EJPMR, 2026, 13(8), 431-433 **Review Article** **Impact Factor: 8.158**

EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF PHARMACEUTICAL AND MEDICAL RESEARCH

www.ejpmr.com

ISSN (O): 2394-3211
ISSN (P): 3051-2573
Coden USA: EJPMAG

NIDROITPATTI; PHYSIOLOGICAL AND CLINICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF *NIDRA*

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How to cite this Article: Dr. Parinita R. Kunkulol[1]*, Dr. Revati Fulchand Burse[2] (2026). Nidroitpatti; Physiological And Clinical Significance Of Nidra. European Journal of Pharmaceutical and Medical Research, 13(8), 431–433.

Article Received on 05/07/2026 **Article Revised on 25/07/2026** **Article Published on 01/08/2026**

ABSTRACT
Ayurveda defines sleep as *Nidra*, which is one among the three principal pillars of life known as *Trayopasthambha*, along with *Ahara* and *Brahmacharya*. Good quality and adequate sleep promote mental and physical wellness and help fight off illnesses. Classical Ayurveda texts clearly mention the role of *Nidra* in achieving a long life and improving memory, intelligence, powers of thinking, immunity, beauty, voice, etc. Adequate sleep improves body's defenses, allowing recovering from illnesses and preventing diseases. According to Ayurveda, *Nidra* occurs when *Manas* and *Indriyas* get exhausted, thus achieving temporary rest. From the physiology viewpoint, *Nidra* follows the natural rhythm of circadian cycles and is ruled by the predominance of *Kapha Dosha* as well as *Tamoguna*. The contemporary scientific studies support the classical philosophy by proving the importance of sleep for maintaining immune function, cognitive abilities, and tissue healing. Thus, *Nidra* can be seen not just as a different state of relaxation, but as a process necessary for health maintenance and prevention of diseases. This article explains Ayurvedic perspective of *Nidroitpatti* with physiological and clinical significance of *Nidra*.

KEYWORDS: *Nidra, Sleep, Trayopasthambha, Indriya, Nidroitpatti.*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda considers *Nidra* to be one of the main pillars of life, along with *Ahara* and *Brahmacharya*, indicating its importance in promoting physical, mental, and spiritual welfare. *Nidra* starts when both *Manas* and *Indriyas* become weak following the constant exertion and get inactive which leads to temporary separation from the *Atma*. This physiological condition takes place in accordance with the natural course of the night, the dominance of *Kapha Dosha*, and the influence of *Tamoguna*. *Nidrotpatti* is the process that starts from physical and mental exhaustion that limits the work of sense organs and releases the mind from external stimuli. Besides, *Kapha dosha* surrounds the body channels while *Tamoguna* controls intellect leading to the beginning of sleep. *Charaka* identified seven forms of *Nidra* as mentioned in **Figure 1**.

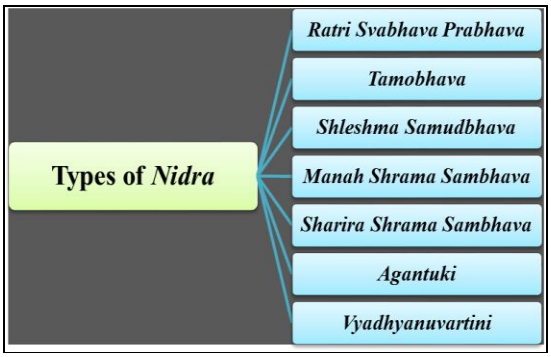

Figure 1: Various types of *Nidra* as per *Charaka*.

- ✓ *Ratri Svabhava Prabhava*, or the natural physiological sleep during the night.
- ✓ *Tamobhava* due to *Tamas* predominance.
- ✓ *Shleshma Samudbhava* due to *Kapha* vitiation.
- ✓ *Manah Shrama Sambhava*, resulting from mental stress.

- ✓ *Sharira Shrama Sambhava* due to physical exhaustion.
- ✓ *Agantuki* induced by outer causes or trauma.
- ✓ *Vyadhyanuvartini* appearing because of diseases.

In Ayurvedic medicine, *Nidra* is considered among the various important aspects of physiology. Sleep is thought to be essential for restoring *Bala* and immunity, preserving *Varna* and promoting *Upachaya*, supporting *Indriyas* as they function at their best, and leading to *Ayushya* through the optimal functioning of the body systems. Indian medicine emphasizes not only the role of *Nidra* in maintaining homeostasis but also in promoting overall health and well-being.

Nidra is pronouncedly significant in Ayurveda from the clinical perspective. Normal sleep prevents health issues while various abnormalities of sleep such as *Atinidra* or *Anidra* can lead to numerous disorders. Disruption of sleep leads to the impairing of the digestive fire. This affects the body causing indigestion, vomiting, blockage of channels in the body, and headaches, making the body stiff and leading to any other inflammatory processes such as confusion and fever. *Anidra* is related to the *Vata Dosha* and *Raja Guna* imbalance leading to weight loss, tiredness, and neurological problems. *Atinidra* is, on the contrary, associated with *Kapha Dosha* and *Tamoguna* imbalance with lethargy, overweight, heaviness of the body, etc.

