

DIVASWAPNA AS ETIOLOGICAL FACTOR OF DISEASES: A NARRATIVE REVIEW FROM BRIHATTRAYI

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ABSTRACT

According to *Ayurveda*, sleep is one of the three fundamental pillars of life. While sleeping at the proper time promotes health and well-being, sleeping during the daytime (*Divaswapna*) is often viewed as a harmful habit in *Ayurvedic* literature. This review article explores and compiles the references from the three classical *Ayurvedic* texts viz. *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, and *Ashtanga Hridaya* describe *Divaswapna* as an etiological factor for various diseases. The study was conducted by searching the online versions of these texts using the *e-Samhita* portal developed by the National Institute of Indian Medical Heritage (NIIMH), Hyderabad. A total of sixty-nine relevant references were found and analyzed. The findings clearly show that *Divaswapna* is considered a direct *Nidana* for several health conditions, such as obesity, indigestion, cough, headaches, mental dullness, skin diseases,

and metabolic disorders. It is especially contraindicated during certain seasons, in specific diseases, and after therapeutic procedures like *Panchakarma*. This review highlights how classical *Ayurvedic* texts strictly warn against sleeping during the day in multiple health and seasonal contexts. *Ayurveda* offers guidance for maintaining health through proper sleep habits. Awareness and avoidance of *Divaswapna* can play a key role in preventing disease and promoting holistic well-being.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda*, Day sleeping, *Nidana*, Contraindication, *Vyadhi*.

INTRODUCTION

In the modern world, changing lifestyles and occupational stresses have significantly altered sleep patterns. Many individuals engage in night shifts, late-night study sessions, or excessive day sleep due to fatigue, leading to imbalances in the body's natural rhythm. *Ayurveda* provides a comprehensive understanding of the impact of sleep on health, highlighting the importance of following a proper sleep regimen. *Acharya Charaka*, *Sushruta*, and *Vaghbata* have broadly discussed the indications and contraindications of *Divaswapna* (day sleep) and *Ratrijagarana* (night awakening), and have associated them with various diseases such as obesity, indigestion, mental disorders, and metabolic dysfunctions.

Ayurvedic texts define sleep as a natural physiological function governed by the balance of *Doshas*. Sleeping at the wrong time or in excess can lead to serious health conditions. The modern world has seen an increasing trend of disrupted sleep patterns due to factors like stress, exposure to artificial light and irregular working hours. Understanding and analyzing the impact of improper sleep habits from an *Ayurvedic* perspective can provide valuable insights for holistic health management.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This review study aimed to search the main texts and commentaries of *Brihatrayi*, viz. *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, and *Ashtanga Hridaya* for textual references with the following objectives.

1. To enumerate references where *Divaswapna* is mentioned as a specific *Nidana* (causative factor) of *Vyadhi*.
2. To enumerate references where *Divaswapna* are *Varjya* (contraindicated) in a specific *Vyadhi*.

METHODOLOGY

Literature review was conducted only in *Brihatrayi*. The literary search was exclusively online. A phonetic search key words like ‘divAsvapna’, ‘divAsvapn’, ‘divAsvApa’, ‘svapna’, ‘prasvapna’, ‘Aha Svapna’, were used in the ‘search samhita’ section of the e-samhita portal developed by the National Institute of Indian Medical Heritage, Hyderabad. *Charakasamhita* with *Ayurveda Dipika* commentary of *Chakrapani*, *Sushrutasamhita* with *Nibandha Sangraha* commentary of *Dalhana*, *Ashtangahridayam* with *Sarvangasundara* commentary of *Arunadutta*, and *Ayurveda Rasayana* commentary of *Hemadri* were searched for the relevant references. Including both their main texts as well as commentaries, there were a together of twenty-nine references found in *Charaka Samhita*, thirty-one references in *Sushruta Samhita*, and nine references in *Ashtanga Hridaya*.

RESULTS

Divaswapna as a Specific Nidana of Vyadhi

The negative effects of *Divaswapna* are widely elaborated upon across various sections of the *Brihatrayi*, highlighting its role as a major *Nidana* (causative factor) in various diseases.

