

Assessing Impact of Hypnotherapy on Insomnia in Female Professionals: An Empirical Study

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on assessing the cogent impact of hypnotherapy in reducing insomnia among female professionals. Women today are increasingly stressed due to the multiple roles they have to juggle at personal, professional and family fronts, because of which they get more prone to insomnia than men. The ill effects of chronic sleep deprivation on cognitive functions and hence long-term health are especially pronounced among career women, who often work in high-pressure environments. Conventional remedies such as sleep medication and cognitive-behaviour therapy have their own limitations of drug dependency and the inability to target the root cause of this problem. Hypnotherapy is non-invasive and holistic in approach that promotes relaxation. It targets the stress that resides in the patient's subconscious mind which makes it an effective alternative. About 50 female professionals with prevalent insomnia were identified from different areas of Bhopal city. They were intervened with hypnotherapy treatment and also responded to a standard questionnaire before and after hypnotherapy so that their level of insomnia could be assessed. Statistical analysis was used to determine changes in sleeping patterns after treatment. This research paper is conducive to existing literature by providing a fresh perspective for alternatives available for women suffering from insomnia thus offering a potential non-drug remedy for practitioners treating sleep disorders.

Keywords: *Hypnotherapy, Insomnia, Female Professionals*

The females today in the strife of managing their personal, professional and family lives add so much of hassle to their routine that they themselves do not understand when they have invited insomnia in their lives. Females as compared to men are more susceptible to insomnia (Zeng et al., 2020). While sleep loss seems to affect multiple aspects of human performance, it exerts its greatest effect on the ability to sustain attention (Roth & Roehrs, 2003). In today's fast-paced world, where stress and high demands characterize professional life, insomnia has become a pervasive issue, particularly among working women. For female professionals, the burden of juggling work, personal and societal obligations is a common cause of high incidence of chronic sleep disturbances which ultimately results in a myriad of health issues both mentally and physically. Hypnotherapy has recently been identified as one of the non-invasive and holistic treatment that could

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potentially help to combat insomnia (Kohler & Kurz, 2017). But is it really an effective intervention for our women working in various professional fields?

Insomnia is not simply a by-product of a demanding lifestyle; rather, it is a health problem unto itself that can impair cognitive function, decrease work performance and foster the development of chronic conditions such as depression, anxiety, and cardiovascular disease (Strähl, 2023). Standard treatments in the form of hypnotic medications or cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) are widely used (Morin et al., 2009), but often fall short. Adverse effects are possible with medication use, and CBT primarily addresses symptoms rather than the root cause of sleep disruption (Condon, Maurer & Kyle, 2021). Women professionals particularly benefit from interventions that serve as adjuncts to existing care while also enhancing their overall functioning. Because hypnotherapy enhances relaxation and confronts subconscious precipitants of stress-related conditions, it has potential as an intervention for this population.

The main objective of this research is to study the effectiveness of hypnotherapy in improving sleep quality among female professionals representing various sectors. The main problem that will be addressed is whether hypnotherapy, being an alternative treatment, can help reduce insomnia conditions and improve sleep quality significantly, especially in a group that experiences different stress factors characterised by career, gender and work-life balance. This research empirically analyses how hypnotherapy affects sleep patterns, focusing on the quality, duration and overall well-being of female professionals suffering from insomnia.

In this study Hypnotherapy has been administered to insomniac women professionals from diverse sectors (N=50). They were asked to respond to a standard survey tool to analyse the level of insomnia both before and after the intervention of hypnotherapy. Their responses were scored and put to relevant statistical analysis to study whether hypnotherapy brought a significant difference in their condition of insomnia.

As much literature does not exist regarding alternative treatments for insomnia, particularly hypnotherapy's effectiveness among female professionals, this study can contribute significantly in this regard. While hypnotherapy has been used for various psychological conditions, its application for insomnia in the context of professional women remains under explored. The findings could offer healthcare providers and therapists an alternative approach to managing insomnia that is free from pharmaceutical dependency. The study employs both quantitative and qualitative methods, including sleep assessments, hypnotherapy sessions and post-treatment evaluations, to measure changes in sleep quality. By focusing on an underserved demographic, this research also aims to contribute to the broader understanding of how non-traditional therapies can benefit working women.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Hypnosis is a technique through which instructions are given to affect functions such as sensations, perception, thought, emotion or behaviour (Ng & Lee, 2008). This could facilitate the treatment processes as it would permit different ways of solving the patient's problems by deciding on the how and where to intervene. Traditionally and conventionally, benzodiazepines and Z-drugs are used in the management of insomnia. Their safety and efficacy sustain over short-term treatment for both situational and chronic insomnia. However, these medications often lead to tolerance and dependency within 3 to 4 weeks of

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continuous use, presenting a significant drawback for long-term treatment (Riemann et al., 2017).

