

ANTHOLOGY OF NIDRA IN AYURVEDA AND CONTEMPORARY SCIENCES- A REVIEW ARTICLE

Dr. Amaresh Kar¹, Sonam Agrawal, Tanishi Mahapatra, Pradip Kumar Panda

Assistant Professor Department of Samhita Siddhnata, Sri Sri College of Ayurvedic Science and Research Hospital, Sri Sri University.

ABSTRACT:

Introduction: With the advancement of science man reached the moon but the fundamentals of life are remained the same. Sleep is considered a basic need for the restoration of life and essential to maintain the homeostasis of body and mind. From ancient times to till date researchers have tried their best to get the best definition of sleep and to add its importance for the survival of human beings. Materials and Methods: Based on different available contents this paper aims to evaluate the scientific understanding of Nidra (sleep) to attain a complete physical, mental and emotional equilibrium. Simultaneously it will compile, understand and identify the role of sleep in maintaining homeostasis at different levels. Discussion and Conclusion: Going through the Pre-Veda, Purana, Upanishad, Yoga Sutra, and Ayurveda it was found that sleep has a direct influence on age, season, activities/nature of work, healthy or diseased condition, before or after food, lean or obese, Dinacharya, Rtucharya and so on, to declare the stage of Dhatusamya.

KEYWORDS: Nidra, Anthology of Nidra, Nidra in Ayurveda, Sleep for homeostasis, concept of Nidra in contemporary sciences.

Introduction:

Sleep is a state of reduced mental and physical activity in which consciousness is altered and sensory activity is inhibited to a certain extent. Ayurveda scholars have included sleep among the 3 basic pillars of life (Trayopastambha)- Aahar, Nidra and Bramhacharya (Diet, Sleep and Celibacy). Sleep being one of the most essential units, is the basic need of a person, be it children, adolescents, adults or elderly persons.

However, the most disturbed sleep patterns are proven to be those of adults. The haphazard yet sedentary lifestyle, improper eating habits, extended screen time, academics and peer pressure are the foremost reasons for decreased and disturbed sleep cycles amongst the adult student population. Decreased or disturbed sleep quality usually has a negative impact on the learning process, imbibing capacity and overall performance of a student.

Aim and Objectives:

This paper aims to evaluate and unravel the scientific understanding of Nidra w.s,r to attain a complete physical, mental and emotional equilibrium explained at different contemporary science of Ayurveda.

Objectives:

- i. To compile Nidra from different available contemporary sciences/classics like Yoga, Upanishad and Purana etc.
- **ii.** To evaluate and understand the concept of Nidra from different individual prospective and their logical interpretations.
- **iii.** To identify the most essential function and role of Nidra to maintain homeostasis beyond physical requirements.

Materials and Methods:

To conduct this study, materials were collected from different sources like classical text books of Ayurveda, Yoga Shasrtra, Purana, Upanishad, published online articles, ritual and sacred books, dictionary etc.

Nirukti and Vyutpatti:

Nindyate iti nidra (Shabdakalpadruma) "द्रा कत्सायाम् गतौ।" 1

According to Sanskrit Grammar, "Nidra" word is of feminine gender. The word "Nidra" is derived from the verbal root "dra" with "ni" prefix and "ruk" and "tap" suffix. The verbal root "dra" means undesired, to run, to make haste and "Gatau" means to lead. It is a state which is hated and hence called Nidra².

Synonyms of Nidra:

In Amarkosha ³, four synonyms of Nidra have been mentioned, which are:- 1. Shayanam 2. Swapah 3. Swapnah 4. Samvesh Similarly in Vaidyaka Shabha Sindhu⁴, three synonyms have been mentioned, which are:- 1. Shambhashah 2. Suptih 3. Swapanam

Mention of Nidra in Pre-Vedic and Vedic periods:

1.According to the Shakta Philosophy, "Nidra" is another name of Goddess Mahakali who represents the tamas guna. 2.Nidra also has a reference to "Kalaraatri" who is associated with night, sleep, hallucination and enchantment. (Maya) 3. In Natyashaastra, "Nidra" is considered as one amongst the 33 transitory states (Vyabhicharibhava) 4.In Shiva Purana, Nidra has been used to describe Goddess Uma wherein it has been told, "nidra twam sarvabhuteshu" meaning to "you are Nidra in all living beings". 5.In Harivamsa, Nidra is a female Goddess identified with Ekanamsha. 6.In Bhagvad Gita, Chapter 18, Shloka 39 states, "Yad agre cha anubandhe cha sukham mohanam atmanah,nidra-alasya pramada-uttham tat tamasam udahritam." This means the one who takes pleasure in laziness and sleep, one who is blind to self-realization and is in the mode of ignorance, there is only distress both in the beginning and in the end.

