GRANDEUR VIEW ON SLEEP WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ITS ROLE IN SWASTHA RAKSHNA

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ABSTRACT

Sleep is the best meditation and medicine. (Dalai Lama) Nidra is one of the standing pillars of life for every individual. Ahara, Nidra and Bhramcharya have been delineated by Acharya Charaka for the upkeep of health and life. In today’s busy schedule no one takes optimum care of these Upstambhas especially sleep. That is why our society is suffering from different types of sleep disorders and other diseases that are directly or indirectly linked with Nidra. In this hectic world all these pillars are manufactured in unhygienic base and used also same. Now a day’s the working patterns and stressful lifestyle of the individual affects sleep to the large extent is affected. This is because regimen prescribed in Ayurvedic classics are not followed properly. Therefore, homeostasis of the body is disturbed due to disturbance in circadian rhythm or biological clock. So the various physical and mental disorders are related to Nidra. Through this article, I have made an endeavor to evaluate any related relevant point that directly links sleep with Swastha state of individual or any other type of effect of lifestyle on Nidra.

KEYWORDS: Nidra, Upstambha, Ayurveda, Swastha, sleep, Vegavedharna, lifestyle.

INTRODUCTION

For you to sleep well at night, the aesthetic, the quality, has to be carried all the way through. (Steve Jobs). Health depends upon the main constitution of body i.e. Dosha, Dhatu & Mala. Upstambha are elaborated in Ayurveda for the proper well being of individual. Sleep is one of the important pillars of life. And the basic importance of sleep is in the maintenance of health and long life. Nidra is rejuvenates cells, tissues, various systems of body as well as Mana.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. The main objective of this study is to judge the role of sleep in maintenance of health and prevention disease.
2. To establish any type of link between sleep and Swastha stage and its Rakshna. By this I am trying to encourage the people to change sleeping pattern.

This conceptual study will be helpful in the various progressive survey studies.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

1. Only textual materials have been used for this study from which various references have been collected.
2. Modern texts and related websites have also been searched.

CONCEPTUAL STUDY

Upstambha are the three in number viz, Ahara, Nidra & Bhramcharya (celibacy). Among these, Ahara mainly affects physical status of the body. But celibacy mainly affects our mind. While sleep affects both the physical status & mind. That is why Sleep plays important role for both type of health (physical & mental). Nidra is as important as food, therefore we must know the concept of sleep.1 In Ayurveda Nidra is the second Upstambha.

Definition: Nidra is that state of the body and mind where in the sense organs are divorced of the sense objects from their respective senses. This phenomenon is mainly due to Klima or fatigue of the body and mind. Vagbhat states that Nidra is Tamoo moola and Tamonayee (caused by, and full of Tamas). Since it is generally an exhausted state of mind and body we generally sleep at night.[1]

PHYSIOLOGY OF NIDRA- As per Charak physical & mental fatigue is the main cause of sleep when mind & sense organs gets exhausted, then sense organs cannot conjugate with their objects & this fatigue of mind & sense organs leads to Nidra.[2] And as per Sasrurt elevation of Tamas quality & fatigue induces sleep. Heart & brain is the seat of mind. Sattva, Rajas & Tamas are qualities of mind. Tamas quality is responsible for

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sleep while Rajas & Sattva Guna are responsible for awakening stage.[4]

Scholars have stated that being supported by well regulated Upstambhas, the body is endowed with strength, complexion & growth until the full span of life, provided a person does not indulge in such regimen as are detrimental to health.[5] Acharya Chakrapani stated that the main factor to support anything is main supporter i.e. Stambha which is lying very near. But those factors which support the main supporters are called sub-supporters i.e. Upstambha. The Tri-Stambhas (i.e. Vata, Pitta, Kapha) support life & health indirectly. And Upstambhas mainly increase strength of Stambhas.[6] Vagbhata has also supported the view of Charak in his accounts. He has also stated the number of Upstambhas are three but he mentioned Abrahamacharya as stated by Charak in place of Brahamcharya.[7]

Mechanism of Nidra- Sleep is a state of consciousness that differs from alertness, wakefulness by a loss of critical reactivity to events in the environment with a profound alteration in the respiration etc. When the sense organs are exhausted due to exertion and at the same time the Mano-vaha Srotasa are obstructed by Sleshma the person goes to sleep.

Importance of Sleep- More than half of the life is invariably spent in the sleep hence if it is not enjoyed properly it may lead to several disturbances and at the same time if it is properly enjoyed it proves most beneficial to the life. Thus, Sukha, Dukha, Pushiti, Kaarsya, Bala dourbalya, Purushatva, Klaibyata, Gayna, Agunaana, Jeevitha and Mrityu are all dependent upon the properly and improperly enjoyed sleep.[8]

Any anomaly in the sleep whether it is Heenayoga (insufficient), Atiyoga (excessive) or Madhya yoga (irregular), is likely to lead to disease and death. So, it shows that sleep if properly enjoyed keeps the body healthy and mind sharp and sound. Chraka also explained in texts about the benefits of sleep that is happiness or misery, nourishment or malnourishment, strength or weakness, potency or impotency, life or death and intellect depend on sleep. Therefore one should take proper sleep.[8]

Types of Sleep[9]-(by Charak)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of sleep</th>
<th>Cause of sleep</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Tamabhava</td>
<td>Excess of Tamas quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Shesha-samudbhava</td>
<td>Excess of kapha Doshha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sharir-manas-shrama-sambhava</td>
<td>Mental &amp; physical fatigue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Agantuki</td>
<td>Adventitious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Vyadh- anuvartini</td>
<td>Sequelae to diseases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ratri-swabhava-prabhava</td>
<td>Occurring during night</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Benefits of Nidra- Acharya Susrata has said that by using proper and equal amount of Nidra, the person will be free from disease, will have a pleasant mind, endowed with strength, color or complexion and virility.[11]