Hypnotherapy surges deep sleep waves (Graci & Hardie, 2007), thereby enhancing sound sleep. This makes it a better alternative to conventional medication. It has further been underpinned by two more studies showing better results with the use of hypnotherapy over traditional medications which in turn can help in the cessation of benzodiazepine (Mamoune et al., 2022). Moreover, relaxation techniques and sleep hygiene guidance provided with hypnotic intervention has been effective for the management of propagative insomnia and other sleep complications such as nightmares, sleepwalking, night terrors and much more (De Niet et al., 2009). In cases of night terrors hypnotherapy by way of posthypnotic suggestions proves beneficial as it lessens the excitement of senses during night (De Niet et al., 2009).

Self-hypnosis exercises are taught to patients which they can perform at home post treatment. This has proved to be of great benefit during the extended period (De Niet et al., 2009). Patients choose hypnotherapy instead of drugs as a treatment for their fears since it is non-invasive and does not require them to make many trips to the office for treatment. Hypnotherapy has shown paramount efficacy in treating primary nocturnal enuresis in children and adolescents, particularly in older children. Therefore, in these cases it has been preferred to conventional medicine (Mendoza & Capafons, 2009). Furthermore, it has shown substantial benefit in coping lethargy during the day, cataplexy and sleep paralysis, as well as offering strategies for addressing loud snoring by altering sleep positions or reframing noise perception for bed partners (Ng & Lee, 2008).

In a hypnotherapy treatment by (Abramowitz et al., 2008) indelible improvements in sleep quality and abatement in intrusive thoughts and avoidance behaviors were observed after one-month follow-ups. Hypnotherapy works well for both males and females in reducing symptoms of insomnia and psychological distress (Holdevici, 2014). Hypnotherapy sessions if recorded and practiced at home, can further enhance the effectiveness of hypnotherapy, potentially reducing the need for frequent sessions. Moreover, the side effects of hypnotherapy are negligible making it a promising treatment option for insomnia and other clinical conditions (Chamine et al., 2018).

However, a robust methodology is essential for assessing hypnotherapy's efficacy in treating insomnia. "*The IDEAL framework (Innovation, Development, Exploration, Assessment, and Long-term follow-up) could provide a structured approach for evaluating non-pharmacological therapies like hypnotherapy*" (Mamoune et al., 2022). By following IDEAL framework existing methodological flaws in therapeutic hypnosis research can be inscribed, such as sparse quality and lack of effect size calculations, which currently restrain the ability to draw rigorous conclusions about the impact of hypnotherapy on sleep quality (De Niet et al., 2009).

When the effects of hypnotherapy fade over time, treatment should be stopped gradually, along with counseling, cognitive-behavioral therapy for insomnia (CBT-I), or other surrogate treatments (Riemann et al., 2017). Traditional medications for insomnia, especially for older adults or those taking multiple drugs, can cause side effects like confusion, falls, hangovers, and even worsening insomnia. This highlights the importance of non-drug options like hypnotherapy. The success of hypnotherapy depends on key factors such as the patient's attitude before hypnosis, their expectations, trust in the therapist, and how they

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interpret the therapist's suggestions. In addition, the methods and suggestions during hypnotherapy must be specific to the issues of the patient so that success is ensured. Therapy scripts can improve confidence and skill level among beginner therapists, while cognitive therapy including hypnosis will have the most positive effect (Ng & Lee, 2008; Guse, 2012). Yet, it is still difficult to perform gold standard randomized double blind controlled trial in hypnotherapy as it requires the cooperation of patient and therapist and the most difficult area is getting the patient into the trance (Alladin, 2016).

Within this framework, social, and psychological factors such as patients' attentiveness and belief in hypnotherapy and therapist's training level and experience are also important (Alladin, 2012). Although hypnotherapy shows considerable promise as a therapeutic approach for insomnia and related sleep disorders, further comprehensive and methodologically robust research is required to substantiate its long-term effectiveness and to evaluate its comparative efficacy against other treatment modalities.

Research Question and Corresponding Hypothesis

To study the effect of Hypnotherapy on insomnia in women professionals in Bhopal city.

1. Hypothesis: Hypnotherapy administration has brought a significant difference in the condition of insomnia in women professionals

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study has adopted a quantitative approach to study the effect of Hypnotherapy on women professionals suffering from insomnia. A cohort of 50 women professionals was identified from different areas of Bhopal city who were suffering from insomnia. The sampling technique was a two-step process. The Bhopal city was divided into East, West, North, South and Central Zones and then participants were selected based on their voluntary participation in the study. The distribution of data is shown the table below.

Table-1

Area	No of participants
North	1
South	19
East	10
West	6
Central	14

A standard survey tool comprising of 14 questions has been used to assess the level of insomnia in the participants. The insomniac women professionals were administered this survey questionnaire and their responses were noted. Each of their responses was scored according to the manual having a score limit of 14-70. The category of insomnia in these women professionals has been decided according to norms given in table below

Table-2

S No.	Scores	Category
1	14-24	Very low level of sleep insomnia
2	25-36	Low level of sleep insomnia
3	37-48	Moderate level of sleep insomnia

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S No.	Scores	Category
4	49-60	High level of sleep insomnia
5	61-70	Very high level of sleep insomnia

Then the insomniac women professionals were given 3 hypnotherapy sessions for 1 hr 45 min each with a gap of 15 days. After the completion of these sessions, they were again administered the questionnaire and their responses were noted and scored, thus a total score for each participant was calculated pre and post intervention of hypnotherapy. The response scores were then put to statistical two sample paired t-test to assess the effect of hypnotherapy in insomniac women professionals.

FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study show that there was a conspicuous augmentation in the condition of insomnia in women professionals. The average score of the participants before hypnotherapy showed a high level of insomnia in them. But post hypnotherapy they showed a moderate level of insomnia without reporting any side effects. Hence indicating the efficacy of hypnotherapy in treatment of insomnia in women professionals.

The result of the study has been shown in the table below-

Table-3

t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means

	<i>Pre Hypnotherapy</i>	<i>Post Hypnotherapy</i>
Mean	50.12	41.78
Variance	55.3322449	69.76693878
Observations	50	50
Pearson Correlation	0.838020947	
Hypothesized Difference	Mean	0
df	49	
t Stat	12.88004438	
P(T<=t) one-tail	1.19548E-17	
t Critical one-tail	1.676550893	
P(T<=t) two-tail	2.39097E-17	
t Critical two-tail	2.009575237	

Interpretation

The paired t-test results compare the means of two related groups: pre-hypnotherapy and post-hypnotherapy. The mean score before hypnotherapy is 50.12, while the post-hypnotherapy mean is 41.78, indicating a reduction in the mean score after the treatment. The variances are 55.33 for pre-hypnotherapy and 69.77 for post-hypnotherapy, showing slightly more variability in the scores after the treatment. The Pearson correlation between the two sets of scores is 0.838, suggesting a strong positive correlation. This means that individuals who had higher pre-treatment scores also tended to have higher post-treatment scores, despite the overall reduction in the mean.

The test hypothesizes a mean difference of zero, with 49 degrees of freedom. The t-statistic is 12.88, which is quite large, indicating that the difference between the means is substantial. The one-tailed p-value is 1.19548E-17 and the two-tailed p-value is 2.39097E-17, both of which are extremely small and close to zero. This means that the observed difference

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between the pre- and post-treatment scores is highly statistically significant, allowing us to confidently reject the null hypothesis.

The critical t-values for the one-tailed and two-tailed tests are 1.676 and 2.009, respectively. Since the calculated t-value of 12.88 is much larger than both critical values, and the p-values are far below the standard significance level of 0.05, we can conclude that the difference between the pre- and post-hypnotherapy scores is statistically significant. This suggests that hypnotherapy has had a meaningful effect on reducing the scores in the measured variable that is insomnia.

CONCLUSION

The primary focus of our study was to investigate the effectiveness of hypnotherapy techniques in reducing the level of insomnia among female professionals in different work places. The analysis of paired T-test results provided clear evidence of insomnia symptoms being worse during the pre-test phase than after hypnotherapy treatment, suggesting hypnotherapy to be an effective therapy. The statistics revealed that the changes in the sleep quality were not simply by chance, underpinning the use hypnotherapy for sleep-related disorders such as insomnia. These results promote hypnotherapy as an appropriate replacement alternative (Hartman & Zimberoff, 2011) to conventional medicine or behavioural strategies that are usually employed in combating sleep disturbances.

The observed reduction in insomnia symptoms has broader implications, especially in the context of professional women working in high-pressure environments. Since inadequate sleep is known to affect performance, mood and productivity (Killgore, 2010), the potential effectiveness of hypnotherapy presents additional benefits to companies seeking enhancement in health and wellness programs. Incorporating hypnotherapy into the approaches of occupational health and mental health of employees would usefully improve their health, satisfaction with the job and job performances. This makes hypnotherapy not only a tool for individual health improvement but also a strategic intervention for enhancing workplace efficiency (Walters & Havens, 1993).

It should be noted that the research has its own limitations which should be taken into account when looking at the results. The findings may not be applicable to the larger population due to the small sample size involved. The requirement of hypnotherapy also varies according to the severity of insomnia in patients which is another limitation making it unclear as to how many hypnotherapy sessions are necessary to achieve certain sleep improvements. Research conducted in this area in future should aim to conduct trials on a larger population so that the results are more reliable and generalizable. It should also be ensured that a uniform treatment regimen is followed by the participants.

Further studies might assess the efficacy of hypnotherapy by comparing it with other techniques for treating insomnia including but not limited to cognitive behavioural therapy, medications and lifestyle changes. Moreover, it would be important to assess the intersection of age, lifestyle factors, work-related stress and health in modulating the effectiveness of hypnotherapy. Such an understanding would enable the identification of the treatment effectiveness in certain subpopulations.

Pragmatic insights from this study underscore the use of hypnotherapy for the management of insomnia among working women, yet additional studies need to be conducted in order to confirm the safety in a longer-run as well as to seek out broader implications. With more

robust evidence, hypnotherapy could become a key tool in addressing insomnia and improving the overall well-being of working women, leading to better health outcomes and increased productivity.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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