Upanishad and Yogic theories of Nidra:

The ancient seers of Upanishads, had many intriguing theories to offer on Nidra⁵.

- 1. The fatigue theory of sleep has been rightly brought forth by giving an example of a bird, having flown in the sky, gets tired, folds its wings and retires to its nest. Similarly, a tired person hastens to reach that state where he is devoid of all desires and dreams. This state is called as sleep.
- 2. Another theory suggests that sleep is brought about by the soul"s lodgement in Naadis. It states that the hear sends about 72,000 Nadis to the Puritata". Duessen has translated "puritata" as the "pericardium", while Max Muller has translated it to the surrounding body. Puritata might correspond modernly to the pineal gland as far as function is concerned. According to the seers" imagination, the soul moves from the heart via the "nadis" and gets lodged in the "Puritata" after which sleep is followed.
- 3. Ajatashatru,gave another view stating that, when sleep occurs, the soul rests inside the heart. Ajatashatru conducted an experimental investigation to show Gargya that this was true. He led him by the hand to a man who was asleep. He was called by name repeatedly, but he didn't answer. Then he gave him a hand rub. Man stood up. Then Ajatashatru remarked, "This man's soul, full of intellect, lay in the area inside the heart when he was asleep." The doctrines of Upanishads, explains the existence of four different levels of consciousness of human beings. They are: -
- 1. Waking consciousness- Jagritavastha
- 2. Dreaming consciousness- Swapnavastha
- 3. Dreamless sleep- Sushuptavastha
- 4. Turiya (conscious dreamless sleep)- Turiyavastha

The Yogic philosophers explained sleep along with Samadhi, which resembles sleep but is entirely different from it⁶.

- 1. In the 6th Chapter of Bhagavad Geeta, (verses 16 &17), Lord Krishna states, that yoga is not meant for persons who sleep long or completely stay awake. It is for those whose sleep and wakefulness are regulated⁷.
- 2. Other Yogis also opined that, Upavayu Devadutta, controls the Nidra of an individual. 3.Patanjali Maharshi explained sleep as a state wherein all mental activities, thoughts and feelings come to cease. He adds that, the senses rest in consciousness, consciousness rest in the mind and the mind rests in the body. The senses of perception cease to function as their control centre the mind is at rest during deep sleep⁸.

Concept of Yoga Nidra:

An article published by Dr. Kamakhya Kumar, titled Origin and application of Yoga Nidra states that, the word Yoga Nidra firstly mentioned in Devi Mahatmya on of the great part of Markedaya Purana. According to Patanjali Yoga Sutra, Yoga Nidra can lean the aspirants to a stage of Samadhi. These days Yoga Nidra is practiced as a best-known technique to induce complete physical mental and emotional relaxation. Yoga Nidra is a state of consciousness, which is, neither sleep nor awaken, neither is it concentration nor hypnotism. It can be defined, as an altered state of consciousness.

Nidra in Ayurveda:

ननद्रायत्तं सुखं दुखं पुनटुः कार्श्यंबलाबलम्। वृषता क्लीबता ज्ञानमज्ञानं जीनवतं न च॥

The above shloka explains that Nidra is the cause of happiness, sorrow (correlated with wellbeing and diseased state), nourishment, strength, emaciation, sterility, virility, knowledge, ignorance, life and death⁹. Many references of Nidra have been mentioned in the Brihatrayees.

According to Acharya Charaka,

This means a person who never thinks about the work he has to do, consume nutritious food daily and takes more than the required amount of Nidra, becomes as healthy as a Varaha¹⁰.

ONSET OF NIDRA:

According to Acharya Charaka,

यदा तुमन<mark>नस क्लान्तेकमाात्मानुः क्लमान्विताुः | नवष</mark>येभ्यो ननवतान्तेत<mark>दा स्वनपनत मा</mark>नवुः || (Ch.Su. 21/35)

Charaka has defined as Nidra as that state where after performing laborious acts, Manas becomes Klanta(tired) and the Indriyas cease the connections with their concerned Vishayas (objects or stimuli)^{11,12}.

