

CORRELATION BETWEEN *NIDRA* AND *TWACHA*

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ABSTRACT

Healthy skin is a reflection of overall wellness. A complete health is physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing. Aahar(food), Nidra(sleep) and Brahmacharya(celebrity/abstinence) are the Trayopstamba(three basic pillars) of healthy living in Ayurveda.

Three of these if consumed in optimal limits leads to a healthy life. Excess or less consumption of any of these three may lead to consequences(disease/illness). After Aahar, Nidra is an important factor of living. According to Charaka Acharya Samuchit nidra(adequate sleep of 6-7hrs in an adult) showers with many benefits. Amongst these benefits Varna(complexion) is an important factor of Twacha(skin). Sushruta Acharya says that Ratrijaagrana(late night awakening) leads to vitiation of Vata and Pitta Doshas. Since Twacha is both a sthana(seat) of Vata and Pitta, vitiation of these Doshas may also hamper the quality of skin.

Early to bed and early to rise is a key to healthy living and also prevents from many lifestyle and related disorders. Our skin is our best accessory, hence it is necessary to have a sound sleep.

Keywords: Aahar, Nidra, Varna, Twacha.

INTRODUCTION

Skin care is not superficial because it is a complete healthcare. When you have a beautiful skin, it is a sign that you have a healthy body and mind. Ayurveda is a comprehensive system of health care. The fundamentals of Ayurveda are eternal hence are certainly effective in the present era whether in preventive or curative point of view.

This science has put up the unique concept of *Tryopstamba*(that is *Aahar*, *Nidra*, and *Brahmacharya*)¹. These are the three pillars of life. It is mentioned that if they are followed properly then body becomes stable and complete health can be achieved. Even longevity and normality of life is dependent on these three pillars as well. This concept indicates that Acharyas have given equal importance to *Nidra* amongst the *Tryopstambas*. *Nidra*(sleep) is a necessity of every healthy individual. *Samuchit nidra*(adequate sleep) has many benefits, amongst which *Varna*(complexion) is one factor. *Varna* is an important attribute of *Twacha* (skin). Ayurveda

acharyas have mentioned about *Prakrit nidra*(ideal sleep patterns), these sleep patterns should be followed for a healthy living, if these ideal sleep patterns are not followed properly or *Ratrijaagrana*(late night awakening) is done, that will lead to vitiation of *Doshas*. These vitiated *Doshas* indirectly hampers the quality of skin and that leads to unnecessary skin conditions.

The modern science has also given the importance of adequate 7-8hrs of sleep by saying that the skin repairs and regenerates itself best at night, since some hormones like Melatonin, growth hormone, collagen and other factors are released at the peak hour of sleep which helps in regeneration and repair of skin. Hence it is necessary to have adequate sleep.

DISCUSSION

In today's era most of the people live a sedentary lifestyle involving less or no physical activity. This kind of lifestyle has given rise to many metabolic syndrome, stress and other related disorders. One of

the main leading cause of these are their irregular sleep patterns. WHO has also stated that at least one third of the people of the world suffer from sleep disorders and also it has great impact on social, occupational and other functioning areas of the individual.

Ayurveda, the holistic science is commonly referred to as science of life which deals with healthy life style and is responsible for health promotion, disease prevention, diagnosis and treatment². Sleep is a state in which mental content is absent. Sleep is also called *Nidra* in Sanskrit language. *Nidra* is not a new word; there are so many references of *Nidra* available from the *Vedic* period. *Nidra* is mentioned in Rigveda as “*Swapna*”.

Acharya Charaka defines *Nidra*(sleep) as

Nidra: When the mind and along with the soul both are exhausted or become stationary, and the sensory and motor organs also become exhausted, the individual sleeps.³

Sleep: Sleep is a naturally occurring periodic state of rest of both mind and body, in which the eyes usually close and consciousness is completely or partially lost, with decreased bodily movement and decreased responsiveness to external stimuli. Sleep determine many aspects of our life like mood, cognitive functions such as attention and working memory, homeostasis etc.⁴

Occurance of Nidra: According to Ayurveda *acharya Nidra*/sleep occurs when the seat of *Chetna*(consciousness) is covered by *Tamo guna*(one among the three main qualities of mind which is responsible for ignorance) which predominates along with *Kapha*. Sleep is another form of *Tamas*(drowsiness).

