Dream analysis in relation to *Prakrithi* and diseases: A study at National Ayurveda Teaching Hospital, Borella

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Abstract

This study explores the relationship between dreams, individual constitution (*Prakrithi*), and disease manifestation within the Ayurvedic framework. Dreams were examined as potential diagnostic tools in Ayurveda, with a focus on understanding how dream content correlates with Prakrithi and disease types. Therefore, this study was conducted over six months at the National Ayurveda Teaching Hospital, with 210 volunteer participants selected using a stratified sampling method. Data were collected through self-questionnaire forms and analyzed using a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques. Demographic analysis revealed a predominantly female sample, with the highest frequency observed in the 18-27 age group. *Pitta-Kapha prakrithi* was most prevalent among participants, with *Pitta dosha* being the predominant dosha. Most participants reported infrequent dreaming, with a minority experiencing dreams close to waking up. Nearly half of the participants reported dreaming while suffering from a disease, predominantly respiratory system-related diseases. The study did not find a significant correlation between dream frequency, disease type, and Prakrithi. However, it acknowledges the influence of factors such as life satisfaction, attitudes, and emotions on dream patterns and health outcomes. Further research is needed to explore the complex interplay between individual constitution, dream content, and disease manifestation within Ayurveda. While this study provides valuable insights into the role of dreams in Ayurvedic diagnosis and treatment, additional research is necessary to deepen understanding in this area. By considering broader factors beyond Ayurvedic principles, future studies can elucidate the comprehend relationship between dreams, health, and individual constitution.

Keywords: Metaphor, Dream, *Prakrithi*, Disease

Introduction

Ayurveda is an ancient, prevailing medical system which has taught many things about dreams. It says that dreams are related to *Majja dhatu*. Ayurvedic thought says that dreams are further evidence of the strong connection between the body, spirit and mind. Dreams can sometimes contain clues about a disease someone experience[1]. In Ayurveda, dreams are mentioned in the term "*Swapna*" according to Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, and Ashtanga Samgraha, and Astanga Hridaya[2]. Not only in Ayurveda but also in *Upanishads*, *Puranas*, *Darshanas* have mentioned about swapna[3].

Ayurveda mentions that there is a relationship between *Prakriti* and dreams. Charaka acharya has explained *Swapna* in the context of *Arishta Lakshana* of disease[3]. In Kashyapa Samhita explained the concept of dream in the discussion of *Grahabhada.* Likewise, many Acharyas explained the concept of *Swapna* in related to *Prakruti*. *Prakirthi* of a person is determined at the time of conception and it is determined by the *Dosha* which is strong at that time[4].

There are various references of *Swapna* available in the classics. If all these compiled together, dreams can be classified according to the Haritha Samhitha[5].

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The source and content of the dream

· The efficacy of the dream
· The effect of the dream
· According to the person who sees the dreams
· Their utility in the Ayurvedic *Chikitsasastra* and
· The *Doshika* dominance of the dream.

Each of the classifications seems to be complete in their own sense as each of them analyzes different aspects of the same dream.

According to western philosophies "Dreams are usually spontaneously occurring continuity of images, thoughts, emotions, and sensations that in the mind during certain stages of sleep". It can be assumed that there is a cognitive factor in dreams that can understand the true emotional state of a dreamer at some point[6]. At present, dream analysis has special significant diagnostic value as a non-pharmacological tool in western countries[7]. Various studies have found that dream analysis has been of a great help in treating certain mental illnesses[8]. There are many literatures related to dreams analysis in many countries. The concept of metaphor analysis in dream is related to prakriti has good diagnostic value. This survey will be conducted for the purpose of exploring dream analysis as a diagnostic and therapeutic tool for the enhancement of our treatments. It can be able to use to identify *Doshic* predominance of the patient, for giving diagnosis and prognosis and to plan the treatment line.

Materials and Methods

This is an analytical study using cross-sectional survey. The participants who were volunteered were screened for inclusion and exclusion criteria. Thereafter informed consent was gotten verbally and in written form. The stratified sampling method selected participants using the disease type as the strata. The questionnaire used is a modified version of *Prakrithi* and questions made based on Haritha Samhitha translated to Sinhala by the researcher. Therefore, it is confirmed that the equal chance was given to patients having different diseases. This research was conducted at National Ayurveda Teaching Hospital, Borella with the permission of the Ethics Review Committee of Faculty of Indigenous Medicine and the Hospital committee of the hospital under registration number (ERC 22/182). Data were collected using a self-questionnaire form which was assisted by principal investigator assistant and consultant under the guidance of the supervisor. Personal data were recorded under assigned code number and principal investigator and supervisor will only have access to data. Data will not be exposed to any 3rd party person for any reason and kept in key locked cupboard or password saved softcopy in laptop for one year after the research. Collected data were analyzed using mix method (qualitative and quantitative). Quantitative-ANOVA Chi-square with 0.01 significant level using SPSS 16 version.

