essential for cellular rejuvenation, enhancing Ojas, and ensuring the smooth functioning of Dhatus. It influences hormonal balance, digestion, immune strength, and mental stability. Samyak Nidra promotes Sukha, Bala and Jivana, whereas Asamyak Nidra leads to Dukha, Karshya and various health disorders.

In the contemporary world, increasing stress levels, erratic work schedules, and digital exposure have disrupted natural sleep patterns, leading to lifestyle disorders like insomnia, metabolic syndrome, and mental health issues. Ayurveda offers a holistic approach to restoring healthy sleep through Dinacharya, Ritucharya and the use of herbs like Ashwagandha, Brahmi, and Tagara, which promote natural and restorative sleep.

Thus, Nidra is not just a state of rest but a key determinant of health, longevity, and overall vitality, making it imperative to examine and regulate sleep for a balanced and disease-free life. The concept of Tamodbhava Nidra, from a modern perspective, aligns with a comatose state, where an individual is unable to carry out virtuous activities. Sleshma Samudbhava Nidra can be associated with drowsiness induced by substances such as antidepressants, antihistamines, antipsychotics, and anticonvulsants. Nidra resulting from Sharira Srama Sambhava corresponds to ATP breakdown in the body, leading to an accumulation of adenosine, which promotes sleep. Increased physical activity during the day also contributes to better sleep at night. Agantuki Nidra refers to cases where the cause of sleep remains unidentified, sometimes serving as a precursor to death. The concept

of Vyadhi Anuvartini, in a modern context, relates to cytokines produced by immune cells during infections, which induce sleep. Ratri Svabhava Prabhava Nidra aligns with sleep regulated by melatonin, a hormone that is produced at night and degraded during daylight.

In modern science, sleep is categorized into NREM and REM phases, consisting of five distinct stages. The encroachment of work hours into sleep time, coupled with rising stress levels, has contributed to a decline in overall sleep duration. Just as a balanced diet is essential for well-being, adequate sleep plays a crucial role in maintaining optimal health. Chronic sleep deprivation can lead to the deterioration of a healthy individual's condition, increasing the risk of various diseases. Understanding sleep patterns is vital for the early detection of sleep disorders, highlighting its importance in modern healthcare.

Relation between Deha Prakriti and Nidra

The Acharyas, in the Samhitas, have described the symptoms of Nidra based on individuals with Ek Doshaj Prakriti, where a single Dosha dominates. Elements such as stress, lifestyle, profession, mental state, and Manas Prakriti play a significant role in shaping Nidra patterns. Additionally, hereditary and developmental aspects—including Jatyadi Prakriti, as well as physiological influences like Shukra, Shonit, Garbhashaya, Kaal, and Matru Ahar-Vihar—contribute to the overall constitution of an individual. These factors collectively impact the balance of Manas and Sharir Doshas, leading to potential disruptions in physiological functions, including sleep regulation.

