

**INSOMNIA AS A PRESENTATION OF DEPRESSION MANAGED WITH SIDDHA
VARMAM THERAPY AND HOMOEOPATHIC MEDICINE: A CASE REPORT**L. Janani^{1*} and Tushita Thakur²¹Consultant Siddha Physician, AYUSH Wellness Clinic, President's Estate, New Delhi-110004.²Consultant Homoeopathic Physician, AYUSH Wellness Clinic, President's Estate, New Delhi-110004.**Corresponding Author: Dr. L. Janani**

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ABSTRACT

Insomnia is a common sleep disorder where the patient finds it difficult to fall asleep or stay asleep. This disease condition regularly affects millions of people worldwide. Published literature has reported nearly 30% population has difficulty initiating sleep, difficulty maintaining sleep, wakes up too early and/ or in some cases, non-restorative or poor quality of sleep. Insomnia significantly affects quality of life as it may lead to daytime sleepiness, lethargy, and a general feeling of being unwell, both mentally and physically. Commonly associated symptoms include mood swings, irritability, anxiety and a potentially higher risk of developing chronic diseases. In conventional system of medicine, antipsychotics and sedatives are used to combat insomnia that is often habit forming. However, insomnia can be successfully treated by integrated approach of AYUSH systems of medicine. In Siddha System of medicine, insomnia is referred as Thookaminmai. This paper reports a case of 42 year old female suffering from depression presented with complain of chronic insomnia at AYUSH wellness clinic, President's Estate treated with Siddha Varmam therapy and Homoeopathic individualized oral medicine.

KEYWORDS: Insomnia, Homoeopathy, Individualized treatment, Siddha, Varmam.**INTRODUCTION**

Insomnia is the most common sleep disorder that significantly affects the quality of life of the patient. The patient with insomnia complains primarily of dissatisfaction with the quality and/or quantity of sleep. This dissatisfaction may stem from the difficulty in falling or staying asleep throughout the night, or the number of times patients wake up during the night. The impact of insomnia on health has been studied from the epidemiological point of view, except for its relationship to psychopathology. However, several studies have shown an association of insomnia with a worse overall health status and a self-perception of poor health.^[1,2] Insomnia is usually associated with daytime fatigue and mood disorders such as irritability, dysphoria, tension, helplessness and depression.^[3,4] At least one study suggesting that untreated chronic insomnia may be a risk factor in developing major depression.^[5] In addition, patients with insomnia often have somatic complaints, typically gastrointestinal and respiratory, or headaches and non-specific pains.^[1,6]

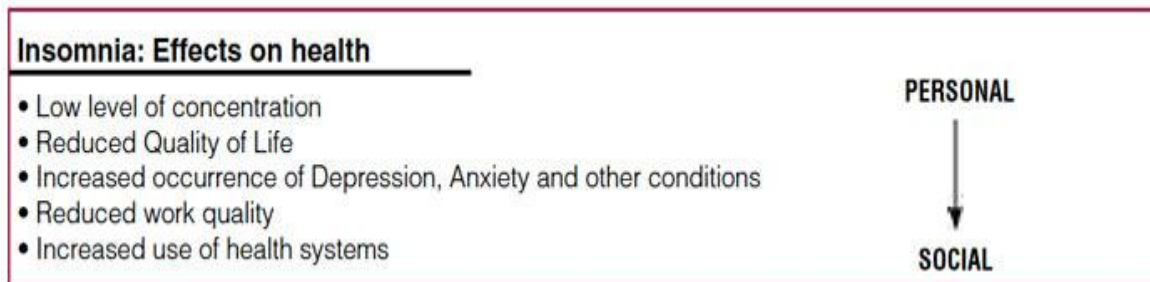
During the day, patients with chronic insomnia may have problems that affect both their health and social and occupational functioning.^[7,8] They may complain of symptoms on the emotional, behavioural and cognitive level and of impairment in their social and working lives, with an increase in absenteeism.^[9] Moreover, they are

more likely to have accidents. Published literature has reported nearly 30% population has difficulty initiating sleep, difficulty maintaining sleep, wakes up too early and/ or in some cases, non-restorative or poor quality of sleep. This result in a poorer quality of life: they are impatient, have difficulty concentrating, organising their work or are warned that their productivity is lower than expected. These patients also have more frequent health service consultations, which represent an increase in both direct and indirect health costs.^[10,11] Diagram 1 shows some of the health effects caused by insomnia, with both personal and social consequences.

