

**INTRODUCTION**

Sleeping disorders appear in various ways: difficulty in falling asleep, frequent night wakings, early waking or non-restorative sleep.

There are many initial causes: stress and burn-out, fears and anxiety, hormonal disorders (thyroid or adrenal glands, menopause, etc.), irregular working hours or lifestyle, digestive or urinary disorders.

Consequences: whatever the cause of the sleeping disorders, a significant increase in stress levels can be observed with the subjects concerned.

The stress symptoms could come from apprehending going to bed, a chronic fatigue, a decrease of the cognitive functions (faculties of concentration, memorization, intellectual efficiency, etc.), a weakening of the immunity system, an increased irritability, a depressive state, digestive and appetite disorders, and headaches from tension. All these symptoms have a negative impact on the quality of life of the subjects and maintain a recurring stress, which in turn creates a vicious circle.

Sleeping disorders, causes and consequences

- Anxiety disorders
- Stress, burn-out
- Hormonal disorders
- Irregular hours
- Digestive disorders

Sleeping disorders

- Fatigue, stress, decrease of the cognitive functions
- Anxiety, apprehending bedtime

A disrupted autonomic nervous system

- Neuroendocrine disturbance

Through our study cases, we have noticed a significant improvement of sleep after reflexology treatment. This effect is observed right from the first session, of variable durability according to the subjects, from one to seven consecutive trouble-free nights. After two to six regular sessions (according to the cases), all subjects have recovered a normal sleep of good quality, whatever their profile or their related symptoms.

NB: the value «12 and +» corresponds to a constant and permanent improvement of sleeping disorders.

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**METHOD**

Sample group: women aged 25 to 57, suffering from sleeping disorders and stress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Sleeping disorders</th>
<th>Other disorders</th>
<th>Number of sessions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>Non-restorative sleep</td>
<td>Stress and nervousness, digestive and appetite disorders</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>Non-restorative sleep</td>
<td>Fatigue, stress, fatigue</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>Difficulty falling asleep, insomnia, waking at night</td>
<td>Stress, fear, exhaustion, digestive and urogenital disorders, hypothyroidism (Hashimoto)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>Night sweats and waking</td>
<td>Hormonal disorders</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>Difficulty falling asleep, insomnia, non-restorative sleep</td>
<td>Digestive disorders, palpitations and anxiety</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>Difficulty falling asleep, insomnia, non-restorative sleep</td>
<td>Fatigue, gastric reflux</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The different stages of a reflexology session:
- duration: from 1h to 1h30
- a complete case history and a treatment using finger-pressure on specific foot reflex zones (RZ)
- a common protocol, centred on sleeping disorders, was applied to all the subjects, and was completed by a protocol adapted to the specific pathologies of each person.
- interval between two sessions: from 1 to 4 weeks

Reflex zones related to the specific common protocol in sleeping disorders:
- Hypothalamus
- Hypophyse
- Pituitary gland
- Pineal gland
- Thyroid gland
- Adrenal glands
- Autonomic nervous system

**RESULTS**

Through our study cases, we have noticed a significant improvement of sleep after reflexology treatment. This effect is observed right from the first session, of variable durability according to the subjects, from one to seven consecutive trouble-free nights. After two to six regular sessions (according to the cases), all subjects have recovered a normal sleep of good quality, whatever their profile or their related symptoms.

**CONCLUSION**

Our results seem to confirm that regular treatment in reflexology allows for a better regulation of the neuroendocrine system (NES) thanks to the work of related reflex zones: hypothalamus, hypophyse, pituitary gland, pineal gland, thyroid gland, adrenal glands and autonomic nervous system. Applied regularly, this protocol makes it possible, in the mid or long term, to rebalance the autonomic nervous system and the associated neurotransmitter secretions and hormones (adrenaline, noradrenaline, glucocorticoids, melatonin, serotonin, etc.). We can note a gradual regulation of circadian rhythms and a better stress management. In the short term, reflexology sessions enable the subject to break with the bedtime anxiety pattern, by reconnecting the lying down position and closed eyes with a moment of peace and quiet, as was the case during the treatment. The repetition of the sessions allows for a readaptation of the NES by reactivating the capacity to relax and build up resilience.