Results and Discussion

Demographic profile

Demographic profile of the patients is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic profile of the patients

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
18-27	54	25.7%
28-37	43	20.5%
38-47	49	23.3%
48-57	48	22.9%
58-67	12	5.7%
68-77	4	1.9%
Religion		
Buddhist	135	64.3%
Catholic	47	22.4%
Islam	18	8.6%
Hindu	10	4.8%
Dosha		
Vata	63	30.0%
Pitta	80	38.1%
Kapha	67	31.9%
Dreaming frequency		
Always	58	27.6%
Sometimes	53	25.2%
Seldom	62	29.5%
No memory	37	17.6%
Total	210	100.0%

The data presents a diverse demographic profile comprising age distribution, religious affiliations, Ayurvedic *Dosha* prevalence, and dreaming frequency among 210 individuals. Age-wise, the majority fall within the 18-47 age range, with a gradual decline in representation among older groups, notably 58-77. Religiously, the population is predominantly Buddhist, comprising nearly two-thirds, followed by Catholic, Islam, and Hindu adherents. In terms of Ayurvedic *Doshas*, *Pitta dosha* appears to be the most prevalent, closely followed by *Kapha* and then *Vata*, illustrating a balanced distribution among the three constitutions. Dreaming frequency varies, with a notable proportion reporting dreams sometimes or seldom, while a considerable minority claims no memory of dreams.

The data includes a multifaceted snapshot of the population's characteristics and experiences. It highlights not only demographic nuances, such as age distribution and religious affiliation, but also provides insights into individual constitutions through Ayurvedic *Dosha* prevalence. Moreover, the exploration of dreaming frequency adds a psychological dimension, indicating varying degrees of dream recall among the surveyed individuals. Together, these findings underscore the richness and complexity of human diversity, reflecting a tapestry of cultural, spiritual, and physiological aspects.

Analysis between frequency of dreaming and Prakriti

Table 2 presented the Statistical analysis between frequency of dreaming and *Prakriti.*

Table 2: Analysis between frequency of dreaming and *Prakriti*

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	5.443	5	1.089	.951	.449
Within groups	233.585	204	1.145		
total	239.029	209			

P<0.01

According to Anova analysis there is no significant difference in between frequency of dreaming and *Prakrithi* under 0.01 significant level.

Analysis between frequency of dreaming and disease type (Table 3)

Table 3: Analysis between frequency of dreaming and disease type

	Sum of squares	**df**	**Mean square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Between groups	2.638	5	.528	.455	.809
Within groups	236.390	204	1.159		
total	239.029	209			

P<0.01

According to analysis, there is no significant difference in between frequency of dreaming and disease type under 0.01 significant level.

Correlation between frequency of dreaming and type of disease (Table 4)

Table 4: Correlation between frequency of dreaming and type of disease

		Disease type	**Frequency of dreaming**
Disease type	Pearson correlation	1	-.053
	Sig.(2-tailed)		.447
	N	210	210
Frequency of dreaming	Pearson correlation	-.053	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.447	
	N	210	210

According to analysis, there is no significant correlation between frequency of dreaming and type of disease.

Correlation between frequency of dreaming and Prakrithi

According to data, there is no significant correlation between frequency of dreaming and *Prakrithi* (Table 5)

Table 5: Correlation between frequency of dreaming and *Prakrithi*

		Frequency of dreaming	*Prakrithi*
Frequency of dreaming	Pearson correlation	1	.096
	Sig.(2-tailed)		.167
	N	210	210
Prakrithi	Pearson correlation	.096	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.167	
	N	210	210

Crosstabulation between Prakrithi and dreams

According to data (Table 6), 15.5%of *Vata prakrithika* persons have seen *Vataja* dreams.14.6%of *Pitta prakrithika* persons have seen *Pittaja* dreams.16.9%of *Kapha prakirthika* persons have seen *Kaphaja* dreams.

Crosstabulation between disease type and dream

According to data (Table 7), 14.6%of the participants who have been suffering from a respiratory system related disease have seen *Pittaja* dreams.12.0% of the participants who have been suffering from a circulatory system related disease have seen *Kaphaja* dreams.11.4%of the participants who have been suffering from nervous system related disease when dreaming have seen *Kaphaja* dreams.15.3% of the participants who have been suffering from a digestive system related disease when dreaming have seen *Pittaja* dream

Metaphor analysis according to Haaritha Samhitha

According to the findings (Table 8), Most of the participants are females and 18-27 age group had the highest frequency. *Pitta Kapha prakrithi* has the highest frequency and predominant *Dosha* in this sample was *Pitta dosha*. Most of the participants dreams seldomly showing 29.52% percentage. 26.67% sees dreams at the time close to wake up. 10.48% has no understanding of time of dreaming. 49.05% of the sample have been suffering from a disease when dreaming. 8.10% had no specific memory.

Most of the participants had suffered from respiratory system related diseases when dreaming. Least number of participants had suffered from skin related disease.

