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An Assessment of the Role of Oil Massage in Sound Sleep: A Survey Study

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Abstract: ***Sound sleep plays an integral role in health. A good quality sleep empowers the body to recover and let an individual wake up refreshed. It is a period where the body and mind rest and bodily functions are partially withdrawn & external stimuli is diminished, but easily regained. Globally, poor-quality sleep is prevalent across various age groups, considered to be a public health epidemic that is often unrecognized. Insufficient and/or disturbed sleep impairs attention, alertness, concentration and thus affects on the quality of life. The International classification of sleep disorders lists more than 80 different sleep disorder diagnosed. Massage is the practice of soft tissue manipulation with physical, functional and in some cases psychological purposes. It involves acting on and manipulating the body with the help of different techniques. Oil massage tones up the nervous system, influences respiration and quickens the elimination of toxins and waste materials from the body through skin. Massage with oil increases blood circulation and warms up the body parts. By soothing nervous system, it causes quality sleep. A health survey was carried out by Department of Swasthavritta, Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda (ITRA), Jamnagar through Google Forms platform to assess the health status of individuals and the effect of oil massage in sound sleep. Survey aimed to assess the association between oil massage and quality of sleep. The parameters like nature of sleep with the time duration of night sleep were studied. Total 472 individuals recorded their response out of which 86 individuals were found to be practicing oil massage regularly. Among 86 individuals 65 were experiencing sound sleep. It is concluded that, Oil massage is highly beneficial in producing sound sleep with proper duration.***

Keywords: Massage, Sleep, Sound sleep, Survey

1. Introduction

Sleep is nature's device for restoring lost vitality, there by refreshing and renovating both mind and body for the labours of the succeeding day. During sound sleep the subtle body has a greater access to the cosmic power skies, which replenish the vital power. Naturopathy is the system of natural therapeutics based on the use of Pancha Tattva (five elements) i.e. Earth, Water, Sunlight, Air & Ether. Massage therapy is a scientific manipulation of the soft tissues of the body, which is predominated by Air from these Penta Elements. The general massage, dealing with all parts of body, is highly beneficial in producing a quality sleep. Manipulation of body parts by oil massage enhances the overall blood circulation, removes the toxins from body through the various eliminative organs mainly the skin and transports the nourishment. Oil massage makes the skin more alive and active; stirs up and accelerates the circulation through the system and thus promotes the elimination of systemic poison through skin. It also enhances the nerve stimulation and causes relaxation. So, ultimately it improves the quality of sleep. Oil massage reduces stress, sleeplessness and gives a feeling of well-being. Access to the source of life and mind is greatest when there is the greatest possible rest for life and mind and in sound sleep there is such rest. There is a rhythm of work and rest, which has to be maintained for the continuance of healthy life. Hence, is the need of good quality sleep.

Oil massage can be correlated with Abhyanga procedure emphasized in the science of Ayurveda for the both preventive and curative aspect. Anointing all parts of the body with oil followed by massage is considered as Abhyanga. It is mentioned in the daily regimen of the healthy individuals[1]. Ayurveda says Abhyanga (oil massage) should be performed daily or if not daily, at least applying oil to the head, ears and feet is must to lead a healthy life, important parts that should be massaged are Shira (head), Shravana (ears) and Paada (feet)[2]. In Ayuevedic classic, it is specifiend that proper sleep impartscontentment, complexion, strength, enthusiasm, increased digestion power and mastery over senses[3].

