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Dr. Priya Sharma

Department of Materia Medica,
Swasthya Kalyan Homoeopathic
College and Research Centre,
(Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan
Rajasthan Ayurved University),
Rajasthan, India

Dr. Anshuman Kankoriya

Department of Repertory,
Swasthya Kalyan Homoeopathic
College and Research Centre
(Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan
Rajasthan Ayurved University),
Rajasthan, India

Corresponding Author:

Dr. Priya Sharma

Department of Materia Medica,
Swasthya Kalyan Homoeopathic
College and Research Centre
(Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan
Rajasthan Ayurved University),
Rajasthan, India

Primary insomnia and its homoeopathic approach

Dr. Priya Sharma and Dr. Anshuman Kankoriya

Abstract

Primary insomnia is a term that has been used for sleeplessness that is not attributable to medical, psychiatric or environmental cause. It is estimated to occur in 25% of all chronic insomnia patients. Common conventional treatment include sedating anti- histamines, Hypnotics, cognitive behavior therapy, behavioral therapy etc. But the hypnotics cause side effects like drowsiness especially during the day time, constipation, headache etc. & they may also cause dependence when patient use them for a long time. Homoeopathy has a great role in the treatment of primary insomnia because we treat each and every patient as a whole and on the basis of individualization so there will be a more chance to cure the sick individual who is suffering from primary insomnia & these medicines also help to decrease stress or provide good quality sleep in patients.

Keywords: Primary insomnia, sleeplessness, homoeopathy, homoeopathic therapeutics

Introduction

Insomnia is sleep disorder in which there is a disruption in the amount and quality of sleep that impairs functioning ^[1].

There are two types of insomnia

1. Primary insomnia
2. Secondary insomnia

Primary insomnia is not directly linked to any other health condition or problem ^[2].

The diagnostic criteria for primary insomnia as set forth by the Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders, fourth edition, text revision (DSM-IV-TR) ^[3].

Primary insomnia caused by jet lag, extreme heat or cold, lack of exercise, caffeine or alcohol use before bedtime, job shift changes, high altitudes, environmental noise, daytime napping ^[4].

Epidemiology

Insomnia is the most common sleep disorder. Various studies worldwide have shown the prevalence of insomnia in 10%–30% of the population, Primary insomnia is estimated to occur in 25% of all chronic insomnia patients. It is hypothesized to be a disorder of hyperarousal, which has been supported by research on the autonomic nervous system and hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis function ^[3, 5, 6].

Etiology

- Stress
- Anxiety
- Day time sleep
- Lack of exercise
- Environmental noise
- Extreme heat or cold
- Jet lag
- Use of too much caffeine, alcohol, drugs while sleeping
- Use of electronic gadgets while sleeping
- Job Shift changes ^[4].

Types of primary insomnia

1. Psychophysiological insomnia
2. Idiopathic insomnia
3. Paradoxical insomnia ^[3]

Pathogenesis

The pathophysiology of primary insomnia is not well known. Recent studies shows that hyperactivity of corticotropin releasing factor (CRF) is responsible for hyperarousal in primary insomnia patients. These findings suggests overactivity of Hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis and corticotropin releasing factor (CRF). Also there are some evidences which suggests that primary insomnia may be linked with mood disorders [7].

Clinical features

- Problems falling asleep and staying awake.
- Sleep that varies, for example: one night of good sleep that comes after several nights of difficult sleep.
- Daytime sleepiness.
- Problems performing normal daily functions, for example: difficulties with memory or concentration and problems at school or work.
- Eye redness.
- Irritability or moodiness.
- Concerns about sleep [8]

Diagnosis & Investigation

A good history taken clinically is most important for a correct diagnosis along with the examined individuals sleep diary to make sure whether the individual is not obtaining enough sleep as per require or good quality of sleep.

Laboratory investigation used in the diagnosis of primary insomnia include the following:

- Sleep diary
- Epworth sleepiness scale
- Polysomnogram
- Actigraphy
- Mental health exam: [9]

General management

Homoeopathic Therapeutics for primary insomnia

1. **Arsenicum album:** Constant drowsiness especially in the evening, with strong and frequent yawnings. Unrefreshing sleep; in the morning it seems as if more sleep were needed. Light sleep; the slightest noise is heard, though the patient dreams continually. Frequent dreams, full of cares, threats apprehensions, repentings and inquietude; anxious, horrible, fantastic, lively and angry dreams; dreams of storms, of fire, of black waters and darkness; dreams with meditation. Frequent waking during the night, with difficulty in sleeping again. Sleeplessness, from anguish and restlessness, with tossing about (after midnight) [10].
2. **Phosphorus:** He sleeps on the right side. Lying on the left side causes anxiety and pain in the heart and palpitation. Late falling to sleep in the evening; lies awake thinking about the affairs of the day and borrowing trouble [11]. Frequent waking from feeling too hot, without perspiration. Frequent waking, with starts and fright. Dreams: anxious, distressing; lascivious; frightful and horrible; or vivid and uneasy; of animals which bite; of robbers fire; the business of the day (which he could not finish); bloodshed; death quarrels [10].
3. **Pulsatilla nigricans:** Constant sleepiness and comatose sleep, with agitation and disquieting fancies, day or night. Great tendency to sleep during day, principally in

