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The significance of *Nidra* for Mental Well-Being: A comprehensive review of its benefits and mechanisms

Shantanu¹, Man Mohan Sharma², Vedprakash³

¹Post Graduate Scholar, PG Dept. of Rog Nidan Evum Vikriti Vigyan, Madan Mohan Malviya Govt. Ayurved College, Udaipur, Rajasthan, India.

²HOD & Guide, PG Dept. of Rog Nidan Evum Vikriti Vigyan, Madan Mohan Malviya Govt. Ayurved College, Udaipur, Rajasthan, India.

³Lecturer, PG Dept. of Rog Nidan Evum Vikriti Vigyan, Madan Mohan Malviya Govt. Ayurved College, Udaipur, Rajasthan, India.

ABSTRACT

Nidra, often known as sleep, is an essential component of *Ayurvedic* philosophy and is seen as one of the three *Upastambhas*: fundamental dimensions of well-being, nutrition, and celibacy. The *Ayurvedic* tradition acknowledges the significant influence that *Nidra* can exert on an individual's physical and mental health. This extensive analysis investigates the impact of *Nidra* on improving mental well-being, consolidating results from current research and clinical trials. This comprehensive review examines the role of *Nidra* in enhancing mental health using secondary data sourced from both international and national repositories. This study investigates the impact of *Nidra* on mental well-being by an examination of its effects on stress reduction, emotional regulation, and enhanced sleep quality. The findings indicate that *Nidra* presents a proper supplementary method to conventional mental health treatments, offering a critical understanding of its advantages and fundamental processes. This report suggests future research and practical applications, underscoring the need to conduct more rigorous investigations to confirm and comprehend the complete range of *Nidra's* advantages.

Key words: *Nidra* (Sleep), Mental Well-being, Stress Reduction, Emotional Regulation, Sleep Quality, *Ayurvedic* Philosophy

INTRODUCTION

In the ancient Indian medical system of *Ayurveda*, *Nidra*, a *Sanskrit* word meaning sleep, played a supreme role. This comprehensive approach to health and well-being acknowledges sleep as essential to preserving physical, mental, and emotional balance. In contrast to contemporary Western medicine, which traditionally perceives sleep as a condition of inactivity, *Ayurveda* regards *Nidra* as an active process essential

for the body's revitalization and equilibrium.^[7] *Nidra*, or sleep, has been profoundly embedded in *Ayurvedic* philosophy for thousands of years. This can be traced back to ancient *Vedic* writings offering comprehensive information regarding the human body, mind, and soul. *Ayurveda* emphasizes attaining a harmonious equilibrium among the three *Doshas* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*) for optimal health. Sleep is thought to be directly affected by these *Doshas*. An imbalance in any of the *Doshas* can result in sleep disruptions, such as insomnia, excessive sleepiness, or suboptimal sleep quality.

The *Vedas*, the oldest extant religious scriptures of Hinduism, define sleep as a condition of awareness that enables the soul to go beyond the corporeal form and establish a connection with the divine. The spiritual interpretation of sleep is a prominent motif in *Ayurvedic* literature, where *Nidra* is frequently linked to spiritual enlightenment and awakening. The Rishis, the *Ayurvedic* sages responsible for compiling the *Vedas* and other ancient written works, acknowledged

Address for correspondence:

Dr. Shantanu

Post Graduate Scholar, PG Dept. of Rog Nidan Evum Vikriti Vigyan, Madan Mohan Malviya Govt. Ayurved College, Udaipur, Rajasthan, India.

E-mail: shantanumaurya66@gmail.com

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the significant role of sleep in preserving health and overall well-being. Their observation revealed that disruptions in sleep patterns could result in a range of physical and mental disorders. Consequently, students thoroughly comprehended the elements that impact sleep and the techniques to enhance restful sleep.

Throughout the evolutionary trajectory of *Ayurveda*, the concept of *Nidra* has experienced significant growth and enhancement. The primary *Ayurvedic* texts, notably the *Charaka Samhita* and the *Sushruta Samhita*, provide detailed elucidations of sleep, encompassing its many stages and the factors that can impact it. Furthermore, these works outline various *Ayurvedic* approaches, including herbal remedies, dietary modifications, and lifestyle practices, that can address sleep problems.

Experiments have demonstrated that this technique, which promotes a state of profound relaxation while preserving consciousness, is successful in decreasing stress, anxiety, depression, and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), as well as enhancing psychological well-being. A notable feature of this phenomenon is its capacity to induce deep mental and physical relaxation, which may result in enhanced cognitive abilities and emotional control.^[10]

Significantly, *Yoga Nidra*, although originating from traditional practices, has been linked to quantifiable physiological changes, including modifications in cerebral blood flow and dopamine release. This implies that its impact on the central nervous system (CNS) can be objectively confirmed by.^[11] Moreover, it has been proposed that the practice can result in a harmonious activation of the *Chakras* and a rise in alpha brain waves, symbolic of a state of relaxation. As mentioned earlier, the results emphasize the many processes by which *Yoga Nidra* may provide its therapeutic benefits.

