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A CONCEPTUAL STUDY TO UNDERSTAND RELATION BETWEEN NIDRA AND AGNIBALA –A REVIEW ARTICLE.

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ABSTRACT

Nidra (sleep) performs an essential role in the well being and good health throughout the life of a person. Good quality and good quantity of sleep provides a person with many health benefits from good health to healthy physical and mental functions. A good and sound sleep manifests as healthy functioning of *Agnibala* (Digestive Fire). A night of relaxed and good sleep is remarkably important. *Acharya Charak* explains that *Nidra* or sleep is the combined state of tired mind and body. It simply means that when mind gets exhausted or tired from its work and indriyas withdraws themselves from their objects due to heavy work load, then the individual sleep. In the present scenario some odd lifestyles habits like late night work, late night study, or staying awake at night due to any reason, hampers one's sufficient quantity of sleep which as a results affected the *Agnibala* of an individuals. According to our classical texts, *Ratri Jagran* is assumed to aggravate *Vata*, which is responsible for *Vikrit Agnibala*. In *Ayurveda*, *Ahara*, *Nidra* and *Brahmacharya* are given primary importance under tripod of life ie. '*Trayopstambha*'. Adequate sleep, like proper eating, is extremely vital for body maintenance. *DiptaAgni*, or good *Agnibala*, is achieved when a person obtains enough sleep at night. Present article emphasized on role of *Nidra* in maintenance of *Agnibala* and to see relation between *Nidra* and *Agnibala*.

Keywords : *Ayurveda, Nidra, Agnibala, DiptaAgni, Ratri Jagran, Trayopstambha, Sleep.*

Introduction

Ayurveda is an eternal system of medicine, is known for its multidimensional approach towards mankind. One whose *dosas*, *agni*, and functions of *dhatu* and *malas* are in the state of equilibrium and who has cheerful mind, intellect and sense organs is termed as ‘*Swastha*’ (healthy)^[1]. Ayurvedic classics give special emphasis on three important values which have been considered as the important conducive factors for maintenance of life and health. Ayurved considered *Ahara* (food), *Nidra* (Sleep) and *Brahmacharya* (Good conduct) are the three important *Upastambha* (sub-pillars) of healthy life^[2].

Out of these three *Upastambhas*, *Nidra* is one of the important supporting pillar significant for life as it affects our mental, physical, and emotional well-being. When mind is exhausted and *indriyas* withdraw themselves from their object then the individual sleep^[3].

AGNI (FIRE IN LIVING BODY) – *Agni* is defined as the entity which is responsible for all digestive and metabolic processes in the human beings. One lives long, free from disorders if the *agni* is functioning properly (*yukte chiram jivayati anamayah*). In fact, according to *ayurveda*, when *agni* is extinguished, death soon follows. Impaired *agni* is the root of all imbalances and diseases. The *agnibala* (status of *agni*) depends upon various factors like age, constitution of the individual, seasonal rhythm and so on.

According to **Acharya Sushrut**, *Nidra* taken at proper time gives us *pushti* (good physique), *varna* (glowness of skin), *bala* (power), *utsaha*, *agnidipti* and *dhatu samya*^[4].

According to **Bhavprakash**, Sound sleep maintains proper built of the body, complexion, vigour, valour and good digestive capacity^[5].

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the role of *Nidra* in promotion and maintenance of the health and wellness.
2. To understand the concept of *Agnibala* and its role in maintenance of health and wellness.
3. To understand the relation between *Nidra* and *Agnibala* in healthy individuals.

Material & Methods

Review of literature regarding *Nidra* and *Agnibala* are collected, compiled and interpreted from *Bhrihatrayi* and their commentaries.

Systematic Review

NIDRA /SLEEP

Ayurveda is an ancient life science, Its main aim is to protect the health of healthy persons as well as to subside diseases of the diseased persons, *Ayurveda* concentrate on maintain health of healthy persons, for that purpose *Trayaupastamba* explained (*Ahara, Nidra, Bramhacharya*).

Ayurveda is the holistic science deals with the knowledge of *Ayu*, where the *Ayu* refers to the life. *Ayurveda* is the only media to attain the *sukha-ayu* by the *shareera*. The *shareera* is formed by *Tri-dosa, Sapta-dhatu and Tri-mala*.

