

Complimentary Folk Therapies For Sleep Disturbances

Vo Hoang Ca, Dong Thi Thao Nguyen, Kieu Thi Thu Chung, Huynh Tan Hoi

Abstract: Sleep disturbance becomes one of many terrible symptoms to both old and young people. Western sleeping medications are considered a fast and effective way to stop this annoyance right away but are not a great solution. Many people suffer from this and do not know how to have a better sleep and a healthy life. In order to get good sleep and never encounter this situation, patients must use and apply some different ways in which medication herbs are combined in order to bring the patients a good night. This paper aims to analyze some causes of sleep disturbance, thereby finding suitable therapies to bring patients better health. Based on journals, books as well as survey data, the paper will compare and analyze advantages and disadvantages of using both Western drugs and traditional medications.

Index Terms: Folk medication, herbs, health, insomnia, patients, sleep disturbance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Insomnia is a condition of sleep disturbance, difficulty in falling asleep, not maintaining enough sleep or waking up too early, affecting the quality of life, especially on the subjects of working age [1]. Insomnia causes the body to not have time to compensate for the energy lost in the previous working day. On average, an adult sleeps 4-8 hours a day, but assessing bedtime is not only about hours, but also depends on the quality of sleep, which is comfortable and enough to serve a next working day. Around the world, about 20% of the population suffers from insomnia. Each person needs about 8 hours of good sleep every night to balance his physiological and psychological health. If a person sleeps 8 hours a night, but wakes up the next day, we still feel tired and lethargic, that means that our sleep is not good enough. On the contrary, even sleeping only 5 hours but the body is cheerful and happy to start a new working day, our sleep is satisfactory. Scientists studied the reason for insomnia and found an effective method to eliminate it [2].

2 THE CONCEPT OF SLEEP AND ITS IMPORTANCE'S

Insomnia or sleeping difficulties are diseases that make it difficult for many people to live. Difficulty sleeping in many forms, difficult to fall asleep, restless sleep, wake up early to not sleep again, nightmares or wake up several times during sleep, each time longer than 30 minutes [3]. Sleep is a periodic natural activity, then movement and feeling are temporarily suspended. This is expressed by the immobility of most muscles and reducing reactions to external stimuli. Sleep is very important to help the body rest and restore energy. In fact, average sleep time of a normal person is about 7-8 hours per night (ranging from 4-11 hours). Good sleep means that meeting some of the following basic requirements such as enough hours, deep sleep, good feeling when waking up, etc.

- Vo Hoang Ca, is now working at College of International Studies, Ton Duc Thang University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Corresponding author's e-mail: vohoangca@tdtu.edu.vn
- Dong Thi Thao Nguyen is studying English at Ho Chi Minh City, Open University. Email: kieuithichung@gmail.com, Kieu Thi Thu Chung is a lecturer of FPT University. Email: thaonguyendong158@gmail.com
- Huynh Tan Hoi is a student of Faculty of Business Administration, Ho Chi Minh City University, Vietnam. Email: hoiht@fe.edu.vn

3 SOME REASONS WHY WE SUFFER FROM INSOMNIA

Some reasons of short-term insomnia (less than 3 weeks) and long-term insomnia (last longer) depend on some symptoms of patients including anxiety, nocturia, chronic pain, psychiatric disorders and alcohol abuse (Figure 1).

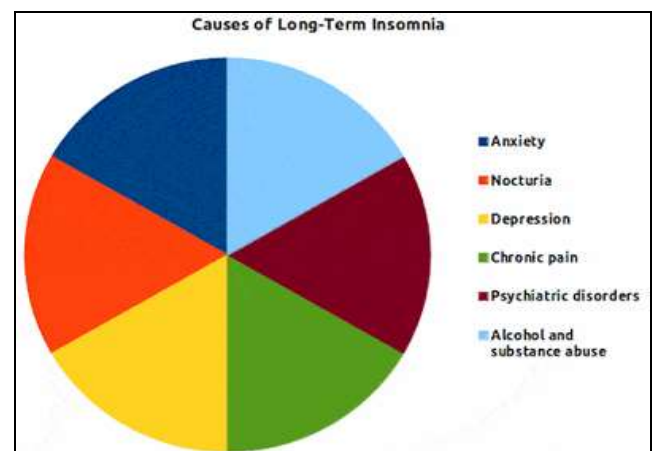


Figure 1. Causes of insomnia in the world (Source: Disabled World)