According to direction or technique of massage, Swedish massage is towards the heart or in the direction opposite to the artery & Ayurvedic massage is away from heart or in the direction of artery. The Five fundamental modes of manipulation in massage are effleurage (stroking), friction (rubbing), petrissage (kneading), tapotement (percussion) and vibrations (shaking or trembling). Massage effects on circulatory systems by increasing venous & lymphatic drainage and thus allowing fresh blood to tissue. It also effects on CNS & Musculoskeletal systems and thus provides quality sleep. When the mind including sensory and motor organs is exhausted and they dissociate themselves from their objects, then the individual sleeps. Quality sleep is essential for physical and mental well-being. Oil massage has a greater influence on sound and sufficient sleep. On scientific basis of material used, massage is of two kinds - Dry massage (massage without any material) & Moist massage (massage with oil or any paste). Head massage especially with the oil is a kind of moist massage, which has a greater influence on the good quality sleep.

1) Materials for massage:
Sesame seed oil and Cotton seed oil are used most commonly for massaging. Coconut oil is preferred for head massage by some individuals.

2) Structures concerned in massage[4]:

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Oil massage in its varied application, has either direct or indirect relation to every structure and function of the body; but in its ordinary application, it directly and immediately affects especially the following -

Skin, connective tissues lying just beneath the skin, muscles, large blood vessels, nerve trunks, abdominal viscera, bones, joints and ligaments.

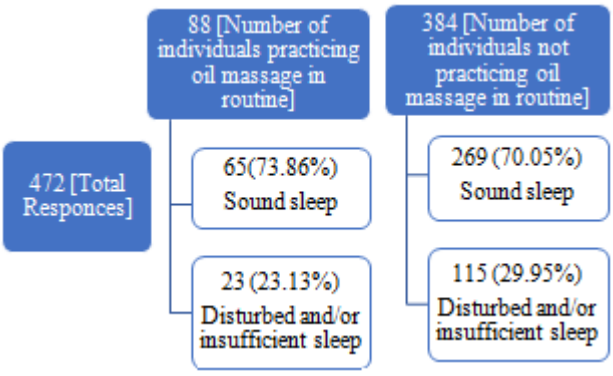
3) Contraindications of massage[5]:
a) Skin disorders which would be irritated by either increase in warmth or lubricants E.g., Eczema
b) Inflammation of joints
c) Open wounds or Unhealed scars
d) Massage near on recently fractured sites
e) Suppuration of superficial infection

Aims & Objectives:
1) To know about the ratio of individuals practicing Oil Massage in daily routine
2) To assess the effects of massage in the Quality and Duration of sleep
3) To establish the relation between Oil massage and Sound sleep

2. Materials & Methods

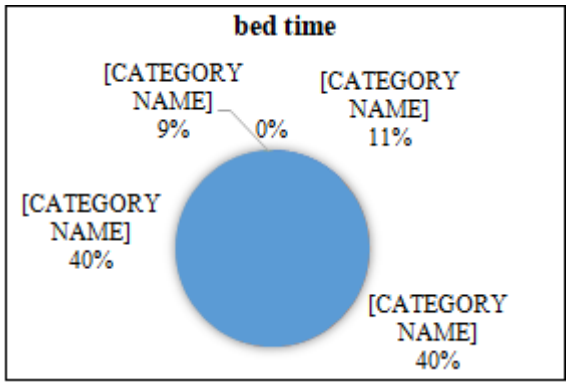
Department of Swasthavritta, Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda (ITRA), Institute of National Importance (INI), Ministry of Ayush (MoA), Government of India (GoI), Jamnagar had conducted a survey on the occasion of World Health Day-2022. The health survey was carried out through a Google form titled-Life style assessment of healthy individual. It was open for all but, yet it was voluntary. It was allowed to response for the duration of 10 days. It was circulated through social media. Total 472 responses were recorded, among which 88 individuals were daily practicing oil massage (Abhyanga). Only 23.13% of them were not having sound sleep. 384 individuals were not practicing oil massage; among them 29.95% individuals were not having sound sleep, which is higher ratio comparing to those of individuals who were practicing oil massage in routine.