evening or afternoon. When sleeping patient lies on back with knees raised and arms placed over head or crossed over abdomen. Fearful, frightful, anxious, confused, vivid, disgusting, voluptuous dreams, of quarrels and of business of the day, of spectres, and of the dead [10].

first sleep restless. Wakes languid, unrefreshed. Irresistible sleepiness in afternoon. Sleeps with hands over head [12].

4. **Nux vomica:** Cannot keep from falling asleep in the evening while sitting or reading hours before bedtime, and wakes at 3 or 4 a. m.; falls into a dreamy sleep at daybreak from which he is hard to arouse, and then feels tired and weak [13]. Goes to sleep late from crowding of thoughts on him. Much yawning and sleepiness during day. Yawning in general; yawning with stretching of limbs. Sleeps mostly lying on the back. Loud snoring respiration during sleep [10].
5. **Coffea cruda:** Full of ideas; quick to act, no sleep on this account. Sleepless, wide-awake condition; impossible to close the eyes; physical excitement through mental exaltation [13]. Wakeful; on a constant move. Sleeps till 3 am, after which only dozing. Wakes with a start, sleep disturbed by dreams [12].
6. **Kalium bromatum:** Restless sleep. Extreme drowsiness. Sleeplessness due to worry and grief and sexual excess. Night terrors. Horrible dreams. [12]
7. Sleeplessness: in anæmic patients, or nervous persons who are exhausted but irritated; from over-fulness of cerebral blood-vessels [10].
8. **Baryta carbonica:** Drowsiness night and day. Sleep with many unquiet dreams [10].
9. **Passiflora incarnata:** Restless and wakeful, resulting from exhaustion. Especially in the feeble, infants and the aged. Insomnia of infants and the aged, and the mentally worried, and overworked, with tendency to convulsions [12].
10. **Aconitum napellus:** Nightmare. Nightly ravings. Anxious dreams. Sleeplessness, with restless and tossing about. Starts up in sleep. Long dreams, with anxiety in chest. Insomnia of the aged [12]. Dreams with a sort of clairvoyance. Light sleep. Impossibility of lying on the side. During sleep, lying on the back, with the hand under the head; or in a sitting posture, with the head inclined forward [10].
11. **Opium:** Sleeplessness with acuteness of hearing; clocks striking and cocks crowing at a distance keep her awake. Sleeplessness, with anxious tossing, restlessness, and delirium. Stupefying, unrefreshing sleep. Lascivious, frightful, and anxious dreams. Dreams and cannot be roused [10]. Distant noise, cocks crowing, etc, keep him awake. Child dreams of cats, dogs, black forms. Bed feels so hot cannot lie on it. Pleasant, fantastic, amorous dreams [12].
12. **Ignatia amara:** Very light sleep; hears everything that happens around him. Sleep, disturbed by nightmare, or by starts and frequent dreams. Starting of the limbs on going to sleep. Dreams, with reflection and reasoning, or with fixed ideas. Dreams with fixed ideas, continuing after waking. Restless sleep, and great restlessness at night. Starts with fright on going to sleep. Whimpering

during sleep ^[10].

13. ***Daphne indica***: Complete sleeplessness, caused, sometimes, by aching in the bones. Inclination to sleep, with inability to accomplish it. Dreams of fire; or of black cats, with nightmare. Agitated, unrefreshing sleep. Starts with fright, on going to sleep, accompanied by shivering, with viscid sweat ^[10].
14. ***Lachesis mutus***: Drowsiness and sleeplessness alternately every two days. Restless sleep, with many dreams. Sleeplessness in the evening with talkativeness. Dreams connected and frequent, poetical and meditative or voluptuous; dreams of quarrels, of horrible things, of spectres, and of death. Sleeplessness, chiefly before midnight, with excessive nervous excitement ^[10].

Conclusion

Primary insomnia is a new emerging problem of the modern lifestyle. Conventional system of medicine has limited scope in treating primary insomnia. Common conventional medicines have a suppressive action only. They only suppress the symptoms which may lead to relapse in a greater intensity. Homoeopathic medicine is useful in treating the primary insomnia without suppressing the symptoms. There is a wonderful scope in homoeopathy for the treatment of Primary insomnia, concept of individualization makes homoeopathy a unique system of medicine.

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