When insomnia becomes chronic, it is associated with increased morbidity.^[6] Insomnia or typical manifestations have been associated in epidemiological studies with respiratory disease (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease-COPD, asthma, chronic bronchitis), rheumatic diseases, cardiovascular diseases (coronary heart disease, hypertension), cerebro-vascular conditions (stroke), diabetes and painful diseases, among others.^[6,7]

CAUSES

Insomnia can be caused by physical and psychological factors. There is sometimes an underlying medical condition that causes chronic insomnia, while transient insomnia may be due to a recent event or occurrence. Insomnia is commonly caused by:

Diagram 1. Effects of insomnia on health

Psychological issues - bipolar disorder, depression, anxiety disorders, or psychotic disorders.

Medical conditions - chronic pain, chronic fatigue syndrome, congestive heart failure, angina, acid-reflux disease (GERD), chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma, sleep apnea, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases, hyperthyroidism, arthritis, brain lesions, tumors, stroke.

Disruptions in circadian rhythm - jet lag, job shift changes, high altitudes, environmental noise, extreme heat or cold.

Hormones - estrogen, hormone shifts during menstruation.

Other factors - sleeping next to a snoring partner, parasites, genetic conditions, overactive mind, pregnancy.^[12]

SYMPTOMS OF INSOMNIA^[13]

- difficulty falling asleep, including difficulty finding a comfortable sleeping position.
- waking during the night and being unable to return to sleep.
- feeling un-refreshed upon waking.
- daytime sleepiness, irritability or anxiety.

Sleep-onset insomnia is difficulty falling asleep at the beginning of the night, often a symptom of anxiety disorders. Delayed sleep phase disorder can be misdiagnosed as insomnia, as sleep onset is delayed too much later than normal while awakening spills over into daylight hours.^[14]

It is common for patients who have difficulty falling asleep to also have nocturnal awakenings with difficulty returning to sleep. Two-thirds of these patients wake up in the middle of the night, with more than half having trouble falling back to sleep after a middle-of-the-night awakening.^[15]

Early morning awakening is an awakening occurring earlier (more than 30 minutes) than desired with an inability to go back to sleep, and before total sleep time reaches 6.5 hours. Early morning awakening is often a characteristic of depression.^[17]

DSM-5 CRITERIA FOR INSOMNIA^[18]

1. Predominant complaint of dissatisfaction with sleep quantity or quality, associated with one (or more) of the following symptoms:
 - a) Difficulty initiating sleep. (In children, this may manifest as difficulty initiating sleep without caregiver intervention.)
 - b) Difficulty maintaining sleep, characterized by frequent awakenings or problems returning to sleep after awakenings. (In children, this may manifest as difficulty returning to sleep without caregiver intervention.)
 - c) Early-morning awakening with inability to return to sleep.
2. In addition, the sleep disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, educational, academic, behavioural, or other important areas of functioning.
3. The sleep difficulty occurs at least 3 nights per week.
4. The sleep difficulty is present for at least 3 months.
5. The sleep difficulty occurs despite adequate opportunity for sleep.
6. The insomnia is not better explained by and does not occur exclusively during the course of another sleep-wake disorder (e.g., narcolepsy, a breathing-related sleep disorder, a circadian rhythm sleep-wake disorder, a parasomnia).
7. The insomnia is not attributable to the physiological effects of a substance (e.g., a drug of abuse, a medication).
8. Coexisting mental disorders and medical conditions do not adequately explain the predominant complaint of insomnia.

Siddha System of medicine is one of the ancient traditional Indian system of medicine refers Insomnia as "Thookaminmai". In the Siddha text Noiillaneri describes the effects of Insomnia i.e if the person doesn't sleeps well he will experience heaviness of head, generalized body pain, ophthalmalgia, ear will be normal but the person's brain may not appreciate any sounds.^[19]

Varmam is a unique, special branch of Siddha medical system play a major role in the management Insomnia. From ages Varmam has been developed and used as martial or defensive art and also used in medical healing practice.^[17] According to the Siddha literature, Varma

therapy is considered as Vital points therapy by which the disease are healed by manipulating some pressure points either by touch or massage in appropriate pressure.^[18] Varma therapy is simple, cost effective, non invasive, drugless and can be done at anywhere. Varma is a complete naturalistic healing system to rejuvenate the body by eliminating toxic imbalances to restore resistance and good health in the highly stressful environment of modern times. There are about 108 major Varmam points located in the body, among these Kondaikolli, Patchi ner Varmam, Patchi Varmam, Thilartha kaalam, Vettrilai kaalam, Kuttri kaalam, Adappa Kaalam, Soozhiaadi Varmam, Saramudichu were applied over the patient with Insomnia.