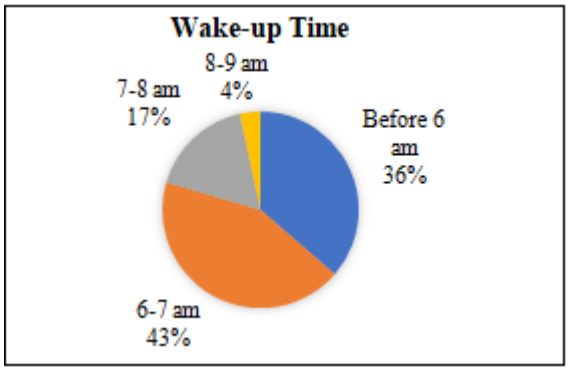
3. Observation



The assessment of the data (in number and percentage) of 88 individuals who were practicing Oil Massage in routine is given below:

Nature of sleep	Number	Percentage
Sound sleep	65	73.86%
Disturbed and/or Insufficient sleep	23	23.13%





4. Discussion

Oil massage removes abnormal pressure upon the nerves and blood vessels & establishes a free, abundant flow of nerve and blood current. It is an excellent form of passive exercise which is very helpful in producing good quality sleep. Sound sleep is fundamental for everything functioning. It is evident from the survey that 73.86% of total 88individuals (who were practicing oil massage in routine) were experiencing sound sleep at night. Majority of them were waking up before 6 am (32) and between 6 am to 7 am (38), which is considered as proper time to wake up in today's era. Most of them were getting sufficient sleep for 7-8 hours.

Only 23out of 88 individuals were experiencing insufficient and/or disturbed sleep. Even though by practicing oil massage, the reasons behind their insufficient and /or disturbed sleep might be day-time sleep, delayed wake up times and bed time at night and diseases like DM, obesity, cancer, PCOD, stress and anxiety were noticed.

Oil massage is the most powerful stimulant to the circulation as it actually pumps and pushes the blood through the venous drainage and allows blood with its nourishment and fresh supply of oxygen to flood the cells and organs. Thus, massage acts on mind, helps in inducing sleep & also improving the quality of sleep. Massage with oil warm up body parts and relieves physical and mental fatigue. By calming down the nerve endings, it soothes the nervous system. Sound sleep is generated by relaxation and enhances cellular respiration.

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In Ayurveda, Taila (oil) is considered as the best for the purpose of massage because skin is dominated by Vata Dosha. Oil has the special property to pacify the Vata Dosha, so oil is advised for massage regularly according to Ayurveda. Also, skin consist of Swedavahasrotas (Channel which transports the sweat), Sparshavahasrotas (Channel which carry the sense of touch) and Vatavahasrotas (Channels of Vata Dosha)[6]. To clean and purify these channels, regular massage should be done with oil. It is clearly mentioned in Charaka Samhita that, appropriate sleep imparts happiness and enhances the life span.

Duration of Abhyanga[7]:

SN	Name of Dhatu (Body tissue)	Penetrating time of oil (InMaatra)
1	Romakupa	300 Maatra (95 Sec.)
2	Twaka	400 Maatra (127 Sec.)
3	Rakta	500 Maatra (159 Sec.)
4	Mamsa	600 Maatra (190 Sec.)
5	Meda	700 Maatra (220 Sec.)
6	Asthi	800 Maatra (254 Sec.)
7	Majja	900 Maatra (284 Sec.)

As per Nature cure, General body massage may be done for 40 to 45 minutes and local body massage for 10 to 15 minutes. The oil should be washed off completely after massage.

5. Conclusion

In health survey, it was found that the average duration of sound sleep is 7-8 hours.88 individuals who were practising Abhyanga, Majority of them i.e.65 individuals were experiencing sound sleep and their night sleep time falls in between 10-11 pm, Wake up time was more evident before 6 am and in between 6 am to 7 am with sufficient & undisturbed sleep. From this study, it can be concluded that oil massage has a greater influence on the sound sleep. Oil massage can be a non-pharmacological therapy for those who are not getting sound and sufficient sleep.

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