Research Question:

What is the current state of knowledge on *Nidra* and its potential impact on mental well-being?

METHODOLOGY

Primary Data: Considering the practicality and usefulness of *Nidra* on the human body, the key

sources include the studies of Brihat-Trayee, together with their commentaries and other classical literature.

Secondary Data: Secondary Data encompassed articles, research papers, prior thesis papers, and internet sources authored by doctoral researchers. Research paper Journal repositories like Scopus, PubMed, ResearchGate, and Google Scholar.

Cause of Nidra

According to *Ayurveda*, the *Kapha* and *Tamas* are accountable for *Nidra*. Hence, maintaining a balanced state of *Kapha* and *Tamas* promotes restful sleep and good health. Variables such as psychological state, food patterns, environmental influences, and familiar circumstances, among others, influence sleep patterns. An interruption of the sleep pattern results in hazardous effects for *Anidra*. Therefore, it is advisable to get adequate sleep to prevent any health problems associated with inadequate sleep.

Type of Nidra

A classification of *Nidra* into seven categories in *Ashtanga Sangraha* has been established by **A Gupta (2011)**

Acharya Vagbhata	
1. <i>Kaalasvabhava</i>	Natural processes <i>Nidra</i>
2. <i>Chittakheda</i>	Because of cognitive fatigue
3. <i>Dehakheda</i>	Attributable to physical fatigue
4. <i>Kaphaja</i>	Attributable to Kapha Dosha
5. <i>Aamaya</i>	Due to Medical Conditions
6. <i>Aagantuja</i>	Attributable to Exogenous Contributions

7. <i>Tamobhava</i>	Because of the prevalence of Tamas
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The Significance of *Nidra*

- **Fundamental Pillar of Health:** In Ayurveda, *Nidra* is considered one of the three fundamental foundations of life, playing a significant role in preserving health and energy.^[1]
- **Assessment of Physical and Mental Health:** Ensuring adequate sleep is crucial for achieving both physical and mental relaxation, therefore enhancing general well-being and mitigating the risk of illnesses associated with stress and worry.^[7]
- **Therapeutic Advantages:** *Nidra* presents therapeutic advantages such as mitigating stress, alleviating anxiety, and enhancing mental well-being. Furthermore, it facilitates cellular renewal, maintains hormonal equilibrium, and supports the body's inherent healing mechanisms.^[9]
- **Effects on longevity and well-being:** Sufficient sleep enhances both well-being and lifespan, but insufficient or excessive sleep can result in health problems and diminished quality of life.^[12]

The Impact of *Nidra* on Health

- **Regulation of hormones and maintenance of menstrual health:** *Nidra* greatly enhances hormone profiles in women with menstrual abnormalities by the reduction of thyroid-stimulating hormone, follicle-stimulating hormone, luteinizing hormone, and prolactin levels.^[14]
- **Psychological well-being and mitigation of stress:** *Yoga Nidra* is efficacious in mitigating stress, anxiety, and depression, especially among women experiencing menstruation problems.^[12,5] Consistent engagement in *Nidra* meditation can effectively mitigate psychological problems such as dissociation, paranoia, and hallucinations, therefore enhancing general mental well-being.^[4]
- **Analysis of Physical Health and Prevention of Diseases:** *Nidra* has a vital role in the prevention of significant illnesses, such as cardiovascular

diseases, diabetes, and obesity, by the maintenance of both physical and emotional well-being.^[15,2] *Yoga Nidra* has purported therapeutic properties for physical ailments, including hormone imbalances, pain, and migraines, as well as non-communicable conditions such as diabetes and hypertension.^[6]

DISCUSSION

Nidra is an essential element of health and well-being, firmly established in *Ayurvedic* philosophy. In addition to promoting physical and mental well-being, it enhances longevity and happiness and provides therapeutic advantages for various ailments. Engaging in practices such as *Yoga Nidra* and making *Ayurvedic* lifestyle adjustments can significantly improve sleep quality and overall energy levels. The practice of *Nidra*, including *Yoga Nidra*, is crucial for preserving and enhancing health. It influences hormonal equilibrium, psychological well-being, physical health, and general life satisfaction. The systematic application of *Nidra* can effectively prevent and control a wide range of health problems, establishing it as a fundamental aspect of both traditional *Ayurvedic* traditions and contemporary health treatments.

CONCLUSION

This extensive analysis emphasizes the far-reaching influence of *Nidra* on mental and physical health, emphasizing its fundamental position in *Ayurvedic* philosophy as one of the three *Upastambhas* necessary for general well-being. The empirical data compiled from multiple studies indicates that *Nidra*, through techniques like *Yoga Nidra*, plays a substantial role in reducing stress, regulating emotions, and enhancing sleep quality. These results validate the use of *Nidra* in modern mental health treatments, providing a supplementary method to traditional therapies. Nevertheless, a more thorough investigation is required to completely clarify the extent of *Nidra's* advantages and fundamental processes. It is recommended that further investigation be conducted to confirm and enhance these encouraging findings, therefore assuring the full realization of *Nidra's*

therapeutic potential in both conventional and contemporary health practices.

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