Homeopathy is a holistic system of medicine that believes that body and mind are integrated. German physician Dr. Samuel Hahnemann, the founder of Homoeopathy; emphasised that no two persons are alike and each is different in his physical, mental and behavioural patterns. Homoeopathy attempts to go to the root level of disease in each individual patient by studying the physical make-up of the patient as well mental characteristics. Mental characteristics in Homoeopathy include the symptoms of will, understanding, emotion and intellect. Thus, Homoeopathy individualizes each patient and treats the patient not the disease. Homoeopathic literature gives detailed description of depression, insomnia and psychosomatic illnesses along with their treatment. Homoeopathic medicines are regarded as effective and safe treatment for wide number of acute and chronic diseases.^[20, 21]

In conventional system of medicine, antipsychotics and sedatives are used to combat insomnia that is often habit forming. However, insomnia can be successfully treated by integrated approach of AYUSH systems of medicine. This paper reports a case of 42 year old female suffering from depression presented with complain of chronic insomnia at AYUSH wellness clinic, President's Estate treated with Siddha Varmam therapy and Homoeopathic individualized oral medicine.

CASE REPORT

A 42 year old woman presented in OPD with a primary complaint of sleeplessness at night with daytime fatigue and sleepiness since approximately 11 months.

HISTORY OF PRESENTING COMPLAINT- The patient had a history of bereavement 11 months ago when her son suddenly died in a road-side accident. Initially, she had long spells of crying, poor eating schedule and difficulty falling asleep after this incident. She gave history of strong ruminations about the time spent with her child and gradually although the eating schedule is better; in the past 6 months, sleeplessness and daytime fatigue have increased in severity. Presently, the patient wakes up 3 or more times per night at least 5 nights per week, and on most nights has difficulty falling asleep (takes her about 40 minutes to an hour). There is

confusion of mind on waking up in morning from bed, brooding and irritability.

HISTORY OF PREVIOUS ILLNESS- NO H/O of Diabetes mellitus/ Hypertension/ Bronchial asthma/ Ischemic heart disease.

FAMILY HISTORY- No family history of insomnia or depression is reported.

PERSONAL HISTORY- Diet is vegetarian. Disinclined to eat food on time, says not hungry.

MENSTRUAL HISTORY- Cycle Length and frequency - 3/28, Regular

MEDICATION HISTORY: H/O of taking sleeping pills for Insomnia present for 4 months.

TREATMENT SUMMARY- Varmam therapy was given every day for 12 weeks. Each varma point mentioned below will be stimulated with pressure mentioned in text and may vary according to patient's pirakuruthi (body constitution).

1. **Kondaikolli** – To correct the chemistry of cerebrospinal fluids of the brain and mind in the spiritual heart.
2. **Patchi ner Varmam** – To enhance the spiritual condition of the mind and body and to activate functions of the body and mind.
3. **Patchi Varmam** – To reduce the mental stress and cool down the anxiety and enhance the positive thoughts through divine power – Varma energy into the body.
4. **Thilartha kaalam** – To activate mind, decision making, intellect, and rational thoughts, (Manam, Puthi, Siddham, Agangaram).
5. **Vettrilai kaalam** – located three finger right side of Patchi ner Varmam. To regulate the divine power into the mind and body (Vasi) to accomplish or carried out all functions smoothly, because of the relief in mental stress and mental calmness will be attained.
6. **Kuttri kaalam** – To normalize Vatham, Pitham and Kabam. To coordinate the parts of body according to the thoughts of mind. To maintain well being status.
7. **Adappa Kaalam** – To attain the spiritual power and relieve bad evil thoughts from the mind through the activation of mind, lungs and liver.
8. **Soozhiaadi Varmam** – To enhance the spiritual energy in the body and mind and connect the energy system between head and the trunk of the body.
9. **Saramudichu** – To regulate Saram (Important energy circulation in the body) so as to reach good conditions of mind and body.^[18]

Homoeopathic medicine was prescribed to the patient as per the detailed case history of patient, symptom totality,

individualization and repertorisation. The rubrics taken for repertorisation are mentioned below^[14]

1. MIND-AILMENTS FROM- grief.
2. MIND-BROODING.
3. MIND-CONVERSATION-aggravates.
4. MIND-CONFUSION of mind-waking on.
5. MIND-IRRITABILITY- sadness, with.
6. MIND-WEEPING-involuntary.
7. SLEEP-SLEEPLESSNESS-grief from.
8. GENERALS-WEARINESS.
9. STOMACH-APPETITE-wanting.

