Integrative Medicine For Insomnia
Topics

- Herbal therapies
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia
- Mind-body practices
Do patients with insomnia use herbal therapies?¹

- 25% of patients in one sample were dissatisfied with sleep.
- 9.5% met criteria for an insomnia syndrome
- 15% of the total sample had used herbal therapies for sleep
- 11% had used sleep medications

Herbal Therapies with Evidence of Efficacy and Safety

- Melatonin
- Valerian
- Lemon Balm
Melatonin

Good evidence for

- Circadian rhythm sleep disorder in the blind\(^2\)
- Delayed sleep phase syndrome\(^3\)
  - Reduces time to fall asleep, increases total sleep time
  - Improves QOL measures significantly
- Sleep wake cycle disturbances\(^4\)

Also likely effective in

- Jet lag
- Insomnia in the elderly
Dosing

- 3-5 mg
- Short acting sublingual form best for reducing sleep latency
- Sustained release better for sleep maintenance
- Take before bed, studies have shown safety up to 3 months
Valerian

- GABA receptor agonist
- Modest reductions in sleep latency
  - 14-17 minutes
- Significant improvement in subjective sleep quality and rest
- In one study, equivalent to oxazepam 10mg
Valerian Dosing

- Root form
- 400mg-900mg extract
- Up to 2 hours before bed
- Studied up to 28 days
- Often combined with lemon balm or hops
Lemon Balm

• Most studied in combination with Valerian or Hops
• Does appear to be somewhat effective alone and in combination
• May function through acetylcholinergic activity
• 80mg nightly dose
Commonly used therapies with insufficient evidence

- Chamomile
- Passion Flower
- Hops
- Lavender
- Ashwagandana
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia

As effective as medication, more lasting effect.\textsuperscript{6}

- Sleep diary
- Sleep restriction therapy
- Sleep hygiene
- Sleep environment improvement
- Relaxation training
**TWO WEEK SLEEP DIARY**

1. Write the date, day of the week, and type of day: Work, School, Day Off, or Vacation.
2. Put the letter “C” in the box when you have coffee, cola or tea. Put “M” when you take any medicine. Put “A” when you drink alcohol. Put “E” when you exercise.
3. Put a line (I) to show when you go to bed. Shade in the box that shows when you think you fell asleep.
4. Shade in all the boxes that show when you are asleep at night or when you take a nap during the day.
5. Leave boxes unshaded to show when you wake up at night and when you are awake during the day.

**SAMPLE ENTRY BELOW:** On a Monday when I worked, I jogged on my lunch break at 1 PM, had a glass of wine with dinner at 6 PM, fell asleep watching TV from 7 to 8 PM, went to bed at 10:30 PM, fell asleep around Midnight, woke up and couldn’t get back to sleep at about 4 AM, went back to sleep from 5 to 7 AM, and had coffee and medicine at 7:00 in the morning.

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<th>Today's Date</th>
<th>Day of the week</th>
<th>Type of Day</th>
<th>Noon</th>
<th>1PM</th>
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<th>11PM</th>
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**week 1**

**week 2**
Sleep restriction

- 43 yo woman presents with 6 months of insomnia ever since she was hospitalized for a traumatic injury.
- After injury, had restricted mobility and was on pain mediations, leading to daily naps in the afternoon.
- Since returning to work, she finds that she still wants to nap in pm and has instead been going to bed earlier and earlier.
- Lays in bed unable to sleep, but feels tired in the morning.
- Currently going to bed at 9pm, falls asleep around 11pm, wakes at 3 am, back to sleep around 4, up at 5am for work.
Simplified Sleep Restriction Principles

• Avoid naps
• Keep a consistent wake time regardless of sleep time
• Reduce non-sleeping time in bed
  – Initially reduce to 50% of non-sleep bed time
  – If after 2 weeks, still <85% sleep time, reduce non-sleep time to 30 minutes

• As sleep consolidates and quality improves, gradually shift bedtime earlier to increase total sleep time
Simplified sleep restriction for our patient

- Reduce non-sleep bed time
- Set 10:00 bedtime and 5am wake time
- Completely eliminate naps

- Strict schedule for one week, then gradually increase sleep time
Sleep Hygiene Principles

• Avoid
  – Caffeine in the afternoon
  – Alcohol before bed
  – Screen time 2 h before bed

• Create
  – A bedtime routine
  – A consistent wake time

• Train your brain that the bedroom is for sleep
  – Don’t stay in your bedroom if you can’t sleep—leave and do something boring
  – Don’t go to bed until you are tired
  – Use your bed only for sleep and sex
Sleep environment improvement

• Quiet
• Dark
• Cool
• No TV
• Hide clock from view
Mind-Body Therapies
Mind-Body Therapies

• Breathing Practices
• Body Scan
• Progressive Muscle Relaxation
• Meditation
Breathing Exercises
Breathing exercises you can teach in clinic

• Deep Belly Breathing
• Cued Controlled Breath
  – Begin with deep belly breath
  – Say “Breathe in” on inhale, “Relax” on exhale
• 4-7-8 Breath
Body Scan

- Find a comfortable position
- Close the eyes
- Bring attention to the feet. Relax the feet.
- Move attention to the lower legs. Relax the legs.
- Continue to scan up the body, relaxing each set of muscles

Script:

Audio:
http://www.freemindfulness.org/download
Progressive Muscle Relaxation

• Found to be more effective for reducing sleep latency than sleep restriction\(^8\)
  – Less effective for sleep maintenance
• Progressively tense and release muscles throughout the body from head to foot or foot to head

Script:
https://www.law.berkeley.edu/files/Progressive_Muscle_Relaxation.pdf
Audio:
https://www.dartmouth.edu/~healthed/relax/downloads.html
Meditation

A family of self-regulation practices that focus on training attention and awareness in order to bring mental processes under greater voluntary control and thereby foster general mental well-being and development and/or specific capacities such as calm, clarity, concentration, and compassion.
Concentration
- Sound
- Physical Sensation
- Image

Mindfulness
- Physical Sensations
- Sounds
- Emotions/Thoughts

Compassion/
Loving Kindness
- Words or phrases
- Images
- Emotive
Mindfulness Meditation for Insomnia

- Increased attentional control
- Decreased perseveration
- Increased ability to notice and accurately label emotions
- Decreased impulsive reaction to emotion
Key Points

• CBT-I is as effective as medications for insomnia
• Many patients use herbal treatments for insomnia
  – Valerian and Lemon Balm have the most evidence of efficacy
• Mind-body practices are effective for reducing sleep latency
  – Breathing can be taught in clinic
  – PMR, body scans, and mediation can be learned from books, therapists, or classes, or through online resources.