Charaka Samhita emphasizes that *Divaswapna* is an important causative factor in several disorders. It vitiates the *Meda Dhatuvaha Srotas*, especially when combined with lack of exercise and excessive intake of fatty/oily foods.^[1] It is a major cause of *Sthaulya* (obesity).^[23] Due to the accumulation of *Mala* (waste products) from impaired digestion, it leads to the formation of *Arshas*.^[4] It leads to aggravation of *Vata Dosha*, which further contributes to disease pathogenesis.^[5] It is a primary cause of *Shiroroga* (head diseases).^[6] The *Kapha Dosha* dominant diseases of the head arise due to day sleep. It is because of excessive sleep that *Kapha Dosha* becomes aggravated in the head, leading to diseases of the head. In this verse, the word *Svapnasukham* indicates *Anuchita-Divaswapna* (improper day sleep).^[7] It also causes manifestations of diseases of the nose, such as *Pratishyaya* (running nose). *Atiswapna* (excessive day sleep) leads to the manifestation of *Dosha* in the head by aggravating *Vata Dosha*, giving rise to *Pratishyaya*. In this verse, the word *Atiswapna* means *Divaswapna*.^[8]

Sleeping during the daytime is contraindicated in seasons such as *Shishira* (early winter), *Vasanta* (spring), *Varsha* (rainy), *Sharad* (autumn), and *Hemanta* (late winter), except in *Greeshma* (summer), because it causes vitiation of *Kapha* and *Pitta Doshas*. Sleeping during the day is not advisable in any season other than summer, as it leads to the aggravation of

Kapha and *Pitta* doshas. Individuals who are excessively overweight, frequently consume oily and heavy foods, have a *Kapha*-predominant constitution, suffer from *Kapha*-related disorders, or possess *Dushi Visha* (latent toxins) in the body should strictly avoid daytime sleep. Neglecting this guideline can result in various health complications such as *Haleemaka* (a severe form of jaundice), *Shirashoola* (headache), *Staimitya* (feeling like body is covered with wet cloths), *Guru Gratrata* (heaviness of the body), *Angamarda* (body ache), *Agninasha* (loss of digestive power), *Hridayopalepa* (sensation of phlegm sticking to the heart), *Shotha* (edema), *Aruchi* (anorexia), *hrillasa* (nausea), *Peenasa* (rhinitis), *Ardhavabhedaka* (hemicrania), *Kotha* (urticaria), *Pidaka* (pustules and boils), *Kandu* (itching), *Tandra* (drowsiness), *Kasa* (cough), *Galamaya* (throat disorders), *Smriti-Buddhi Pramoha* (impairment of memory and intelligence), *Srotorodha* (obstruction of channels), *Jwara* (fever), *Indriya-Asamarthya* (loss of sensory and motor function), and *Visha Vega Pravardhan* (intensification of symptoms due to poisoning).^[9]

Those who indulge in sedentary, inactive lifestyles and sleep during the day are prone to *Santarpanajanya Vyadhis*.^[10] It particularly causes *Kaphaja Jvara*,^[11] *Kaphodara*,^[12] *Kaphaja Arshas*,^[13] *Pandu*,^[14] *Kaphaja Atisara*,^[15] *Visarpa*,^[16] and *Madatyaya*.^[17] It worsens conditions like non-healing ulcers,^[18] *Urustambha*,^[19] *Vata Dosha* and *Shonita* vitiation.^[20] Due to daily sleeping during daytime after having food, *Vatadi* three *Doshas* get vitiated and they reach the milk carrying channels and vitiate the breast milk, thus eight types of *Stanyadushti* (abnormal breast milk) are manifested.^[21]

Before regaining normal health and strength after *Shodhana* (purification therapies), *Divaswapna* causes disorders like *Arochaka* (anorexia), *Avipaka* (indigestion) and *Agninasha* (suppression of the power of digestion), *Staimitya* (feeling like body is covered with wet cloths), *Pandu* (anemia), *Kandu* (itching), *Pama* (scabies), *Daha* (burning sensation), *Chhardi* (vomiting) *Angamarda* (malaise), *Hridsthambha* (impairment of the cardiac function), *Jadya* (stiffness), *Tandra* (drowsiness) *Nidra* (sleep), *Prasamga Granthi* (appearance of nodular swelling), *Dourbalya* (weakness), *Raktamutrakshi* (red coloration of urine and eyes), and *Talu-lepa* (coating of the palate).^[22]

In *Sushruta Samhita*, similar statements are accounted. *Divaswapna* is regarded as a *Tridosha Prakopaka* (vitiating factor of all three *Doshas*),^[23] especially vitiates *Kapha Dosha*,^[24-25] and is linked with causing *Pleehodara* (enlargement of spleen), *Kasa* (cough), *Shvasa* (dyspnea), *Pratishyaya* (nasal catarrh),^[26] *Shirogauravata* (heaviness of the head), *Pandu* (anaemia),^[27]