Types of *Nidra*:

In-general *Nidra* is classified into two types

1. *Swabhavika* (natural sleep).
2. *Aswabhavika* (abnormal sleep).

Maharshi *Acharya Charaka* described seven types of *Nidra*.⁵

These seven types of *Nidras* are caused due to;

1. *Tamas*.

2. Caused by vitiated *Kapha*.
3. Mental exertion.
4. Physical exhaustion.
5. *Agantuki*(indicative of bad prognosis leading to imminent death)
6. Complication of other diseases like *Sannipataja jwara*(fever that involves *Tri-Doshas*).
7. The very nature of night(physiological sleep).

Acharya Vagbhata also described seven types of *Nidra* similar as *Charaka*.⁶

Acharya Sushruta has described three types of *Nidra* as follows;⁷

1. *Vaishnavi* (created by the sustaining god which is the natural one).
2. *Tamasi* (due to mental darkness).
3. *Vaikariki* (due to disease).

Adequate sleep hours according to age has been given as follows;

AGE GROUP	ADEQUATE HOURS OF SLEEP
Infant	14-15 hours
Toddler	12-14 hours
Pre-school	11-13 hours
School age	10-11 hours
Teens	9-10 hours
Adults	7-8 hours
Old age	6 hours

Importance of Adequate sleep/Samuchit Nidra:

Acharya Charaka has described that the person who has consumed *Samuchit Nidra* is benefited with the following;

Pushi (good physique), *Varna* (complexion), *Bala*(strength), *Utsaah*(enthusiasm), *Agni-dipan* (digestive power), *Dhatu-saamya* (proper structure and functioning of *Dhatu*).⁸

Twacha and its Panchabhautikatwa:

Twacha: *Twacha* is one of the ‘*Dnyanendriyas*(organ of sense)’ which is responsible for ‘*Sparsh Dnyan*’(carries sensation of touch), therefore it plays

a great role in physical and mental wellbeing of any individual.

Twacha is derived from “*Twak Savarne*” *Dhatu* which means the covering of the body.

Skin: Outer covering of the body and largest sense organ of the integumentary system

(total area of about 20 square feet).

Panchbhautikatwa of Twacha:⁹

Sthula, *Sthira* and *Murtimant Guna* is due to *Prithvi Mahabhuta*.

Mrudu snigdha Twacha is due to *Apya Mahabhuta*.

Varna(complexion)of the skin is due to *Agni Mahabhuta*.

Sensation of pain, temperature and pressure is due to *Vayu Mahabhuta*.

The pores of *Loma* and *Swedavaha Strotas* are due to *Aakash Mahabhuta*.

Twacha and Tridosha sambandh:

Acharya Vagbhata has described the *pramukh*(main) *sthanas*(sites) of the *Tri-Doshas*.

Amongst the main sites of *Vata* and *Pitta Dosha*, *Sparshanendriya* or *Twachais* one main site of it.¹⁰

Relations with Vata Dosha:

*Varna*of *Twacha* – Function of *Udan Vayu*.¹¹

Transportation and excretion of sweat is under control of *Samaan* and *VyaanVayu* respectively.

Relations with Pitta Dosha:

Pitta situated in skin is known as *Bhrajak pitta*, which gives color and luster to the skin. Different skin applications are digested and absorbed through skin due to *Bhrajak pitta*. Thermoregulatory function of skin is maintained by *Bhrajak pitta*.

Relations with Kapha Dosha:

Snigdha, *Shlakhshanta*, *Mruduta*, *Sheetata*, *Prasannata*, of *Twacha* is due to *Kapha Dosha* and *Kapha Dosha* is responsible for *Ropan karma*.

