



EFFICACY OF HOMOEOPATHIC MEDICINES IN SLEEP DISORDERS

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ABSTRACT

Sleep is a fundamental biological process essential for physical health, cognitive performance, emotional well being & overall quality of life. Most adults sleep 7-8 hours per night, thus one third of our lifespan is spent in sleep. Normal sleep is controlled by Reticular activating system in the upper brainstem & diencephalon. Disturbance in sleep pattern results in Sleep disorders.

KEYWORDS

Sleep, Sleep disorders, Insomnia, Sleep apnea, Behaviour, Disorders, Homoeopathy

INTRODCUTION

Adequate sleep supports memory function, immune mechanism, metabolic regulation & emotional stability. To understand sleep disorders, it is essential to understand what is sleep, what are its functions, how sleep is regulated etc. sleep disorders can be simply explained as inability to sleep adequately at night, excessive sleepiness during the day, & behavioral manifestations associated with sleep. Disturbances of sleep are common. Apart from insomnia, patients may complain of excessive daytime sleepiness, disturbed behavior during night time sleep, the parasomnias, or disturbing subjective experiences during sleep.

SLEEP

An early reversible state of relative unresponsiveness & severity which occurs more or less regularly & repetitively each day.

Functions of sleep-

Conservation of energy, Restoration of tissues & growth, Thermoregulation, Regulation of emotions, Neural maturation, Memory & learning.

Regulation of sleep-

Three main processes are responsible for sleep regulation.

1. Homeostatic- the longer an individual remains awake, the sleepier he/she becomes.
2. Circadian- this is closely related with the temperature cycle. Drowsiness occurs when temperature starts to fall, sleepiness decreases & alertness increases as temperature begins to rise.
3. Autonomic nervous system balance- sleep requires decreased sympathetic activation & increased parasympathetic balance. Anything that increases sympathetic outflow eg- coffee, anxious thoughts at bed time etc can delay sleep.

SLEEP DISORDERS

Change in sleeping patterns or habits that can negatively affect health.

The various sleep disorders are divided into-

- a. Insomnia
- b. Hypersomnia- Narcolepsy
- c. Parasomnias & Sleep related movement disorders- Restless Legs Syndrome
- d. Sleep related breathing disorders- Sleep apnea
- e. Circadian Rhythm Sleep-Wake disorders

a. **Insomnia**- is the disorder of initiation &/o maintenance of sleep. This also includes insufficient or poor quality of sleep. It may be acute or chronic & is frequently associated with stress, anxiety, depression, chronic illness or poor sleep habits.

b. **Hypersomnia**- Narcolepsy includes excessive day time sleepiness, sleep attacks during day time, sleep drunkenness which means a person needs much more time to awaken.

c. **Parasomnias**- Parasomnias are abnormal motor behaviors that occur around sleep. They may arise in either REM or non REM sleep with characteristic features & timing.

- i. Non REM Parasomnias-these are due to incomplete arousal from non-REM sleep & manifest as night terrors, sleep walking & sleep drunkenness.
- ii. REM Sleep behavior disorders- here the patients 'act out' their dreams during REM sleep. Patients fight or struggle in their sleep, sometimes cause injury to themselves or their partners.
- iii. Restless leg syndrome- Sleep related movement disorder characterised by an irresistible urge to move the legs.

d. **Sleep related breathing disorders**- Sleep apnea- Here the upper airway repeatedly collapses during sleep leading to intermittent breathing pauses. Common symptoms include Loud snoring, Gasping during sleep, morning headaches & excessive daytime sleepiness.

e. **Circadian Rhythm Sleep**-Wake disorders- This disorders arise when an individuals internal biological clock becomes misaligned with the external environment. Shift workers, frequent travelers & people with irregular sleep schedules are particularly vulnerable.

RISK FACTORS & CAUSES FOR SLEEP DISORDERS

1. Psychological stress & Anxiety
2. Obesity & other Metabolic disorders
3. Chronic long standing medical illnesses
4. Tobacco or other drug abuse.
5. Irregular sleeping habits
6. Excessive screen exposure before bed time
7. Genetic predisposition
8. Ageing.

CONSEQUENCES -

Mental Health-

Anxiety disorders, Depression, Mood instability, Reduced concentration & memory, Decreased cognitive performances

Physical Health-

Hypertension, Cardio vascular diseases, Diabetes Mellitus, Obesity, Impaired immune function, Increased risk of Accidents & Injuries.

Prevention & Control

- Early screening for sleep disorders,
- Sleep Health Education
- Prohibition of Tobacco or other drug intake
- Workplace policies supporting proper sleep schedules
- Developing healthy sleep habits from an early age
- Avoiding screen exposure before bed time
- Life style modifications like reduction in weight, stress, regular physical exercise, healthy dietary practices.

HOMOEOPATHIC APPROACH FOR SLEEP DISORDERS

The Homoeopathic management of sleep disorders focuses on:

Identifying the underlying cause

Individualizing the remedy based on the patient's physical, mental, and emotional symptoms

Promoting healthy sleep hygiene alongside treatment

In Homoeopathy, remedy selection is individualized based on the patient's symptoms and constitution. Some commonly cited remedies for sleep disorders include:

1. *Coffea cruda*

Sleeplessness due to an overactive mind, excitement, joy, anticipation, or excessive thoughts. Patient feels mentally alert despite fatigue.

2. *Nux vomica*

Insomnia associated with stress, overwork, late-night studying, excessive coffee, alcohol, or stimulants. Wakes around 3–4 a.m. and cannot return to sleep.

3. *Arsenicum album*

Restlessness, anxiety, fear, and frequent waking after midnight. Patient may be worried about health or security.

4. *Passiflora incarnata*

Difficulty sleeping due to nervous exhaustion, mental fatigue, or worry. Often used for mild insomnia.

5. *Kali phosphoricum*

Sleeplessness from mental strain, examination stress, nervous debility, or emotional exhaustion.

6. *Ignatia amara*

Sleep disturbances following grief, disappointment, emotional shock, or suppressed emotions.

7. *Chamomilla*

Irritability with sleeplessness, especially in children. Patient is restless and difficult to console.

8. *Pulsatilla*

Difficulty sleeping due to emotional upset; patient seeks comfort and company. Sleep may be disturbed by vivid dreams.

9. *Sulphur*

Early morning waking (around 4–5 a.m.), difficulty returning to sleep, and feeling unrefreshed.

10. *Opium*

Sleep disturbances after fright, shock, or emotional trauma; sleep may be heavy but unrefreshing.

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