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Review Article

A Comprehensive Review of *Nasya* Therapy in the Management of *Anidra* (Insomnia)

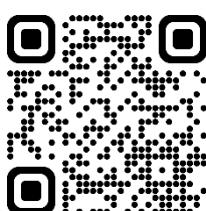
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Abstract

Anidra (Insomnia) is recognized as an independent disease, or in some texts it is mentioned as a prodromal symptom of other conditions such as; *Visha Lakshanas*, *Angamarda*, *Tandra*, *Shiro Roga*, *Akshigaurav* and *Arishta*. Heaviness in eyes, polymyalgia, drowsiness and headaches, etc. are major side effects associated with *Anidra*. Medical science offers several options for the management of such conditions; similarly, Ayurveda also put great emphasis for its management. Pharmacological drugs as well as *Panchakarma* therapies such as-*Brimhana Chikitsa*, *Sirahtarpna*, *Akshitarpna* and *Nasya* are mainly described by Ayurveda philosopher for the management of insomnia. Among these, the role of *Nasya* therapy is explained in this article. In this therapy, medication is administered through the nose, which is considered one of the routes for delivering medication to the head region, serving as a gateway to the brain and central nervous system. *Nasya* gives beneficial results, such as lightness in head, refreshing sleep, cheerful mind, improvement in function of sense organs and normalization of metabolic activity, etc.

Keywords: Ayurveda, *Nasya*, *Anidra*, *Insomnia*



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1. Introduction

Anidra is a disorder characterized by the difficulty in proper sleep and restlessness. In this condition patients fail to sleep, experience feeling of tiredness and wake up early, etc. Fatigue, inability to focus, grogginess and irritability, etc. are major conditions persisted with insomnia. According to modern science imbalance in level of GABA, dopamine and serotonin may lead to insomnia. (1) Causes of *Anidra* may include consumption of *Ruksha Ahara*, overexertion or fasting, anxiety and some other diseases, etc. (2-4)

Sleep arises when sensory impulse slow down or terminated, *Manas* disconnected from the external environment, *Gyanindriya* and *Karmindriya* reaches in relax condition, these all conditions together induce sleep. Withdrawal of sensory awareness and initiation of sleep mechanism helps the brain to transit into sleep state. Contrary to this *Nidravikara* associated with various conditions including *Gauravam*, *Jrumbha*, *Klama* and *Nidrataisava*, etc. (3,4)



Figure 1. Various Therapies for *Anidra*

Poor concentration, lack of coordination, gastrointestinal issues and unhappiness, etc. are also associated with insomnia. *Nidra* is a crucial aspect linked to happiness which also provides mental relaxation. *Nidra* occurs when *Tamoguna* combines with the *Kapha*, leading to the detachment of *Indriyas* and *Manas*. This cycle governed by *Svabhaviki Nidra* and disruption of this cycle leads to the condition of *Anidra*. Ayurveda suggested various therapeutic interventions for *Anidra* as depicted in **Figure 1.** (5-7)

As mentioned above there are various approaches which offers therapeutic benefits in case of insomnia and *Nasya* is one such approach that provides several advantages in *Anidra*. This article further explained role of *Nasya* in *Anidra*.

2. Role of *Nasya* in *Anidra*

In *Anidra* *Vata Dosha* mainly involved, therefore medications which offer *Vata-Shamaka* effect can be recommended for pacifying *Doshas* associated with *Anidra*. *Nasya Karma* in this regard works greatly to facilitate transportation of drug though the nasal route. The procedure involves *Sthanika Abhyanga* for *Purva Karma* which helps to alleviate *Vata* and fatigue. This also relaxes body and mind to bring state of sleep. *Acharyas* suggested oiling the head region for inducing sound sleep. *Swedana* also perform as *Purva Karma* to increase local circulation and facilitate maximum absorption of drug in subsequent procedure. (6-8)

Pradhana Karma is main procedure of therapy in which *Nasya dravya* instilled into the nostrils keeping patient's head in tilted position. This process facilitates drug's transportation into the brain to stimulate olfactory neurons. *Avichchhina Dhara* means a continuous stream of oil should be maintained while administering drug

through nostril to ensure that appropriate volume of drug should reaches to the site of action.