Tri-dosa i.e *Vata Pitta and Kapha* are the basic pillars of the *shareera* and play very important role and responsible for the sustainining and destructing the *shareer* during their *samaavasta* and *vikruta avasta* respectively. In relation to *dosa* next important factors are the *trayopstambha* of *shareera* ie. *Ahara, Nidra, and Brahmacharya* are three variables that play a significant part in the sustaining of a living organism's health and are thus referred to be subpillars (*Upastambha*) of human physiology.⁶

Sleep, according to *Acharya Kashyapa*, is one of the characteristics of a healthy man⁷, and it has been said that happiness and sorrow, growth and wasting, strength and weakness, virility and impotence, knowledge and ignorance, as well as the existence of life and its cessation, are all dependent on sleep⁸.

Not only this, *Nidra* is important for fetus. *Bhavamishra* has mentioned that during the pregnancy, when the mother sleeps, the fetus in the womb enjoys better rest and comfort.⁹

These three properly indulge support the body constantly just like the house is supported by the pillars, *Nidra* (Sleep) is one of the *Traya upastamba*, according to ancient epics (three pillars). Along with *Ahara* (diet) and *Brahmacharya* (celibacy), *Acharya Charaka* has elaborated on its significance¹⁰.

As a result, it is critical that all of these methods be used wisely in order to maintain excellent health, with healthy sleep being one of them. According to *Acharya charaka nidra* is one among the *Adharniya vega*. *Nidra* and *Anidra* are the sources of happiness and sorrow, growth and waste, strength and weakness, virility and sterility, wisdom and ignorance, and life and death, according to *Acharya Vagbhat* in *Sutrasthana*.¹¹

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as "a condition of complete physical, mental, or social well-being, rather than the absence of disease or sickness".¹²

Sleep quality has been disrupted in recent years as a result of changing lifestyles and environmental variables, which may lead to an unhealthy state. As a result, adequate sleep quality is very important for overall health and well-being.

TABLE-1: Various types of *Nidra* according to different *Acharyas*:

ACCORDING TO <i>ACHARYA CHARAK</i> ¹³	ACCORDING TO <i>ACHARYA SUSHRUT</i> ¹⁴	ACCORDING TO <i>ACHARYA VAGBHATA</i> ¹⁵
1. <i>Tamobhava</i>	1) <i>Vaishnavi Nidra</i>	1) <i>Kalasvabhawajanya Nidra</i>
2. <i>SleshmaSamudbhava</i>	2) <i>Vaikariki Nidra</i>	2) <i>Aamayajanya Nidra</i>
3. <i>Manah-sharir-shrama-sambhava</i>	3) <i>Tamsi Nidra</i>	3) <i>Chitta- khedajanya Nidra</i>
4. <i>Aagantuki</i>		4) <i>Deha- khedaajanya Nidra</i>
5. <i>Vyadhyaanuvartini</i>		5) <i>Kaphajanya Nidra</i>
6. <i>Ratrisvabhava-prabhava</i>		6) <i>Aagantuki Nidra</i>
		7) <i>Tamobhava Nidra</i>

Concept of Sleep - Circadian cycles and sleep have an impact on a number of physiological systems, including digestion. The digestive system has intrinsic rhythms that interact with the circadian rhythm in a dynamic way. Appetite, nutrition absorption, and metabolism are all influenced by sleep and circadian variables. Intestinal illnesses such as reflux, ulcers, inflammatory bowel disease, irritable bowel syndrome, and gastrointestinal cancer may be exacerbated by sleep and circadian rhythm disruption.

Agni

Definition: The digestive element present in human body at microscopic level is called *agni*.

Function: The body-fire is responsible for lifespan, complexion, strength, health, enthusiasm, corpulence, lustre, immunity, energy, heat processes, and vital breath. If this fire is extinguished, one dies; if it is working properly, one lives a long life devoid of disorders; if it is disordered, one becomes ill; thus, the altered state of *agni* is the fundamental cause of all ailments¹⁶.

Types: *Agni* is considered to be present everywhere, digestion is taking place (even at microscopic level). There are 3 sets of *agni* in our body.