- As per Bhav Prakash, Nidra after meal, enhances Vata and Pitta while vitiates Kapha. It resolute the body and bring comfort level.[12]
- As per Bhash- Mishra Nidra is best for alleviating Pitta Dosh.[12]
- As per Kasyapa comfortable Nidra is essential for milk production in mother.[14]

Effects of Sleep
Sleep is caused due to excess of Kapha Dosh and Tamas. Sleeping during night is healthier as it reduces Tamas and heaviness of Kapha Dosh and produces dryness in the body. Proper sleep at night creates lightness in the body and the person then becomes fresh and starts all the activities with good strength.[15]

Nidra as non suppressible urge- it is included in 13 non-suppressible urges. He has further said that various types of diseases occur by the suppression of these urges. For living a normal Swastha life and protection of good life, it is important and necessity of today’s time to take care of the sleep. Non-suppressible urges are the symptoms of many physiological actions. By suppressing those, any pathology can be created in the body. That is why scholars have indicated that one desirous of preventing the diseases, (produced by suppression of non-suppressible urges) should not suppress these natural urges.[16]

Functions of Sleep at different Dhata level
Rasa: Pushiti and Varnaprada,
Rakta: Varna, Agnidipti,
Mamsa: Pushiti and Balas,
Meda: Attractiveness (Shriman),
Asthi: Bala,
Majja: Varna, Utsaha,
Shukra: Vrishata, Utsaha,
Ojas: Jivana, Manasa: Jyana and Sukra suppress these natural urges.

Prakrit also determine Nidra pattern. An individual of Kapha Prakriti gets more sleep which is sound while a person of Vata Prakriti gets less sleep and may be disturbed.

Sleep pattern according to Vaya

Age  Dominance of Dosha

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sleep Pattern</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balyawastha (Childhood)</td>
<td>Kapha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atinidra- Excess</td>
<td>Pitta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuwawastha (Adulthood)</td>
<td>Vata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpanidra - Less</td>
<td>Vata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vridhawastha (Oldage)</td>
<td>Vata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nidranasha - Insomnia</td>
<td>Vata</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Causes of *Nidra Naasa-* (insomnia) mental tension, uncomfortable bed, and unpreparedness of mind, dry foods, time unsuitable for sleep, malnutrition, or any other long disease or *Vataja* disorder.

*Nidra naasa* creates many symptoms of diseases which make obstacles in the path of *Swatha* maintainee. Individual feel pain all over the body, feeling of heaviness of head, frequent yawning, feeling of lassitude, tiresomeness, drowsiness.

**SLEEP**—According to modern medical science sleep is a state of reversible unconsciousness from which a person can be aroused. Sleep is the state of body in which cerebral activity slows down. There is reduction in sensory and motor activity hence reticular activating system (RAS) produces a state called as sleep.

**Requirement of Sleep**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages</th>
<th>Timing</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New born baby</td>
<td>16-20 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>12-14 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>7-9 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old age</td>
<td>5 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stages of Sleep-a) - NREM- non rapid eye movement  
b) - REM- rapid eye movement

There is continuous cycle of NREM & REM sleep stages throughout the night. In small children and infants REM sleep increases neuronal activity. This is useful for maturation of brain, as the individual grows REM sleep decreases.[17]

**Neurotransmitters and sleep**

Serotonin which is a neurotransmitter is required to induce sleep. Decreased level of serotonin produces insomnia i.e. lack of sleep or disturbed sleep.

**DISCUSSION**

In *Ayurveda Ahara, Nidra and Bramcharya* are the factors which are responsible for the maintenance of *Tri-Doshas* or and therefore they are as known as *Tri-Upstambhas*. These *Upstambhas* support and maintain the life through *Tri-Doshas*. *Nidra* has psychosomatic approach. *Nidra* is equally necessary for the maintenance of body as well as mind. *Nidra* helps to maintain the life, to gain divine knowledge and to achieve salvation. *Darshanas* also explained and mentioned that *Nidra* is the stage of increase of *Tamo-guna* and considered as ignorance. *Tri-Doshas* and *Nidra* are conjointly dependent on each other like *Nidra* affects *Doshas* directly and in this way it affects functions of *Doshas* indirectly.

*Nidra* decreases the catabolism and is responsible for the energy storage that is why *Nidra* is said to be responsible for the body nourishment. And secondly, *Nidra* is the cause of physical and mental *Vaydhikashmatava*. *Ojas* is also maintained by *Nidra*.

Improper *Nidra* is the cause of *Abala* in both the sense i.e. weakness and immunodeficiency. If, a person does not follow the prescribed regimen he may suffer with various disorders. The various diseases have been mentioned due to suppression of *Nidra-vega* e.g. *Jrimbha*, *Anga-mardu*, *Tandra*, *Akshi-gaurav*, etc. besides these, *Udavarta* is the main disorders which is caused by suppression of sleep. So, have a nice sleep!

**CONCLUSION**

In my study of *Nidra* and its importance I have come to the conclusion that maturity of present day life style diseases like obesity, depression, insomnia, illusion, headaches and even some endocrine disorders like DM, thyroid disorders have a direct link with the quantity and quality of sleep. Sleep cannot be taken for granted. Efficiency of human body both as physical and mental depends on sleep. An optimum amount of sleep depending on the working hours and age is always advisable for disease free life.

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