Shvayathu (edema), *Jvara* (fever), *Moha* (loss of consciousness), *Angasadana/Angamarda* (body aches), *Agnidaurbalya* (weakness of digestive fire), *Avipaka* (indigestion), *Aruchi* (anorexia). In addition to this, it causes the patients to become overwhelmed with the quality of *Tamas*, which produces in them more desire for sleep.^[28-29] It also causes vitiation of *Rakta*.^[30] It is a causative factor in diseases such as *Manyastambha*^[31] and *Prameha*.^[32]

The *Kapha Dosha* and *Pitta Dosha* are aggravated in the body by causative factors like sleeping during the daytime. They cause the germination of *Krimi* (parasites) of various shapes in the different parts of the body, among which *Amashaya* (stomach) and *Pakvashaya* (intestines) are the main locations.^[33] Day sleep also impacts fetal health. It is said that if a woman in her menstrual period indulges in day sleeping, then her child she will be giving birth to will become sleepy.^[34] Regular day-sleep tends to slowly poison the *Dhatus* of the body, and this slow poison is known as the *Dushi Visha*. The poisons which vitiate *Dhatu*, because of factors such as specific *Desha*, *Kala*, food, and sleeping during day time is called as *Dushi Visha*.^[35,36]

Dalhana's commentaries elaborate that day sleep causes various diseases. While explaining the causes of *Pratishyaya*, the author mentions a word 'Vividhahi Prakopanaihi', which *Acharya Dalhana* describes as other factors mentioned in *Vranaprashna Adhyaya* that include *Krodha* (anger), *Divaswapna*, etc.^[37] Similarly, while explaining the causes of *Gulma*, the author mentions a word 'Yathoktaihi Kopanaihi' in the main verse, which *Acharya Dalhana* describes as other factors mentioned in *Vranaprashna Adhyaya* that include *Krodha* (anger), *Divaswapna*, etc.^[38]

Ashtanga Hridaya aligns with above mentioned observations. In addition to this, while describing *Asadhyva Vrana*, the author says even curable ulcers become incurable due to certain lifestyles, such as day sleeping.^[39] It leads to occurrences of itching, redness, pain, swelling, and pus in the ulcer (Dushta Vrana).^[40]

Contraindications of *Divaswapna* in Various Contexts

Divaswapna is repeatedly cited across Ayurvedic classics as a lifestyle factor that is to be avoided under several seasonal, pathological, and therapeutic contexts. *Brihatrayi* provides a detailed discourse on its consequences and contraindications, linking it primarily to *Kapha* vitiation and related pathological states. One should not sleep during the daytime. A wise person should always indulge in *Mita Svapna* (sleeping in a moderate amount).^[41]

In the context of seasonal regimens, *Divaswapna* is considered inappropriate, especially in seasons where *Kapha* or *Pitta* dosha predominates. In *Charaka Samhita*, *Divaswapna* is listed as one of the factors to be strictly avoided during *Vasanta Ritu*,^[42] *Varsha Ritu*,^[43] and *Sharad Ritu*.^[44] This seasonal perspective is also reflected in *Sushruta Samhita*, where the *Uttara Tantra* section indicates clear contraindications for *Divaswapna* in *Varsha Ritu*,^[45]

Hemanta Ritu,^[46] *Vasanta Ritu*,^[47] and *Pravrit Ritu*.^[48] Likewise, *Ashtanga Hridaya* emphasizes this seasonal avoidance of *Divaswapna* in *Vasanta Ritu*^[49] and *Sharad Ritu*.^[50]

Divaswapna is strictly contraindicated in several disease conditions. In *Nava Jvara* (initial stage of fever), it is advised that the patient should avoid day sleep to prevent complications from *Doshic* imbalance.^[51,52] Moreover, even after the fever subsides, it should be avoided until full health and strength are restored, underscoring the risk of relapse or incomplete recovery.^[53] In diseases related to abdominal enlargement, such as *Udara*, the authors clearly prohibit day sleep in the management of *Jalodara*.^[54,55] Similarly, patients of *Vatarakta* (gouty arthritis),^[56,57] *Kushtha* (skin diseases),^[58] *Shopha*,^[59] *Netra Roga* (various eye diseases)^[60] and those who have been administered with *Basti* are prohibited from day sleep.^[61] Patients recovering from poisoning also avoid sleeping during the daytime.^[62] Additionally, patients who have been poisoned should also avoid it.^[63] A pregnant lady should avoid excessive day sleep.^[64]