CORRELATION BETWEEN NIDRA AND TWACHA

Asamuchit Nidra (inadequate sleep) and Dosha Sambandh(relations);

Acharya Sushruta has mentioned about inadequate sleep and its relation with *Doshas* as follows;¹²

Diwaswaap (sleeping during the day)- causes vitiation all *Tri-Doshas*.

Raatrijaagran (late night awakening)-causes vitiation of both *Vata* and *Pitta Dosha*.

Vata* and *Pitta Vruddhi lakshanas;

Acharya Vagbhata has given in detail the *Vruddhi lakshanas* (Vitiated symptoms) of all three *Doshas*, amongst them below two symptoms are as follows;¹³

Karshnya (Hyperpigmentation/darkening of skin) – *Vata Vruddhi lakshana*

Pita-Vita-Mutra-Netra-Twak(yellowish discoloration or paleness of stool, urine, eyes and skin) – *Pitta Vruddhi Lakshana*.

THE CORRELATION

As already mentioned earlier *Twacha* is a *sthana*/seat of both *Vata* and *Pitta*. If a person does not consumes *Samuchit Nidra* or adequate sleep, if he or she is habitual to *Raatrijaagrana* or late night awakening, he or she may suffer from the Vitiating of *Vata* and *Pitta Doshas*. Now since *Karshnya* (hyperpigmentation of skin) is the symptom of vitiating *Vata Dosha* and *Pita-Twak* (paleness or yellowish discoloration of skin) is the symptom of vitiating *Pitta Dosha*. The person may suffer from both of these symptoms or either one and hamper his/her skin conditions. Hence improper sleeping habits should be changed.

MODERN VIEW

Our skin is the best dressing and everyone wills for a beautiful and bright skin. Modern science says that there are certain secretions in the body that occurs when a person is in peak hour of sleep and these helps the skin to regenerate and repair itself the best. Some important secretions are as follows;

Hormone Melatonin: This hormone is secreted by the pineal gland and regulates the sleep wake cycle.

Its peak secretion is at night. It controls pigmentation of skin by causing the aggregation of Melanin in Melanocytes of the skin. It also is said to have an anti-ageing property. This secretion is suppressed by the blue light. Hence use of mobile phones or gadgets that pass blue rays should avoided at night.¹⁴

Hormone Cortisol: Cortisol is a Glucocorticoid/Steroid hormone/Stress hormone. In normal condition cortisol secretion reduces inflammation inside the body. But in conditions like stress, where the person is devoid of sleep, the level of cortisol increases. This over secretion of cortisol may accelerate the ageing process by breakdown of collagen and elastin in skin. High cortisol levels also cause our skin's sebaceous glands to secrete more sebum and cause Acne. It also worsens the inflammatory skin conditions such as Psoriasis etc.¹⁵

Growth hormone: More human growth hormone is released increasing muscle mass and strengthening skin.

Collagen: Collagen is the main structural protein found in the skin and other connective tissues. It strengthens and provides elasticity to skin. Body produces more collagen during sleep and this helps the skin to repair itself best at night. This is the reason why most of the night creams and moisturizers are applied at night. It enhances the repair process.

A good sleep increases blood flow to the skin, hence giving it a glowing complexion. Collagen and other secretions strengthens the skin and prevents from wrinkles and ageing. Hence adequate sleep of at least 7-8 hours should be consumed.

CONCLUSION

From the above mentioned relations and facts, it can therefore be concluded that 'A sound sleep gives a healthy skin'. Hence every individual should consume complete hours of sleep mentioned as per his or her age group. Acharya *Sushruta* has explained the benefits of *Samuchit Nidra* (adequate sleep) by saying that one should neither be awake late night nor should sleep during the day time because both of it causes vitiation Of Doshas. A smart person should consume adequate amount of sleep only. Only the person who takes adequate sleep as per his/her age group remains disease free, happy and is showered with strength and good complexion. He is neither fat

nor thin, but *Shreemaan* (body with good physical appearance) and gains a life span of about 100years.¹⁶

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