According to Acharya Sushruta,

Hridaya, is considered as the seat of manas, and when manas is engulfed by Tamo-bhava, the person gets sleep. Further he states that

करणानांतुवैकल्येतमसाऽनभप्रवनधाते। अस्वपन्ननप भूतात्मा प्रसुप्त इव चोच्यते॥

(Su.Sha. 4/37)

This means, in Vaikalya state of Indriyas, which means the exhaustion of sensory organs lead to the marked increase of Tamobhava due to which the Bhutatma falls asleep^{13,14}.

- 3. **Dalhana** in his commentary has mentioned Nidra as a state of combination of mind and intellect in which the person feels happy both at physical and sensorial levels¹⁵.
- 4. According to Vagbhatta (Ashtanga Sangraha),

लोकानदसगाप्रभवा तमोमूला तमोमयी। बाहुल्यात्तमसो रात्रौ ननद्रा प्रायेण जायते॥(A.S.Su.9/28) श्लेष्मावृतेषुस्रोतस्सुश्रमादुपरतेषुच। इन्वियेषुस्वकमाभ्यो ननद्रा नवशनत देनहनम्॥ (A.S.Su. 9/29) सवेन्वियव्युपरतौमनोऽनुपरतंयदा। नवषयेभ्यस्तदास्वप्नंनानारूपंप्रपर्श्यनत॥ (A.S.Su.9/39)

At the time of Sarga, there is prominence of Tamoguna, due to which Nidra occurs. Further, the Srotas is accumulated with Sleshma, mind gets devoid of sensory perception due to fatigue, as a result of which, the person gets sleep.

5. Further he adds that since night is "Tamoadhikya" in nature, it contributes to Nidra as Nidra itself is Tamamoola & Tamomayi. Therefore, when the mind becomes Tamoadhika and/or the body becomes Kapha-adhika, Indriyas become inactive and Nidra occurs^{16, 17}.

Rules and benefits of proper Nidra:

Charaka and other Acharyas have explained the benefits of proper Nidra and drawbacks of having less Nidra.

अकालेऽनतप्रसङ्गाच्च न च ननद्रा ननषेनवता। सुखायुषी पराकु याात्कालरानत्ररखापरा॥ (Ch.Su.21/37; A.S.Su. 9/23; A.H.Su. 7/54)

सैव युक्ता पुनयुाङ्क क्तेननद्रा देहं सु<mark>खायुषा। पुरुषंयोनगनं नसद्ध्या सत्या बुन्विररवागता</mark>॥ (Ch.Su. 21/38)

Acharya Charak and Vagbhatta, have mentioned to avoid

- 1. Akala Nidra-sleeping at improper times
- 2. Atiprasanga-excessive sleep
- 3. Nidra Na Sevita- Not taking proper amount of sleep

The above mentioned, are said to be Kala-ratri and destroys the Ayusha and Arogya of the person¹⁸. If proper Nidra is habituated, a person receives the boon of being Aarogya, increased physical strength, proper utilisation of Indriyas and maintenance of increased life span.

On the other hand, if Nidra isn't taken properly then, different types of diseases, emaciation, decreased physical strength, sterility, and improper working of senses occurs¹⁹.

According to Ashtanga Hridaya:

अकालशयनान्मोहज्<mark>वरस्तै</mark>नमत<mark>्यपीनसा|नश</mark>रोरुक्शोफहल्लासस्रोतोरोधा<mark>निम</mark>न्दताुः|| तत्रोपवासवमनस्वेदनावनमौषधम्| योजयेदनतननद्रायांतीक्ष्णंप्रच्छदानाञ्जनम्||

नावनंलङ्घनं नचन्तांव्यवायंशोकभीक्रु धुः । एनभरेव च ननद्राया नाशुः श्लेष्मानतसङ्खयात्॥

(A.H.Su.7/61-63)

Vagbhatta has mentioned the complications caused due to Akala-Sayana (untimed sleep) which are, Moha(delusion), Jwara(fever), Staimitya(lassitude), Pinasa(nasal-catarrh), Shiroruk (headache), Shopha(inflammation), Hrllasa(nausea), Sroto-rodha (obstructionin channels), Agnimandya (diminished digestive strength) and Upvasa, Vamana, Swedana and Navana nasya have been recommended as treatment.