In postoperative or post-procedural conditions, *Divaswapna* is strictly prohibited to support recovery. The person who has been operated on or is in the post-operative care should avoid day sleep.^[65] The persons who have undergone therapies like *Snehana*, *Swedana*, *Vamana*, *Virecana*, *Asthapana Vasti*, *Anuvasana Vasti*, and *Siravyadha* should avoid *Divaswapna* until they obtain strength or for a period of one month after these therapies.^[66] Additionally, until the normal state of health is restored after the *Shodhana*, the patient should avoid all the prohibited activities during that period. He should avoid the eight dietary and lifestyle activities in particular, which are considered very harmful, i.e. *Mahadoshakarana*, and one of them is *Divaswapna*. It is because this gives rise to diseases due to vitiated *Kapha Dosha*.^[67] During specialized therapeutic interventions like *Mukhalepa*, *Divaswapna* is contraindicated to ensure therapeutic efficacy and avoid vitiation of *Doshas*.^[68] More specifically, the author elaborates that sleeping during the day in a wounded condition results in heaviness, itching, swelling, different kinds of pain, redness, and abnormal discharges, ultimately leading to *Vata* aggravation and delayed wound healing.^[69,70]

DISCUSSION

Nidra is described as one among the three pillars of life (*Trayopastambha*), along with *Ahara* (food) and *Brahmacharya* (celibacy or regulated conduct).^[71] In Ayurveda, *Divaswapna* (day sleep) and *Ratrijagarana* (night awakening) are considered forms of abnormal sleep, termed *Nidra-Viparyaya*. While day sleep is often viewed as a harmless or relaxing activity in the modern world, Ayurvedic texts highlight it as a strong causative factor for several diseases and advise its avoidance in multiple health conditions.^[72] Though sleeping during the day is sometimes considered nourishing for the body, especially in specific circumstances like during summer or in debilitated individuals, excessive and improper day sleep leads to various disorders, particularly those caused by over-nourishment. This comprehensive review of the *Brihatrayi* (*Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, and *Ashtanga Hridaya*) shows that *Divaswapna* is contraindicated in a variety of pathological, seasonal, and therapeutic contexts.

The classical texts repeatedly emphasize that *Divaswapna* causes vitiation (aggravation) of all three doshas, *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*, as well as the *Rakta Dhatu* (blood tissue). It also disturbs the *Medovaha Srotas* (fat-carrying channels), leading to disorders related to *Meda Dhatu* (fat tissue). As a result, day sleep contributes to the development of various metabolic disorders such as type 2 diabetes, anemia, irritable bowel syndrome, jaundice, and accumulation of toxins in tissues (similar to the concept of *Dushi Visha*). In addition, diseases like *Jwara* (fever), *Udara Roga* (abdominal diseases), *Vatarakta* (gout), *Kushtha* (skin diseases), *Shopha* (swelling), *Arshas* (haemorrhoids), *Shiroroga* (head diseases), and *Netra Roga* (eye disorders) are known to worsen with improper day sleep.

Another important finding from this review is the strict restriction of *Divaswapna* during post-operative phases and after *Shodhana* therapies. Sleeping during the day in these conditions can delay healing, disturb digestion, and increase the chances of disease relapse. The classical texts clearly explain that avoiding day sleep is essential until full recovery and strength are regained.

Day sleep is also prohibited during certain physiological conditions like pregnancy and the menstrual period, as it is considered harmful to both maternal and fetal health. Avoiding *Divaswapna* during these stages is believed to help in better fetal development and prevent *Tamasic* tendencies (like laziness and dullness) in the offspring.

In psychological purview, *Divaswapna* increases the quality of *Tamas*, which is associated with lethargy, confusion, and delusion. This leads to disturbances such as *Moha* (mental dullness), *Jadya* (sluggishness), and poor *Smriti-Buddhi* (memory and intellect). This concept aligns well with modern scientific findings, which show that improper or excessive sleep disrupts hormonal regulation, emotional balance, and cognitive performance.

The findings of this study show that sleeping during the day is not just a small bad habit, but it plays a major role in starting diseases, making them worse, and even causing them to come back after treatment. *Ayurveda* gives a detailed and deep understanding of how our sleep habits affect our body's natural balance. It clearly explains in which diseases and situations day sleep should be avoided. These guidelines can be very helpful in today's world for guiding people toward healthier lifestyles and preventing many health problems.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this review clearly demonstrates that *Divaswapna* is not a harmless habit but a significant contributor to various diseases, as per *Ayurveda*. The *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, and *Ashtanga Hridaya* strongly contraindicate sleeping during the day in certain seasons, after treatments, and in various health conditions. Day sleep disturbs the balance of doshas, blocks the body channels, and leads to various metabolic and systemic imbalances. It also has a harmful impact on mental health. *Ayurveda* explains in detail when and why day sleep should be avoided. These guidelines are very useful even today for maintaining good health and preventing diseases through simple changes in lifestyle.

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