Nasya dravya reaches the *Shringataka Marma* through the vital point connected to the *Siras* of nose and throat. The drug remains in upper part of cavity which further stimulates olfactory neurons and removes vitiated *Doshas*. Stimulation of this can have profound effect on body since it connected greatly with higher centers of the brain. The irritation of nasal route by *Nasya Dravya* stabilizes mind and helps to induce sleep. The olfactory nerve related to the sleep-regulating centers and hypothalamus thus induces mental calmness after receiving medication through *Nasya*. (7-9)

Vata Prakopa mainly leads to sleeplessness; *Nasya*, especially *Brihana* type relives *Vata* as well as provides relief in *Urdhvajatrugata Vikara*. The drugs administered as *Nasya* penetrate and perfuse the brain cells, correct circulation of *Prana*, affecting cerebral and sensory centre to induce sound sleep. *Harita*, stated that the center of sleep is located in the upper nose, *Nasya* therapy affects this centre and imparts soothing effect. This therapy reduces stress and initiation, therefore helps to keep mind relax and calm. Drugs through nostril administration acts on neurotransmitters (serotonin and dopamine) thus reduce grief and fear which are associated with insomnia. Nasal route is effective for drug delivery since it facilitates drug absorption and also nourishes brain cells. Drugs through this route increase *Tarpaka Kapha* and balances morbid *Doshas*. Drug when absorbed through the nasal route they reaches to the vascular pathways via nasal mucosa, this process stimulates olfactory bulb and brain centre to induce sleep. Ancient texts suggested various *Nasya Dravyas* for the management of *Anidra*; these *Dravyas* works differently in the management of insomnia as depicted in **Table 1.** (9-12)

Table 1. Role of *Nasya Dravya* in *Anidra* (13-17)

Nasya Dravya		Role in <i>Anidra</i>
<i>Brahmi (Bacopa monnieri) Taila</i>		Acts as a brain tonic and neuro-activator, enhancing mental clarity and cognitive function. Calms the mind, reducing stress and anxiety.
<i>Ksheerabala Taila</i>		Strengthens nerves, has adaptogenic properties, reduces plasma cortisol levels, and induces sleep by modulating GABA receptors.
<i>Jatamansi (Nardostachysjatamansi) Taila</i>		Provides sedative and calming effects, reduces nervous excitability, and supports mental relaxation and sleep induction.
<i>Ashwagandha (Withania somnifera) Taila</i>		Reduces stress and anxiety, promotes relaxation, and helps in the regulation of sleep patterns.
<i>Shankhapushpi (Convolvulus pluricaulis) Taila</i>		Acts as a <i>Medhya Rasayana</i> , helps in calming the nervous system, and promotes restful sleep.
<i>Brahmi Ghritam</i>		Enhances brain function, nourishes the nervous system, pacifies aggravated <i>Vata Dosha</i> , and supports healthy sleep cycles.

3. Specific *Nasya* for *Anidra*

- ✓ Acharya *Vagbhatta* recommended *Brimhana Nasya* for addressing *Nidranasha* especially geriatric insomnia since drugs used in this approach pacify *Vata Dosha* and *Dhatu Kshaya*.

- ✓ *Ksheerabala Taila* is also used for managing *Vataja* disorders including sleep disturbance. This *Taila* strengthens nerves and possesses anti-stress properties. *Sida cordifolia* also exhibited anxiolytic, anticonvulsant and sedative effects. *Bala Taila* induces sleep by regulating GABA-benzodiazepine receptors positively.

- ✓ *Nasya* with *Brahmi Ghritam* helps to cure conditions like *Unmada* and *Atatvaabhinivesha*. *Brahmi Ghritam* used as brain tonic and acts as neuro-activator. It enhances mental activity, and lipophilic nature of *Ghritam* facilitates absorption of drug to the brain centre. *Ghee* also acts as *Medhya* agent to pacify brain function. This formulation nourishes brain; pacify *Vata Dosha* and *Kapha Dosha*. These events together alleviate stress and improve quality of sleep. (11-13, 18)

4. Conclusion

Anidra (insomnia), recognized either as a disorder or a symptom of other conditions, is associated with symptoms such as heaviness in body and head, headaches, and drowsiness. Ayurveda offers several treatments for *Anidra*, including *Sirahtarpna*, *Akshitarpana*, *Brimhana Chikitsa*, and *Nasya*. *Nasya Karma* can be particularly effective in treating *Anidra* as it enhances the bioavailability of the drug through the nasal route, thereby improving its efficacy. This therapy helps alleviate *Vata* and *Kapha* imbalances by delivering medications through the nostrils, which stimulate olfactory neurons and improve sleep quality. Medications such as *Ksheerabala Taila*, *Brahmi Ghritam*, *Jatamansi Taila*, *Ashwagandha Taila*, and *Shankhapushpi Taila* are commonly used in *Nasya* for their sedative, calming, and neuroprotective properties. These substances help balance neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine, which are often disrupted in insomnia.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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