Zhou et al. (2017) mentioned some factors for insomnia including age, medication effects, pregnancy, poor mental health, etc. The first cause may be considered as stress. Scientists is sure that the way a patient responds to a situation is very important. It is best to eliminate stress, and have positive thoughts. When a person experiences constant stress, insomnia can become chronic [3]. Second is energy drinks. The consumption of energy drinks has developed over the past few years. The positive and negative effects of energy drinks on the human body have been evaluated by research. It indicated that people who enjoy energy drinks had more strength and endurance, but they became more anxious and insomnia. Negative consequences related to caffeine in drinks, stimulate the central nervous system [4]. Weak immune system may be considered as one reason of insomnia. The common misconception is that when we get sick, we sleep more. However, some research shows that insomnia is partly due to illness. A weak immune system can lead to sleep disorders. Then, eating indigestion food before sleeping is also a reason why some people feel uncomfortable and cannot

sleep well [5].

4 SOME POPULAR WAYS TO CURE INSOMNIA

Sleeping pills work right away, but they also have some consequences [1]. Steady sleep helps the brain to rest, recover quickly, stay alert and increase labor productivity and quality of life, especially for babies, sleep helps children develop intelligence better. People with sleep deprivation may have memory loss, headache, irritability, rapid heartbeat, low blood pressure, diabetes or heart failure. When having insomnia, many people often choose the solution to use sleeping pills [6]. The mechanism of sleeping pills is to inhibit the activity of the nervous system, put the body into a sleepy state, can only use temporary symptoms. However, when abusing, it will directly affect the brain and cause brain disorders by the nature of the drug. That means that the drug just brings us to a "forced" sleep. Since then, neurological and mental problems appear more and more, the body easily falls into a state of emotional turmoil accompanied by anxiety, prolonged stress, and even depressed feel [7]. While some people have been using pills to treat the symptoms of insomnia, some have turned to natural sleep supports like herbs and even aromatherapy. Flower essences that can work via the acupuncture meridians of the body are really effective. These essences are good and effective since they can solve the causes of restless sleep much better. Since then, chronic sufferers can notice a remarkable difference in their sleep quality within some nights. If we are persons who generally sleep rather well, we will sleep like a log, from using flower essences right before going to bed. If we are among those who have a difficult time sleeping, using flower essences often during the day will lead to the good results. The essence simply relaxes our muscles and make us feel happy, relaxing. Then we can fall into a deep sleep easily [2]. Recently, folk remedies are also recommended since it can treat insomnia rather well. We understand that insomnia often occurs in the elderly and people who have neurasthenia. This kind of symptom leads to lack of oxygen to the brain, causing depression. However, today, due to work pressure, stress also leads to psychological disorder and causes many young people fall into insomnia [4]. When there are signs of insomnia, we should first adjust the lifestyle and combine using herbs from nature to find natural sleep. There are hundreds of herbs and over 6000 "medicinal substances" listed by Chinese scientists [2]. The medicine that has the effect of treating insomnia without causing many common side effects includes embryo nelumbinis, passiflora foetida, mimosa pudica, etc. However, when used folk herbs, we must also know how to use them to be effective [7].

5 METHODOLOGY, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistics from data sources and data collected during the study including books, newspapers, scientific journals were gathered, analyzed and compared according to the criteria defined in the research. 40 pieces of questionnaire paper were supported by the respondents who are university students and employees. The survey was put in order to collect information through which the actual status includes symptoms of insomnia, patients 'reactions to the disease as well as their suggested solutions. The results of this survey was then used in the study to evaluate the importance of using herbs and some good way to treat insomnia. For questionnaire specimens, I used a random sampling method so that all

participants were equally likely to participate in the sample. At the same time, to ensure the reliability of the sample, I also conducted some interview questions in different locations and at different times. Survey results show that adults sleep for 7-8 hours per night, especially some usually sleep less than 6 hours per night. The first agent is watching TV or using phones to play games. 40 people from 22 to 35 years old who participated in a study completed the online survey and said that they love watching interesting programs on television at night (Figure 2).