1. *Jatharagni* (digestive strength):-

Jatharagni is also called as *pachakagni* or *kayagni*. It works through the medium of *pachakapitta* and performs primary digestion. The place of this *agni* is in small intestine. *Agni* cooks the food, cooks the *doshas* in the absence of food, cooks the *dhatu*s (tissues) when the *doshas* become depleted, and cooks (cuts shorts) the life itself when the *dhatu*s become depleted. *Pranavayu*, *samanavayu* and *apanvayu* helps *jatharagni*¹⁷.

2. *Dhatvagni* :

This *agni* is responsible for the formation of *dhatu*s as well as in increase or decrease of *dhatu*s. When *dhatvagni* is in normal state, it leads to the formation of proper *dhatu*s.

3. *Bhutagni*:-

Because the human body is made up of five fundamental elements, it needs foods that include all of these elements for growth and development. Each of these elements needs *bhutagni* for their transformation e.g. food containing earth element are digested by *parthivagni*.

Examination of *Jatharagni* (Digestive strength):

The digestive fire is of four types¹⁸:-

Agni (digestive fire) is classified into four types based on its intensity: *tikshna* (intense), *mand* (mild), *sama* (regular), and *visham* (irregular).

***Tikshnagni* :** - It allows person to eat, when he likes to eat. Even if all rules and regulations of eating are neglected, this digestive fire remains functioning properly¹⁹.

***Mandagni* :** - This type of *agni* has got the contrary characters to that of *tikshnagni*. It means if rules and regulations of eating are disturbed even to minutest extent, this digestive fire will get vitiated²⁰.

***Samagni* :** - It digests well, if the rules and regulations are followed meticulously. If not, it vitiates²¹.

***Vishamagni* :** - It sometimes vitiates even after proper care of all rules and regulations of eating and sometimes it offers astonishing results of functioning properly even if the rules and regulations of eating are ignored²².

These four *agni* (*jatharagni*) categories are present in four different types of people. People with a normal constitution, with *vata*, *pitta*, and *kapha* in balance, have regular fire; individuals with a *vatika* constitution, however, have irregular fire because *vata* has subdued the seat of fire. Similarly, *pitta* subdues the seat of fire in people with *pitta* constitutions, causing the fire to become more intense. The seat of fire is subdued by *kapha* in those with a *sleshmika* constitution, and the fire becomes mild²³.

INTER-RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN *NIDRA* AND *AGNIBALA*

Only ingestion of food is not enough. It should be properly digested and assimilated for the nourishment. Improper sleep due to reasons like shift working, late night sleep etc leads to digestive disturbances. Conversely sleeping at night and for adequate time helps in digestion (*AgniDipti*). Sleep has a positive effect on digestion and metabolism. All leads to proper nourishment and health (*Dhatusamya*).

In the aetiology of *Ajirna*, *Acharya* has already said that *Swapnaviparyaya* is one of the key causes of *Ajirna* (loss of sleep at nights or sleeping during day). Sleep deprivation also makes you more vulnerable to stress, which can have a substantial impact on your digestive system. Many people with irritable bowel syndrome and "sensitive stomach," according to studies, have worsened symptoms the morning following a sleepless night.

The benefits of *Nidra* are highlighted in the *skandapurana*. It claims that *Nidra*, when taken at the right time and in the right amount, improves a person's digesting power. Increased digesting power allows one to consume a larger amount of food, allowing him to boost his body's power. Food digestion does not function properly due to a shortage of *nidra*. Finally, that person does not experience *Agnidipti* (appetite), and *tej* (power) does not increase as a result of insufficient food consumption.

Nidra, according to *Acharya Sushrut*²⁴, offers us *pushti* (good physique), *varna* (skin radiance), *bala* (power), *utsaha*, *Agnidipti*, and *dhatusamya* when consumed at the right moment.

Jagaran induces *rukshata* (dryness) and reduces *kapha dosha* and poison intoxication, according to *Acharya Bhavprakasha*²⁵. *Dhatusamya* is maintained via *samyak nidra* (sleep taken at the appropriate time, i.e. during night). *Pushti*, *bala*, *utsaha*, and *Agnidipti* are also produced.