Vata-dominant individuals tend to sleep less due to the inherent qualities of Vata dosha, which include ruksha, laghu, chala, sukshma and ashukari. These characteristics affect both the mind and body, making such individuals prone to light and easily disturbed sleep. They often experience restlessness, overthinking, and mental hyperactivity, particularly at night, which interferes with their ability to fall and stay asleep. Additionally, their heightened sensitivity to stress, irregular routines, and external stimuli like noise or light further aggravates Vata and disrupts sleep. In Ayurveda, restful sleep is primarily governed by Kapha dosha, known for its heavy, stable, and calming nature. Since Vata is the opposite of Kapha in quality, an excess of Vata reduces the calming influence necessary for deep, restorative sleep. As a result, Vata-predominant individuals often experience shorter, lighter, and more fragmented sleep patterns unless they follow routines and diets that help to pacify Vata.^[46,47] According to Sharangadhara Samhita, a person of Pitta Prakriti is described as intelligent, prone to sweating, quick-tempered, and sometimes experiences premature greying of hair (akalapalita). In terms of sleep, it is mentioned that such individuals often have vivid dreams, sometimes even involving light or fire, indicating heightened internal activity and tejas (fire element). Pitta, being hot, sharp, and intense by nature, influences the mental state, often leading to moderate but not excessive sleep. Unlike Kapha types who tend to sleep deeply and Vata types who sleep lightly or insufficiently, Pitta individuals usually sleep for a reasonable duration but may wake up feeling hot, irritable, or mentally overactive. Their sleep can be disturbed by factors such as heat, late-night mental work, or emotional stress. Hence, Pitta-dominant individuals benefit from a cooling and calming bedtime routine, such as avoiding spicy foods at night, reducing screen time, and sleeping in a cool, peaceful environment to maintain balanced and restful sleep.³³ In relation to Kaphaj Dehik Prakriti individuals, Excessive intake of fatty and oily foods results in an abnormal buildup of Medas (body fat) and aggravation of Kapha Dosha in the body. According to Ayurvedic principles, this imbalance leads to Srotorodha—obstruction in various bodily channels (srotas)—which in turn hampers the free flow of vital energies and nutrients. As a result, individuals may experience symptoms such as a sense of heaviness, reduced physical agility, sluggishness, and a lack of motivation. One of the prominent manifestations of this Kapha dominance is AtiNidra or hypersomnolence, characterized by an excessive tendency to sleep beyond physiological needs. This not only affects daily productivity but can also contribute to a worsening cycle of metabolic disorders and lifestyle-related diseases. Therefore, maintaining a balanced diet and regulating Kapha is essential for preserving alertness and overall vitality.^[48]

DISCUSSION

Based Dosha Vriddhi Kshaya over sleep quality

According to Sushruta Samhita, Nidra is deeply influenced by the balance or imbalance of the three doshas—

Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. Each dosha carries specific gunas that affect the body and mind, and their disturbance can lead to characteristic changes in sleep patterns.^[49]

When Vata dosha is aggravated (vata vriddhi), it leads to conditions such as Nidranasha (insomnia or complete loss of sleep). This is because Vata is light, mobile, and dry in nature. These qualities create restlessness, anxiety, overthinking, and an inability to calm the mind, all of which interfere with falling asleep or maintaining continuous sleep. People with Vata imbalance often wake up frequently, sleep lightly, or suffer from racing thoughts, especially at night.

In cases of Pitta vriddhi (increase in Pitta dosha), the individual typically experiences Alpa Nidra, or reduced and disturbed sleep. Pitta, being hot, sharp, and intense, affects the mind by increasing irritability, ambition, and mental activity. Though these individuals may fall asleep, their sleep tends to be short, fragmented, or accompanied by vivid or disturbing dreams. They may wake up feeling hot, thirsty, or mentally agitated, especially during the Pitta kala (midnight to early morning).

Conversely, Kapha vriddhi (increased Kapha dosha) is associated with Tandra (drowsiness) and excessive sleep (AtiNidra). Kapha is heavy, stable, cool, and moist—qualities that promote grounding and calmness, which are conducive to deep sleep. When Kapha is in excess, it dulls the senses, slows down metabolism, and increases lethargy. This leads to a constant feeling of heaviness, desire to sleep during the day, and prolonged night time sleep. Though sleep in Kapha dominance may be deep, it is often non-refreshing and makes the person feel sluggish upon waking.

In summary, Vata aggravation leads to insomnia, Pitta to short and disturbed sleep, and Kapha to excessive sleep and drowsiness. Proper sleep hygiene in Ayurveda involves pacifying the aggravated dosha through diet, lifestyle, and therapies to restore balanced sleep, which is considered one of the pillars of health (Trayopasthambha).

CONCLUSION

Understanding the patient's Dehik Prakriti and assessing the state of doshic imbalance plays a pivotal role in the Ayurvedic management of sleep disorders. Since sleep is closely influenced by the predominance of Vata, Pitta, and Kapha Dehik prakriti, evaluating these factors allows for a more individualized and root-cause-based approach to treatment. Vata dominance leads to insomnia and fragmented sleep, Pitta aggravation causes short and disturbed sleep, while Kapha excess results in excessive sleep and lethargy. By identifying these patterns, clinicians can recommend appropriate dietary, lifestyle, and herbal interventions to restore balance and improve sleep quality. Therefore, the integration of prakriti and dosha analysis into clinical practice not only enhances therapeutic effectiveness but also supports the broader goal of holistic and sustainable patient care in Ayurveda.

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