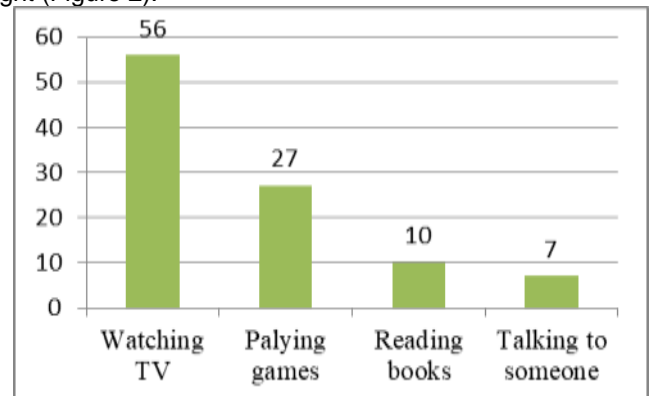


Figure 2. Some things patients usually do before sleep

The figure above shows that most of patients usually watch something on T.V (60%) before sleeping and that may make them suffer from insomnia. most patients expressed dissatisfaction with the modern method. While some play games (15%), some talk to someone (20%) by using chat tools or cellphone after a working day. And to clarify what they often do when they feel tired because of insomnia, a rather important issue was mentioned. It is interesting that only three patients (7,5%) chose to use sleeping pills, but many look for traditional methods (Figure 3).

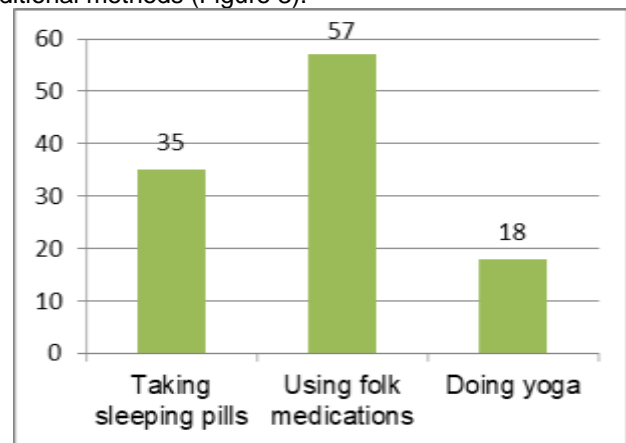


Figure 3. The ways patients choose to treat insomnia

And to better define why the patients chose embryo nelumbinis for treating insomnia, the fourth question was designed regarding to what kind of herbs the patients usually use to treat their insomnia. Many respondents (80%) think that it is much easy to buy embryo nelumbinis instead of momosa pudica or other kinds of herbs. The first interview question was also made to clarify why they chose embryo nelumbinis for treatment. It is not difficult for us to understand that this kind of plant is sold in many places in Vietnam. It is often processed in the form of tea used for drinking and is a rather well-known product. In fact, lotus is grown all year round in hot and humid

temperate country like Vietnam, especially in Mekong Delta. According to Sheikh (2014), lotus “has been used as a food for about 7000 years in Asia” [6]. Although embryo nelumbinis has a bitter taste, it is really good for health. People who have a bad temperature can sleep but they will suffer from fatigue, memory loss, irregular heartbeat in the long run. No evidence of cardiotoxicity was found, but due to high alkaloid content, embryo nelumbinis had a strong pharmacological effect on the heart, so pay attention to the dose and should not be used for a long time [8]. Traditional medicine as well as folk medication have very simple, non-poisonous and easy to treat traditional medicine items such as eating sweet potato soup, pumpkin soup, lotus seed tea or young mulberry leaves fried with eggs also help to reduce insomnia, heart palpitations, neurasthenia, anxiety, stress due to overwork and physical weakness [9]. And the second interview question was addressed to understand the patient's interest in health issues. Most responded that they would arrange suitable work, avoid stress. In addition, some will practice the habit of going to bed and waking up on time, not staying up too late or getting up too early. Some responded that they will take the time to exercise to help the body have more opportunities to exercise after a day in the office, just staring at the computer or busy working with paper document [10].

