

Sleep Patterns & Homoeopathy

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Abstract

When I was studying Homoeopathy (1986-1992), we found so many medicines in our homoeopathic materia medica on sleep patterns, sleep deprivation & sleep related indispositions. Currently, the sleep medicine has become the toast of the world of medicine & the current short communication helps the readers to have the taste of the toast through the homoeopathic approach.^{1,2,3}

During my student days, we were taught one acronym to comprehend the sleep medicine or indisposition due to lack of adequate sleep in an individual. The acronym was for 5 medicines that apply to sleep medicine. The acronym was C3N2 meaning the names of the drugs which are 'Causticum', 'Cocculus', 'Colchicum', 'Nux Vomica' & 'Nitric Acid'. These have become the torch bearers of sleep medicine in homoeopathic therapeutics currently.^{2,3}

The current short communication touches upon the subject of sleep through its historical development to its modern shape. It discusses the homoeopathic approach towards sleep medicine. Finally, the short communication emphasizes upon integration of homoeopathy of AYUSH in the current NCD profile out of which sleep medicine is an active component. One of the ideas that the short communication banks upon is the integration of homoeopathy of AYUSH in the currently operational Ayushman Arogya Mandir (AAM), the successor of Health & Wellness Centers (HWC).⁴

Keywords: Homoeopathic; Materia Medica, REM; Miasms.

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INTRODUCTION

Jefferey Hall, Michael Rosbash & Michael Young received the Nobel prize in 2017 for work on biological clocks. In Latin language, the word 'circa diem' means per day. The body clock is calibrated by appearance & disappearance of light. Biological clocks produce circadian rhythm & regulate their timing. This is the organism's innate timing device.⁵

Like a switch, light can turn off & turn on genes

that control the molecular structure of biological clocks. In changing light, the dark cycles speeds up the wake cycle, slows down or resetting biological clocks as well as circadian rhythm. With determining the sleep wake cycle, circadian rhythms influences hormone release, body temperature, metabolism & other functions.⁵

Physiology of Biological Clock

The biological clock is generated by 20,000 neurons in Supra Chiasmatic Nucleus (SCN) in Hypothalamus. These neurons receive signals from the eyes. Besides light, exercise, hormones & medications affect the SCN & the setting up of the circadian clock.⁶

Circadian rhythms are synchronized with the earth's rotation by daily adjustments in the timing of SCN following the exposure to light that indicates the time of the day. In short, the sleep happens this way. The darkness affects the eyes that affect the hypothalamus which in turn affects the body. Thereafter, the hormone melatonin is released 2 hours before natural sleep time & peaks in the middle of the night.⁶

REM Sleep

There are four stages of sleep. The stage 1 is 'Light Sleep' where in we feel drowsy. The second stage is also 'Light Sleep' where we move to deep sleep. The stage 3 is 'Deep Sleep'. The fourth stage is Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep. This sleep was discovered in 1950s when scientists studying sleeping infants noticed that there were distinct periods when their eyes moved rapidly from side to side. These rapid eye movements led to the name REM sleep.⁷

The sleep has relaxed muscles, quick eye movement, irregular breathing, increased heart rate & brain activity. Usually, adults need two hours of REM sleep each night. It is a stage of sleep associated with dreaming, emotional processing, brain development & memory consolidation.⁷

Sleep in AYUSH

In modern medicine, it is usually suggested to have 8 hours of sleep per 24 hours. However, each individual is different. Ayurveda describes that there are three kinds of constitutions. These are 'vata', 'pitta' & 'kapha'. Our body is made up of 5 elements of the nature. These are earth, air, water, fire & space. The vata people have more air in their body, the pitta people have more fire in their body & the kapha people have more water in their bodies.

We have to eat foods grown with organic manure & that's how we take in the earth. We meditate & do yoga where yoga means to join & here you join with the space or the ether.⁸

Since water is the heaviest element among the three, these people who have more water than the other two humors have the most inertia & that's why they need at least 8 hours of sleep per 24 hours. The people with mid-level inertia are those who have the fire as the leading humor in the body & they need at least 7 hours of sleep per 24 hours. The people with least inertia are those who more air in their body & these people can do away with at least 6 hours of sleep per 24 hours.⁸

Similarly, in homoeopathy, the concept of 'miasm' is akin to these humors. Miasms are disease causing dynamic influences that are infectious in nature. There are three miasms. These are the 'psora' miasm, the 'syphilis' miasm & the 'sycotic' miasm. The psoric people have the least inertia, the sycotic have the mid level inertia & the syphitics have the most inertia. Hence, the psorics need 6 hours, the sycotics need 7 hours & the syphilitics need 8 hours of sleep per 24 hours.^{1,2,3}

RECENT RESEARCH

Being a morning person or night person may be embedded in our DNA. These DNAs are inherited from Neanderthals. These were archaic humans who lived about 40,000 years ago adapted to early rising due to their geographic location on higher altitudes with shorter winter days. The genes that have passed on to us influence our sleeping patterns & habits. There has to be a balance between the circadian clock & the fast paced modern life.⁹

CONCLUSION

In the context of sleep medicine, homoeopathy has innumerable medicines that can address various modalities related to sleep. Sleep deprivation, sleep apnea, sleep walking, snoring are the issues that can be addressed effectively. Sleep related issues are mostly indispositions & not infections. The sleep issues can not only lead to physical issues like Non Communicable Diseases (NCD) but also mental health in the long run since sleep issues affect the Central Nervous System (CNS).^{1,2,3}

Homoeopathy being cost effective, clinically effective with zero side effects can be a solace for the

masses while addressing the various sleep issues.¹⁰

Declaration of the lead Author

The lead author also certifies that he has expressed his personal opinion based upon his public health and clinical experiences. The approach or the medicines suggested are only suggestive in nature.

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