Classification of Nidra:

Table.1 - Types of Nidra acc to different Acharya

Name of Acharya	Types of Nidra
Charaka	6
Sushuruta	3
Vagbhatta (Ast. Samgraha)	7

Charaka's Classification:

Charaka has classified Nidra into six different categories: -

तमोभवा श्लेष्मसमुद्भवा च मनुः शरीरश्रमसम्भवा च आगन्तुकी व्याध्यनुवनतानी च रानत्रस्वभावप्रभवा च ननद्रा॥ (Ch.Su. 21/58)

- 1. **Tamobhava:** sleep caused due to increased tamas bhava
- 2. **Sleshmasamudbhava**:- sleep caused by aggravated sleshma(kapha)
- 3. Manashareer sambhava:- sleep caused due to exhaustion of body and mind.
- 4. Agantuki:- sleep occurring before death, indicating bad prognosis
- 5. **Vyadhyanuvartini:-** sleep caused as a complication of disease
- 6. **Ratriswabhavaprabhava:-** the physiological sleep occurring at night²⁰.

Sushruta's Classification: -

Sushruta has classified Nidra into three different types:

- 1. **Vaishnaivi Nidra** It is also known as Swabhavika Nidra. It is caused when Manas and Atma is subdued by Sleshma and Tamas. It can be correlated with Charaka"s Raatriswabhavaprabhava Nidra.
- 2. **Tamasi Nidra** It is the lack of consciousness preceding death. It occurs when the Sanjnavaha Srotas, is blocked by Tama dominant Kapha and the individual cannot be woken up from this state. It can be correlated with Charaka"s Agantuki and Tamobhava Nidra.
- 3. Vaikariki Nidra- It is caused due to the increase of Kapha and decrease of Vata and also due to physical and mental distress. This can be correlated with Sleshmasamudbhava, Vyadhyanuvartini and Mana-sharira shrama sambhava Nidras of Charaka²¹.

Vagbhatta's Classification:

Vagbhatta has almost opined similar to Charaka, other than the categorisation of sleep.

Vagbhatta has classified sleep into seven categories in Ashtanga Sangraha:-

- 1. Kala-swabhava- It is the physiological sleep caused due to the night
- 2. Amaya-kheda-prabhava- Caused due to complications or other diseases
- 3. Chitta- kheda- Caused due to mental exhaustion
- 4. **Deha-kheda** Caused by physical exhaustion
- 5. **Kapha Prabhava** Caused due to vitiated kapha
- 6. Agantuka- Sleep caused before death indicating bad prognosis
- 7. Tamo-prabhava- Caused by tamas²².

Nidra Vega Dharan: (Suppression of sleep urge)

Acharya Charaka has also mentioned about the Nidra Vega Dharan.

जम्भाऽङ्गमदास्ति। च नशरोरोगोऽनक्षगौरवम्। ननद्रा<mark>नवधारणात्तत्र स्वप्नुः सं</mark>वाहनानन च्रा (Ch.Su. <mark>7/23</mark>)

He explains that since sleep is a natural urge ,it shouldn't be suppressed and if suppressed, it leads to more yawning(jrumbha), body pain(anga-marda), drowsiness(tandra), diseases pertaining to head (shiroroga) and heaviness in eyes(netra gaurava). For treatment of symptoms manifesting due to nidra vega dharan, sleep (swapna) and massage (samvahan) have been suggested²³.

According to Ashtang Hridaya and Ashtang Sangraha:-

ननद्राया मोहमूधाानक्षगौरवालस्यजन्वम्भका । अङ्गमदाश्च तत्रेटुः स्वप्नुः संवाहनानन च ॥ (A.S.Su. 5/15)

Vagbhatta, explains that Nidra-vega-dharan causes delusion (Moha), heaviness in head and eyes (Murdha-akshi gaurav), laziness (Alasya), excessive yawning (Jrumbhika), and body pain (Anga-marda). He has opined similar treatment as mentioned by Charaka.

NIDRA-NASHA:

ननद्राप्रसङ्गमनहतंवारयन्वन्त समुन्वितम्॥ एत एव च नवज्ञेया ननद्रानाशस्य हेतवुः । कायंकालो नवकारश्च प्रकृ नतवाायुरेव च॥ (Ch.Su.21/56-57)

Further mentioning about Nidra nasha, Charaka describes the Hetu (causes), mentioning, too much indulgence in a particular work, any diseased condition, timings when one is not habituated to sleep, Prakriti (Psychosomatic constitution) i.e. the individuals with Pitta and Vata dominant Prakriti do not feel much sleepy) and Vikriti vitiation of Pitta and Vata reduces the sleeping activity. For the treatment of Nidra nasha, Charaka has recommended treatment like, Abhyanga(massage), Utsadan(application of Ubtana or massage with powdered drugs), Aanupa Mamsa (flesh of aquatic animals), Dadhi (curd), Ksheera (milk), Madya (Wine), Netra tarpan, application of Sheeta virya dravyas on head and body²⁴.