The reportorial result is mentioned below

Natrum mur 22/8

Ignatia 19/8

Sepia 17/8

Sulphur 15/8

Lachesis 13/8

Platina 13/8

Natrum mur 200c five pills early morning empty stomach one dose followed by Rubrum met 30, five pills thrice a day for 15 days. As the patient reported symptomatic improvement; the same treatment protocol was followed up to 12 weeks. After 12 weeks, Rubrum met 30, five pills thrice a day were prescribed and the patient was followed up to 2 months.

ASSESSMENT PARAMETERS ADOPTED

Insomnia Severity index (ISI) and Hamilton Depression Rating Scale (HAM-D) were used as assessment criteria in the patient. ISI is a reliable self-report seven question measure to evaluate perceived sleep difficulties. It has adequate internal consistency and is a valid and sensitive measure to detect changes in perceived sleep difficulties with treatment. In addition, there is a close convergence between scores obtained from the ISI patient's version and those from the clinician's and significant other's versions. The ISI is thus, a clinically useful tool as a screening device or as an outcome measure in insomnia treatment research.^[15] The Hamilton Depression Rating Scale (HAM-D) is the proven scale to determine a patient's level of depression before, during, and after treatment. Although the HAM-D form lists 21 items, the scoring is based on the first 17. It has a sensitivity of 86.4% and specificity of 92.2%.^[16]

RESULTS

The results as per the assessment criteria are presented before and 12 weeks after taking Individualised Homeopathic medicine along with Siddha Varma therapy is listed table 1.

Table1: Assessment Before and 12 Weeks After Treatment.

| Assessment criteria | Before treatment (BT) | After treatment (AT) |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Insomnia severity Index | 21 | 4 |
| HAM-D | 21 | 10 |

DISCUSSION

Insomnia is a common sleep disorder that affects 30% of general population at least once in their lifetime. Many times insomnia can be a presentation of masked anxiety or depression. The treatment for Insomnia is often harmful due its side effects, which leads to tolerance, dependence on the pills in order to fall asleep, or abuse of the medications. Nowadays people shows increased interest in AYUSH systems of medicine by which Insomnia can be treated successfully. The Varmam therapy is a non-pharmacological treatment that is capable of enhancing the body functions, relaxes the mind, activates the correct circulation of cerebrospinal fluids, energy (Varma energy) and blood in the brain and body. The Varma therapy bring out proper function of endocrine and exocrine system of the body and regulate 'vasi'(Varmam energy), Saram (energy emerging after passing all six chakras and enter into the brain) and pranam (energy bearing or energized blood with oxygen flowing throughout the body in each cells and tissues of the body) thereby it is effective for the management of Insomnia.

Homeopathy is increasingly becoming the treatment of choice among patients for psycho-somatic diseases, depression, anxiety, insomnia etc. Animal model studies as well as randomised placebo-controlled clinical trials have reported efficacy of homeopathy in Insomnia. Ruiz-Vega, G et al (2003) reported the efficacy of homeopathic medicine in increasing sleep time in laboratory rats, unlike the rats of the control group.^[22] Naude DF et al (2010) published a randomized, placebo-controlled, double blind study in which 30 persons were randomly divided into two separate groups, with one taking a prescribed Homeopathic remedy, and the other taking a placebo. In a two week follow up, persons taking the Homeopathic remedies reported longer sleeping times, at a statistically higher rate than those taking placebo.^[23] Hejazi, S et al (2012) conducted a single, double blind, randomized, double placebo-controlled clinical trial in which 90 Iranian students suffering from insomnia were divided into 2 groups. The first group received homeopathic medicine and the other an herbal preparation. This study concluded that homeopathic medicine was superior herbal preparation and had no side effects.^[24]

In the present case report, the detailed case history of patient was taken. Based on symptom totality of the patient, the case was individualised and repertorized. Homeopathic medicine Natrum mur 200c five pills early morning empty stomach one dose followed by Rubrum met 30, five pills thrice a day for 15 days. As the patient reported symptomatic improvement; the same treatment protocol was followed up to 12 weeks. Varmam therapy was given for the patient everyday for 12 weeks along with homeopathic medicine. The patient reported significant improvement as per the assessment criteria within 12 weeks from starting

treatment with marked relief in all complaints. The patient is now being followed up with Rubrum met 30, five pills thrice a day along with Varma therapy weekly once since last 2 months with continued improvement.

CONCLUSION

Varma therapy which is non invasive, simple, effective along with individualised homoeopathic medicine can be a valid treatment option for patients suffering from insomnia with depression.

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