According to anova analysis there is no significant difference in between frequency of dreaming and *Prakrithi* under 0.01 significant level. There is no significant difference in between frequency of dreaming and disease type under 0.01 significant level According to analysis, there is no significant correlation between frequency of dreaming and type of disease and between frequency of dreaming and *Prakrithi.*

Discussion

The findings of this study align with previous research in the field of dream analysis within Ayurvedic medicine, as well as broader studies on dream content and health outcomes. Previous studies have also noted a correlation between individual constitution (*Prakrithi*) and dream patterns, suggesting that certain doshas may influence the content and frequency of dreams. Similarly, research has indicated that specific health conditions can manifest in dream experiences, with some studies highlighting the role of dreams as potential diagnostic tools in traditional medicine systems.

Moreover, the observation of gender and age differences in dream frequency echoes findings from previous studies, which have consistently shown variations in dream content and recall across demographic groups. Additionally, the prevalence of respiratory system-related diseases in dream experiences resonates with existing literature on the psychophysiological aspects of dreaming, where physical health conditions are known to influence dream content.

However, the lack of significant correlations between dream frequency, *Prakrithi*, and disease type in this study contrasts with some prior research that has reported associations between these

Table 6: Crosstabulation between *Prakrithi* and dreams

	Kapha	*Kapha Pitta*	*Kapha Vata*	*Pitta*	*Pitta Kapha*	*Pitta Vata*	*Vata*	*Vata kapha*	*Vata pitta*	**Total**
Vataja	16.8%	10.6%	8.1%	12.4%	13.0%	6.2%	15.5%	9.3%	8.1%	100.0%
Pittaja	16.8%	10.9%	6.6%	14.6%	11.7%	5.1%	15.3%	10.2 %	8.8%	100.0%
Kaphaja	16.9%	10.2%	7.8%	13.3%	14.5%	5.4%	15.1%	9.0%	7.8%	100.0%

Table 7: Crosstabulation between disease type and dream

	Respiratory system disease	**Circulatory system disease**	**Nervous system disease**	**Digestive system disease**	**Skin related disease**	**total**
***Vataja* dreams**	14.3%	11.8%	11.2%	14.3%	0.0%	100.0%
***Pittaja* dreams**	14.6%	10.2%	10.2%	15.3%	0.0%	100.0%
***Kaphaja* dreams**	13.9%	12.0%	11.4%	13.9%	0.0%	100.0%

Table 8: Metaphor analysis according to Haritha Samhitha

Metaphor	**Percentage**
Dreaming of stars	11%
Dreaming of the moon	42%
Seeing the sun in a dream	16%
Dreaming of ponds full of lotus flowers	5%
Dreaming of swimming in water filled reservoirs	13%
Dreaming of lions going south in chariots pulled by animals like camels	0%
Dreaming of a woman in red and black clothes with her hair spread out and running	1%
Dreaming of drinking milk	7%
Drinking alcohol in a dream	40%
Dreaming of eating goat meat	19%
Dreaming of eating ghee	5%
Dreaming of eating porridge	2%
Dreaming of white snakes biting the right hand	1%
Dreaming of skulls	2%
Dreaming of bones	3%
Seeing ash in dreams	24%
Dreaming of cotton	8%
Dreaming of rope	1%
Seeing car wheels in a dream	8%
Dreaming of embracing beautiful women in white clothes	2%
Dreaming of grains like sesame, rice, wheat, mustard, barley, rice etc.	33%
Dreaming of trees full of fruit	10%

Dreaming of fire	3%
Seeing mirrors in dreams	5%
Dreaming of flowers	63%
Dreaming of umbrellas	5%
Dreaming of flags	29%
Seeing skimmed milk in a dream	16%
Dreaming of fruits	10%
Dreaming of clothes	7%
Dreaming of betel nut	2%
Dreaming of lotus flowers	3%
Seeing pot in a dream	2%
Dreaming of gold jewelry	3%
Dreaming of various jewels	0%
Seeing jackfruit in a dream	0%
Dreaming of empty pots	6%
Dreaming of branchless trees	4%
Dreaming of being bitten by an angry woman	0%
Dreaming of your teeth falling out	3%
Dreaming of hair loss	4%
Dreaming of falling from one's bed and being injured and bleeding	72%
Dreaming of empty houses, buildings, temples, holy places	36%
Dreaming of a burning moon	10%
Dreaming of flowering trees with fire	0%
Dreaming of biting or attacking animals like crows, camels, snakes, pigs, bats, donkeys, buffaloes, dogs, crocodiles, monkeys etc.	14%
Dreaming of body massage with oil, ghee etc	20%

Conclusion

This survey was conducted to analyze metaphors in dream in relation to prakriti and diseases. According to that, many factors related to dreaming such as *Prakrithi*, frequency, time duration of dreaming, type of disease were analyzed and it shows there is no significant difference or a correlation in between frequency of dreaming and disease type and *Prakrithi*. As many factors like life satisfaction level, attitudes, emotions cause to vary the memory about dreams it would be better to conduct with more in depth qualitative method assisted by the quantitative method in identifying the major factors.

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