ATINIDRA: Atinidra has also been a part of Charaka"s discussion.

कायस्य नशरसश्चैव नवरेकश्छदानंभयम्। नचन्ता क्रोधस्तथा धूमो व्यायामो रक्तमोक्षणम्। उपवासोऽसुखा शय्या सत्त्वौदायंतमोजयुः। ननद्राप्रसङ्गमनहतंवारयन्वन्त समुन्वितम्। (Ch.Su.21/55-56)

Here, he states the treatment for Atinidra. Kayavirechana, Shirovirechana, Vamana, Bhaya, Chinta, Krodha, Dhumapana, Vyayama, Raktamokshana, Upavasa, increase of Sattva guna and decrement of Tamo guna are the different lines to be followed for Atinidra²⁵.

NIDRA ACCORDING TO PRAKRITI:

Table.2 -Nidra and Manas Prakriti²⁶

Manas Prakriti	Time at which they sleep	Quality of sleep
Tamasik Prakriti	Both during day-time and night-time	Deep sleep
Rajasik Prakriti	Either during day or during night Light	Light and disturbed sleep
Sattvik Prakriti	Sleep only after mid-night	Peaceful sleep

Nidra and Vaya:

Table 3:- Relationship of Nidra with Age²⁷

Age	Dominant Dos <mark>ha</mark>	Sleep Pattern
Bala-avast <mark>h</mark> a	Kapha	Ati-nidra(excess sleep)
Yuva-avastha	Pitta	Disturbed sleep
Vriddha-ava <mark>sth</mark> a	Vata	Alpa-nidra(less sleep)

NIDRA AND DHATU:-

Dhaty-Samya correlated with homeostasis, is exclusively dependent on proper sleep²⁸.

Charaka and *Sushruta* that proper nourishment, strength of the body, stable *Ayusha* and *Dhatusamyata*, are achieved by proper sleep.

Table 4:- Karma of Nidra on Dhatu²⁹.

NIDRA-KARMA
Pushti and Varnaprada
Varna and Agnidipti
Pushti and Bala

Meda	Shriman(attractiveness)	
Asthi	Bala	
Majja	Varna and Utasaha	
Shukra	Vrishata and Utasaha	
Ojas	Jivana	
Manasa	Jnana and Sukha	

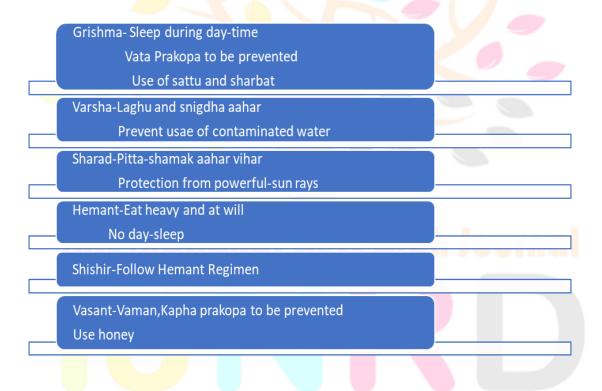
NIDRA AND AGNI³⁰: -

According to Acharya Bhavmishra, proper sleep ignites the Jatharagni properly.

Acharya Vagbhatta states that Akala-shayana, leads to Agni-mandya.

Acharya Sushruta states, Ratri-jagarana, leads to vitiation of Vata and Pitta Doshas.

Relationship of Nidra with Different Ritus



Discussion:

The science of sleep has been analysed and presented differently by various systems like through physical symptoms (In Ayurveda), emotional wellbeing (Yoga/Upanishad) or chemical changes (the modern science) but overall accepts that, it's one among most vital part of human sustainability.

ब्राह्मे मुहुर्त उत्तिष्ठेत्स्वस्थो रक्षार्थमायुषः। Ast.Hri 2/1)

As per the principles of Ayurveda (Astanga Samgraha), the first sign of healthy person is who wakes up in the *Bramha Muhurta* with Ahara Jeerna Lakshana. Here *Bramha Muhurta* falls under the *Anitm prahara* (last 3 hours) of night i.e. Vata Kala³¹.