Physiology of *Nidra*

Ayurveda recognizes that *Nidra* is the consequence of the exhaustion of *Manas*, *Jnanendriyas* and *Karmendriyas* after prolonged physical and mental exertion. Due to their inability to effectively detect and respond to stimuli, the information provided by the *Manas* to the *Atma* ceases, resulting in sleep. This shows how *Nidra* is a natural physiological reaction to the tiredness of the body and mind. In contemporary physiology, sleep is said to be coordinated by sleep promoting centers in the brain. Their activation leads to the onset of sleep, while their impairment results in continuous wakefulness. This process illustrates how sleep is neurophysiologically regulated. The physiological basis of *Nidra* can be viewed as a sequential process. In wakefulness, *Manas* interacts with sensory objects, thereby constantly stimulating *Indriyas* under *Vata* and *Pitta Dosha*. Continuous sensory and mental activity creates *Indriya Shrama* and *Manas Kheda*. When the perception is diminished, the mind pulls back from the sensation. In this case, *Kapha Dosha* becomes more prominent and gives rise to its key qualities; *Guru, Snigdha* and *Manda*. This means that the body enters the stage of *Nidra* where the body's sense organs and movements are blocked. The process of sleeping helps to restore the *Dhatu Poshana*, regulate the *Doshas*, ensures the strength of *Bala* and *Ojas.*

Significance of *Nidra* as per Physiological Aspects

Ayurveda identifies *Nidra* as a key functional mechanism that maintain homeostasis by facilitating physiological, mental, and metabolic restoration. Various anabolic functions take place during sleep, including protein synthesis, tissue repair, cellular restoration, and secretion of hormones related to growth, all of which contribute to the restoration and renewal of the body. This process closely resembles the concept of *Dhatu Poshana* in which body tissues are nourished and revitalized in order to sustain appropriate functioning of body organs and systems. Proper amount of *Nidra* is essential for maintaining *Bala, Ojas* and vitality of the body. From the perspective of neuroscience, *Nidra* is necessary for cognitive renewal. Ayurvedic texts state that *Nidra* is a contributor to *Medha* and *Smriti* while modern science confirms that sleep improves memory consolidation, acquisition of knowledge, brain plasticity, attention, decision-making processes, and emotional control.

Nidra is very important when it comes to keeping the immune system working as it should. Ayurveda believes that sleeping leads to *Ojas* maintenance, an important factor in immunity, vitality and resistance to diseases. Various recent studies have found that sleep improves the functioning of immune cells, regulates inflammation and defenses of a host.

Modern Aspect of Sleep

Sleep can be divided into two distinct types, namely, REM sleep and NREM sleep, based on the modern physiology approach. The term REM sleep refers to the period during which the eyeballs move at great speeds in spite of being asleep that is why it is often referred to as paradoxical sleep. Approximately 20% to 30% of sleep duration is accounted for by REM sleep, which is related to vivid dreams, brain activities, and temporary immobility. REM has its unique function of consolidating memories, learning, regulating emotions and developing cognition. On the other hand, NREM sleep is defined as the sleep without rapid eye movement. NREM sleep constitutes 70% to 80% of the sleep duration. The processes and functions mainly performed during NREM sleep are related to the physical restoration of the body as well as its regeneration, recoveries from injuries, energy retention and synthesis of proteins.

CONCLUSION

Besides *Ahara* and *Brahmacharya*, *Nidra* is one of the three primary supports, or *Trayopasthambha*, of life. The balance in human health directly depends on these three supports functioning in harmony. Therefore, Ayurveda sees *Nidra* as more than a simple rest period; it sees it as a vital physiological process for bringing about growth, repairs, rejuvenation, and maintenance of health. *Nidra* is important from both Ayurvedic and modern scientific viewpoints, where it plays a key role in keeping the balances of *Doshas*, *Dhatus*, *Agni*, and *Manas*, as well as

the *Ojas*. Adequate and punctual sleep makes it possible to maintain physical strength, facilitate metabolic homeostasis, improve mental activity, and promote emotional stability. On the contrary, *Nidra Vaishamya* breaks the harmony of processes taking place in the body and contributes to the development of numerous diseases connected with lifestyle, such as obesity, diabetes mellitus, hypertension, cardiovascular diseases, anxiety, and depression. Comparison of the Ayurvedic term *Nidra* with modern sleep science shows that sleep regulation techniques and following the principles of *Swasthavritta* are very simple, respectful and highly efficient principles, which can be applied for prevention and treatment of lifestyle-related diseases.

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