



Role of Ashwagandha Root Powder in the Management of Insomnia in a Vata Prakriti Purusha: A Case Report

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Abstract

Introduction: Insomnia (*ANIDRA*) is a prevalent sleep disorder with significant physical and psychological consequences. Ayurveda attributes *Anidra* (insomnia) primarily to aggravated Vata dosha. Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*), a classical *Rasayana* herb, has been traditionally used to pacify Vata and improve sleep quality.

Case Presentation: A 38-year-old male, *Vata prakriti purusha* presented with chronic insomnia of six months' duration. Symptoms included difficulty initiating and maintaining sleep, daytime fatigue, dryness of skin, and anxiety.

Intervention: The patient was treated with *Ashwagandha Churna* 5 g with warm milk at bedtime for six weeks, along with dietary and lifestyle modifications.

Outcome: Sleep improved significantly within two weeks, with progressive enhancement in sleep duration and quality. At six weeks, the patient achieved 6–7 hours of restorative sleep with marked improvement in energy, mood, and concentration.

Conclusion: This case highlights the therapeutic potential of Ashwagandha root powder in insomnia associated with Vata prakriti, aligning Ayurvedic principles with modern evidence.

Keywords: Insomnia, *Anidra*, *Ashwagandha*, *Vata prakriti*, *Ayurveda*, *Rasayana*

Introduction

Insomnia affects approximately 10–30% of the global population and is associated with reduced quality of life, impaired cognition, and increased risk of chronic diseases. In Ayurveda, sleep (Nidra) is one of the *Trayopastambha*¹ (three pillars of life), along with food (Ahara) and celibacy (*Brahmacharya*). Disturbances in sleep (*Anidra*) are often linked to Vata dosha aggravation, presenting as restlessness, dryness, anxiety, and light, disturbed sleep.

Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*), described in classical Ayurvedic texts such as *Bhavaprakasha*,² is known for its *Rasayana*, *Balya*, and *Medhya* properties. Ashwagandha, commonly known as "Indian Ginseng" or "Winter Cherry," is a highly valued medicinal herb in Ayurveda. Modern studies support its adaptogenic, anxiolytic, and GABA-mimetic effects, making it beneficial in insomnia management. This case illustrates the successful use of Ashwagandha root powder in managing insomnia in a Vata prakriti purusha.

Taxonomical information of ashwagandha plant

Rank	Taxon
Kingdom	Plantae
Subkingdom	Tracheobionta (Vascular plants)
Superdivision	Spermatophyta (Seed plants)
Division	Magnoliophyta (Angiosperms)
Class	Magnoliopsida (Dicotyledons)
Subclass	Asteridae
Order	Solanales
Family	Solanaceae (Nightshade family)
Genus	Withania
Species	Withania somnifera (L.) Dunal

Phytochemical Constituents

- **Withanolides** (withaferin A, withanolide D)
- **Alkaloids** (somniaferine, anaferine, tropine)
- **Steroidal lactones**
- **Saponins and flavonoids**

CASE PRESENTATION

Patient Information: A 38-year-old male presented with insomnia persisting for six

months. He had difficulty initiating and maintaining sleep, averaging only 3–4 hours of non-restorative sleep per night.

Symptoms: Restlessness, anxiety, irregular bowel movements, dryness of skin, fatigue.

Medical History: No chronic systemic disease, no psychiatric illness.

Lifestyle Factors: Irregular meal timings, excessive late-night screen exposure, work-related stress.

Prakriti Assessment: Predominantly Vata prakriti (lean frame, dry skin, variable appetite, quick to fatigue, anxiety-prone).

Clinical Examination (Ayurvedic Perspective):

- *Nadi pariksha:* Irregular, variable pulse suggestive of Vata predominance.
- *Jihva:* Dry, with minimal coating.
- *Nidra:* Light, disturbed, difficulty in initiation.

Diagnosis:

- Ayurvedic: *Anidra* due to aggravated Vata dosha.
- Modern: Primary insomnia.

Therapeutic Intervention

1. Medication:

- *Ashwagandha churna* 5 g with warm cow's milk, once daily at bedtime, for six weeks.

2. Dietary Modifications:

- Warm, unctuous foods (milk, ghee, soups).
- Avoidance of dry, cold, light foods.
- Regular meal timings according to appetite.

3. Lifestyle Modifications:

- Regular sleep routine.
- Evening Abhyanga with sesame oil.
- Meditation and deep breathing before

sleep.

- Restricted late-night screen exposure.

Follow-Up and Outcomes

Week 2: Improved sleep initiation, reduced restlessness, calmer nights.

Week 4: Sleep duration extended to 5–6 hours, fewer awakenings, improved energy levels.

Week 6: Restorative 6–7 hours of sleep achieved, better concentration, reduced anxiety, improved mood stability.

No adverse effects were observed during treatment.

Discussion

From an Ayurvedic perspective, insomnia in Vata prakriti purusha occurs due to dominance of Laghu (light), Ruksha (dry), and Chala (mobile) qualities of Vata. These qualities manifest as hyperactive thoughts, anxiety, and disturbed sleep.

Ashwagandha, with Snigdha (unctuous) and Guru (heavy) qualities, counteracts Vata aggravation. Its *Rasayana* action supports nervous system rejuvenation. Modern pharmacological studies confirm its adaptogenic and anxiolytic actions, lowering cortisol and enhancing GABAergic activity.

This case aligns with both Ayurvedic principles and clinical research indicating that Ashwagandha improves sleep onset, duration, and quality in patients with insomnia, particularly those with Vata dominance.

Conclusion

This case demonstrates that Ashwagandha root powder with warm milk is effective in managing insomnia in a Vata prakriti purusha. The treatment improved sleep quality, reduced anxiety, and enhanced overall wellbeing without adverse effects. This supports integrating Ayurvedic principles with modern sleep medicine for holistic insomnia management.

Patient Perspective

The patient reported significant relief and satisfaction, stating that he felt “calmer, well-rested, and more energetic” after the intervention.

Informed Consent

Written informed consent was obtained from the patient for publication of this case report.

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