MODERN EXPLANATION OF RELATION BETWEEN SLEEP AND DIGESTION-

Here, 4 ways lack of sleep consistency can affect gut health:

1. **Lack of sleep can increase stress, which affects the gut-**A lack of sleep can lead to an increase in stress, which has a negative impact on the gut. When you don't get enough sleep, your hormones can become out of whack, causing cortisol, the stress hormone, to surge. "Integumentary permeability disorders, often known as leaky gut, occur when food and poisons flow through the intestine and into the circulation as a result of increased stress." Bloating, inflammation, stomach aches, food sensitivities, and changes in the gut microbiome are all possible side effects.
2. **Lack of sleep can affect dietary choices.** Certain hormones that control hunger can go crazy when you're sleep deprived, leading to an increase in appetite. Not to mention the fact that when you're fatigued, you're more prone to reach for bad foods for instant energy. (Think sugar, trans fats, and

processed carbohydrates.) These foods have the potential to harm your gut health as well as your general health.

3. **Lack of the sleep hormone, melatonin, may be related to GERD.** Melatonin is a hormone that our bodies produce in greater amounts at night to aid sleep. But that's not all: melatonin also aids in gastric motility regulation. It might be difficult to sleep when melatonin levels are awry, and this can contribute to GERD, or gastroesophageal reflux disease. "While there are many variables at play," Dr. Barish explains, "there is a link between a lack of melatonin and GERD." Some people with GERD take melatonin tablets to boost their levels, which helps them sleep and reduces GERD symptoms.
4. **If you stay up too late, you might eat too close to bedtime, which can negatively impact your digestive health.** "You shouldn't consume anything within three hours of going to bed," says the expert. "You don't want your body to be burdened with digestion and absorption while you're sleeping, because that's when your body is supposed to be resting and cleaning up." It may also keep you awake and cause disturbed sleep."

Discussion

When we talk about *nidra* (sleep), in today's era, every person has different and changed life styles. Today one of the most common complaint of youth or people is their inability to get a night of good sleep. A healthy long life of hundred years has been embraced wish of human race from ages. This has been found to be necessary in order to achieve the four basic inclinations of life: *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama*, and *Moksha*. Today's definition of health includes not just the absence of illness, but also a full state of well-being that encompasses an individual's physical, mental, spiritual, and intellectual well-being. In today's generation, people run after materialistic things and due to this they face lot of problems. The commonest problem which people are experiencing today is to get restful and better sleep. A night of good sleep (*nidra*) is not only essential for cherishing good health but it is also mandatory for enhancement of good *Agnibala*. In order to have good *Agnibala*, it is important for individual to get proper sleep at night. An individual should be physically and mentally relaxed in order to get a night of good and sound sleep. *Nidra* (sleep) plays a very essential role in our well-being and good health throughout our life span. When a person gets enough high quality and quantity sleep in his or her daily life, it has a number of advantages, including improved health, a longer lifespan, and protection of mental and physical health. While sleeping, the body is working to support healthy brain functions and maintain the physical health. When an individual consumes good quality of sleep in regular basis it provides proper brain functioning, emotional wellbeing, physical health, and daytime performances and activities. It is good to know that a night of good and relaxed sleep is incredibly important. In fact, sleep is as important as food to our body. These days People are sleeping less than used to did in past as a result of which the sleep quality has decreased. Sleep (*nidra*) is very important for various aspects of functions of brain which includes cognition, memory, concentration, performance and productivity. As a

result of sleep deprivation many sleep disorders can occur such as anxiety, depression, stress etc. and poor digestion, difficulty focusing, excessive daytime sleepiness, lethargy, tiredness, morning headaches etc. can occur. Sleep (*nidra*) is just essential to our growth and development as breathing air. Regardless of what age you are, sleep (*nidra*) plays a vital role in helping your body reset, repair, and regenerate.

Conclusion

- These days people sleep less than they used to in the past, as a result sleep quality has decreased which may be due odd life styles, late night work or any other reasons. These reasons significantly have adverse effect on digestion power or *Agnibala* of an individual which leads to *Ama utapatti* (undigested food).
- *Nidra* (sleep) is very necessary for maintainence of melatonin level, stress level, certain digestive hormone like cortisol level via which digestion of an individual will be controlled.
- Everyone is friendly with the truth that a sound sleep at night makes us feel energetic and recharged for the next day. A night of prolonged bad sleep will lead to the impaired digestion and individual having symptoms like acidity, diminished hunger, feeling of nausea, gas formation, which ultimately leads to *Ama utpatti*. A night of good sleep not only just permits the body to relax and revitalize but it also maintain the good status of *Agnibala*.

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