6 SOME RECOMMENDED REMEDIES FOR TREATING INSOMNIA

It is hard to say which therapy is better. However, there are certain differences that keep the two methods. Unlike Western medicine, which insists on insomnia, it is mainly concerned with treating symptoms, while treating insomnia according to Eastern medicine is concerned with the cause of the disease. In Eastern medicine, insomnia is called frustration of sleep. The cause is that kidneys or some organs are damaged. Depending on the patient, the age, gender and the cause of the disease, the physician will adjust the amount of medication in different ways [11].

6.1 Using embryo nelumbinis and lotus seed

First is embryo nelumbinis. Patients can take 2-3g embryo nelumbinis to make tea to drink during the day. Not only does treat insomnia, it also helps reduce anxiety, palpitations, nocturnal emission, tachycardia, high blood pressure, etc. (Figure 4).



Figure. 4. The image of embryo nelumbinis

Second is lotus seed. We can combine vigna unguiculata (30g) with lotus seeds. We can also combine black beans, lotus seeds (15g), erythrina orientalis leaves (15g) and morus alba leaves (20g). Patients can drink 1 time a day after cooking these herbs to get the liquid. This remedy has the effect of treating insomnia with symptoms of sadness, tinnitus, back pain, drowsiness that makes patients do not want to work, feel irritable or dizzy [12].

6.2 Using passiflora foetida

This is another great herb that patients should try to treat insomnia. Patients just take up its prickly leaves and branches to make tea. It can help calm, reduce anxiety, avoid stress and patients can find it easy to sleep well (Figure 5).



Figure. 5. The image of passiflora foetida

This plant grows wild everywhere, it has sedative, calming, analgesic, anti-cough, antipyretic, anti-inflammatory and diuretic effects. Every day, patients can use its leaves (20 g) after cooking to get about 100ml of condensed liquid and drink every night or before going to bed [13].

6.3 Using Panax pseudoginseng

In addition, patients can use some other traditional herbal teas to treat insomnia such as panax pseudoginseng. According to traditional medicine, panax flower buds of panax pseudoginseng have a very useful effect on the nervous system, helping to reduce stress, sedation, aid in going deeper into sleep. How to make ventricular tea is quite simple. Patients can use 3-5 dry flowers in a hot water bottle and then pour the first water. After pouring a certain amount of water into the jar, we can cover for a few minutes, drinking like tea [14]. With the treatment of folk insomnia from this tea, patients can drink it every day to treat insomnia (Figure 6).



Figure 6. *The image of panax pseudoginseng*

However, patients should only drink water during the day to help fall asleep easier. Panax pseudoginseng tea can be prepared with many soaked water until there is no bitter, sweet taste, but patients should not leave tea water overnight. Because tea can be oxidized when exposed to air, leading to metamorphosis or toxicity. In addition, ventricular flowers have antihypertensive effects, so patients with hypotension should avoid using [7].

6.4 Using valeriana officinalis

Valeriana officinalis is not only loved for its outstanding color, this plant is well known for its sedative effects, can treat insomnia and anti-depression, help bring a good night's sleep. The components contained in valeriana officinalis include valerenic acid and the valepotriates derivative that can help prevent stress to the central nervous area, help patients easily fall asleep [15].



Figure 7. *The image of valeriana officinalis*

Patients can use 10 - 15 grams of valeriana officinalis, including the plant and roots, rinse, then add to the kettle, add a sufficient amount of water and drink. With folk remedies from this herbal, patients can take daily to improve symptoms of insomnia. This medicine can be used to treat insomnia in children, but the dosage needs to be reduced accordingly (Figure 7).