By analysing the wake up time, if a person will complete his dinner in the first Prahara of night (i.e. avoiding late night food) and goes for sleep without indulging in any other Indriyartha (sensorial involvements), then only he will be able to wake up early in morning (*bramhi muhurta*) as this is the time of eliminating of *Mala(s)* from the Shareera. These are the natural urges which should not either be supressed or to be expelled forcefully from the body may results in to diseases.

तमोवातकफात्तन्द्रा, निद्रा श्लेष्मतमोभवा । । (Su. Sha. 4/55)

The root cause of Nidra is Tamo guna. It's also indicates the increase of Shlesma (Kapha dosha) in the body. Nidra has been described in Veda, Upanishad, Purana, Yoga, Ayurveda at different context along with its general and scientific benefits, indication, types etc. Shlesma is the material state of Tamasa with identical properties and hence Shlesma and Tamasa are directly proportionate to each other as Kapha is the dominant in Sthira Guna, which in turns provides the stability to the mind and hence persons get sleep. It is also evident from the fact that after eating Guru, Snigdha, Kapha Pradhan Atimatra Ahara, and a person feels sleepy. Both Shleshma and Tama are directly proportionate to each other³².

Upanishadas have described four stages of Nidra which are Jagrita (awaking), Swapna (dreaming), Supta (deep sleep) and Turiya (the identity with Godhead). This explains that Nidra has a broader and deeper aspect attached to it. Dharma, Artha and Moksha are the three Ashanas described by Charakacharya. These are interlinked with each other in the sense that the Arthaprapti done by practising Dharma will lead to Moksha Prapti. The stages Supta and Turiya deal with the Mokshaprapti and the stages Jagrita and Swapna are related to the prior Dharma Palana. The present study deals with the Jagrita and Swapna Avastha of Nidra.

In Ayurveda, all Brihatrayee acharya has given equal importance to Nidra at many contexts like Vega dharana, Trayopastmbha, Dina charya, Ritu charya, Ahara avsthapaka. For diseases many places Nidra has a role either to manifest the disease or to cure the disease like Diwaswap leads to Prameha (Cha.Ni. 4th chapter) and Nidra as a treatment in Rasa sesa Ajeerna (Ast. Hri Su. 8th). In Charaka Sutra 11th chapter, it has been concluded that, Samayoga of all activities leads to Dhatusamya whereas Atiyoga, Hinayoga or Mithyayoga are the cause for diseases and this principle holds good for Nidra also.

Nidra has been considered as one among the "Trayo-Upastmbha" (trio life supportive pillars) which helps in maintaining "Dhatu-samya" (homeostasis). Further, Acharya explained regarding its indication, contraindications, and different confounding factors affecting sleep e.g. digestion, season, emotional factors, day and night and others. Further, Nidra is also responsible for duo factors like life and death, happiness and sorrow, strength and weakness, weight gain and weight loss. Person those who hold the urge of Nidra will end up with symptoms like delusion, heaviness of head and eyes, repeated yawning and twisting like body pain.

The word Upastmbha denotes the meaning that, Nidra has a great contribution and relation with all basic concepts like Dosha, Dhatu, Mala, Agni, Mana, inside the body and with Kala, Ritu, Ahara, Vyayama etc to maintain the Dhtausamya.

As the interrelationship between Aahara (food habits, Nidra (sleep pattern) and Brmhacharya (control ability over senses) depends on each other to meet the Dhatusamya. Any alternation or misbalance among these three will fail to maintain the equilibrium. The current lifestyle among adulthood students with excessive consumption of fast food and using of electronic devices definitely hampers the sleep pattern.

Conclusion:

As per dictionary meaning the stage where undesired to lead further is known as Nidra. In other contemporary science like Yoga, Upanishad also different types of Nidra has been explained. In Ayurveda description of Nidra has been advised based on individual's age, season, activities or nature of work, healthy or diseased condition, before or after food, lean or obese, Dinacharya, Rtucharya and so on which has a direct influence on health. Seers of Ayurveda discussed vividly on Nidra where both qualitative and quantitative have been promoted equally. It's being a pyramid among Trayopastmbha plays an important role to maintain the homeostasis (Dhatusamya) in the body along with coordination of Aahara (food habits) i.e. from Jatahragni to Dhatwagni level and Bramhacarya (controlling over sensory organs) i.e. Manas Samayoga.

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