7 SOME MORE SUGGESTIONS TO PATIENTS WHO SUFFER FROM INSOMNIA

To treat insomnia, we need to eliminate the subjective causes of insomnia. If we try to find out, we will know part of the cause of insomnia, such as drinking too much coffee at night or before going to bed, eating too much hot spicy food, eating too much at night, traveling to the place where the time zone changes are too big, work stress, etc. After finding out the cause, we may be able to adjust themselves to sleep without resorting to medication [17]. Besides, hygiene sleep is something rather important. We should create a relaxed mood to easily go to sleep, our bed should be placed in a cool place, clean blankets, etc. Before sleeping, we can enjoy a cup of tea. This tea may be made from some herbal medicines since they can also help sleep easier such as embryo nelumbinis, passiflora foetida, mimosa pudica, etc. Next is psychological

relaxation. We need to remember that health will not affect if we do not sleep properly 6 or 8 hours a day. When we go to bed, we only need to sleep and do nothing else (like reading a book, watching a movie, etc.), if we can't sleep after 10-15 minutes, we can get up and do something else. However, chronic insomnia patients are often afraid of the evening because they think that they may not be able to sleep, and often, the more anxious they are, the harder it will be to sleep, so think of sleep in a gentle way, then it will come peacefully [18]. When going to bed, create a sense of comfort and avoid stress. If there are unresolved issues in the day, just wait completely until tomorrow to resolve, not just wait for sleep to think about how to solve the problem. One of many therapies for preventing sleeplessness are to stay away from stimulants, not to eat too much, not to take any medicines before going to bed, so practice some gentle nursing movements like practicing breathing and relaxing before sleep. It is suggested that doing yoga for 12 weeks can help eliminate insomnia since it will help patients get rid of insomnia [8]. A number of oriental remedies should also be encouraged. Before sleeping for about 2 hours, we can use 2-4 fresh garlic cloves to crush them, wrap them in cloth, and put them on the soles of our feet. Because garlic can irritate the skin, not everyone can use it freely. Therefore, depending on our physical condition to decide how long to paste garlic, there are people who paste for 30 minutes but some people can paste it for longer hours. Some people suffer from insomnia due to cold feet. In this case, they should soak their feet in warm water before bed. Soak our feet until the water is cool. Note that this approach is not suitable for people with diabetes, or sweating a lot when bathing [19]. People suffer from insomnia due to less exercise, more sitting, staying up late. This can make it hard to believe, but people who sit a lot, are inactive are also at high risk of insomnia. Therefore, if we are a less active person, be aware of foot massage before going to sleep. The best way is to exercise a little with appropriate exercises, sleep will come to us quickly without using any pills at all. The easiest way is to rub two feet together about 20 minutes before bedtime, all problems will be significantly improved [3]. Besides setting the alarm at the same time every morning, we must also go to bed at the same time every night. We must keep it a habit, and don't forget that even a day of distraction can break the habit we are building [20]. We can listen to a lovely song at night or even in the morning before doing something, try to keep us calm in our heart and mind, our life would be much more interesting.

8 CONCLUSION

How to get perfect sleep every night is a problem that many people care about since sleep is one of the most basic needs of people. If we don't get enough sleep every night, many bad health conditions will soon bother us. We should be aware that we should not sleep for a long time since it may affect our health. On the other side, good sleep nights have many health benefits including losing weight, improving memory, and helping us feel happier. Temporarily put aside stress and we should not carry documents, phones and should not even let our brain think about work when we have entered the bedroom. If we try to apply some folk remedies, exercise and care for ourselves more, keep in mind that a lucid spirit is only in a good body, we can do it.

9 ETHICAL CLERANCE

We are ensuring the quality and integrity of our research. The ideas and opinions expressed in this paper are our effort. By writing this, we surely respect the confidentiality and anonymity of our research respondents since they participated in our study voluntarily.

10 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest noted.

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