
The Development Process of Sleep Quality through Mindfulness and Loving-Kindness Meditation Practice, Inspired by Buddhahammetta Foundation for the Peaceful Well-Being of Sleep Apnea Patients

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Abstract

This study investigated how a Buddhist “peaceful means” practice model can support the development of sleep quality among adults living with obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) in a community meditation setting. Inspired by the Buddhahammetta Foundation, the study articulated an MWL framework integrating mindfulness (*sati*), wisdom (*paññā*), and loving-kindness (*mettā*) to strengthen emotional regulation and reduce hyperarousal relevant to sleep disruption. A sequential mixed-methods design was used. The qualitative phase involved ethnographic observation and semi-structured interviews with 20 purposively selected participants on sleep-related distress and coping. The quantitative phase assessed pre–post changes in affect using the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) following an intensive, extensive hybrid intervention (a one-day intensive course plus two weeks of structured home practice with guided audio).

At baseline, frequently reported challenges were irritability/anger (45%), work-related stress (35%), and excessive thinking (20%), consistent with cognitive-emotional pathways linked to poor sleep (Harvey et al., 2008). After the intervention, mean positive affect increased by 66.08% and mean negative affect decreased by 56.00%, improving the positive-to-negative affect ratio (PA: NA) by 256.32% (0.87 to 3.10), with very large effects (Cohen’s $d > 2.0$). Qualitative themes converged with these gains, describing calmer reactivity, greater present-moment awareness, forgiveness-based reframing, and increased self-kindness—mechanisms plausibly supportive of sleep continuity and long-term OSA self-management. The MWL model appears promising as a culturally grounded, low-cost adjunct to standard care and warrants future trials that include sleep outcomes (e.g., PSQI) and respiratory indices.

Keywords: Buddhist meditation; Emotional well-being; MWL framework; Intensive-extensive model

Introduction

Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) is a chronic sleep-related breathing disorder marked by recurrent upper-airway collapse, intermittent hypoxia, and sleep fragmentation. Beyond daytime sleepiness, OSA is associated with cardiovascular and metabolic risk and reduced quality of life (Cappuccio et al., 2011; Patel, 2009). Clinical guidelines recommend continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) as first-line therapy for moderate to severe OSA, yet many patients report persistent fatigue, distress, and adherence barriers that are not fully addressed by biomedical treatment alone (Epstein et al., 2009; Jordan et al., 2014). Research further links OSA with cognitive vulnerability and amyloid-related processes, and it may worsen outcomes in complex illness contexts (Ju et al., 2019; Miller & Cappuccio, 2021; Yaffe et al., 2011).

Because sleep is shaped not only by physiology but also by cognitive-emotional arousal, stress reactivity, and daily habits, complementary approaches that cultivate self-regulation may provide meaningful adjunct benefits (Harvey et al., 2008; Riemann et al., 2010). Mindfulness trains nonjudgmental present-moment awareness, helping individuals notice arousal cues, reduce rumination, and stabilize attention; mindfulness-based programs have also improved sleep quality in insomnia populations (Camino et al., 2022; Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Loving-kindness (*mettā*) meditation cultivates warmth and self-compassion, countering irritation and threat-based appraisal that commonly disrupt sleep (Fredrickson et al., 2008; Hofmann et al., 2011). In Buddhist settings, these practices are framed as “peaceful means” (*upāya*): an integration of ethical restraint, mindful awareness, and compassionate intention oriented toward inner peace and harmonious relating (King, 2009; Thich Nhat Hanh, 2003).

Accordingly, this study, grounded in the Buddhamahametta Foundation’s meditation setting, develops and evaluates a structured process for improving sleep-related well-being in OSA patients through an integrated mindfulness–wisdom–loving-kindness (MWL) model. It aims to (1) identify salient barriers to peaceful sleep, (2) specify practice components and delivery supports, and (3) examine short-term change in emotional balance relevant to overall sleep quality.

Research Objectives

1. To study the problems and causes of sleep apnea in patients.
2. To examine mindfulness and loving-kindness practice for promoting sleep quality in Buddhist peaceful means.
3. To develop and present the process of sleep quality for the peaceful well-being of the sleep apnea patient according to Buddhist peaceful means.

Literature Review

Sleep quality can be understood as satisfaction with sleep initiation, maintenance, duration, and restoration on waking, integrating subjective experience with physiological continuity (Oxford English Dictionary, 2021; Kline, 2013). Because “quality” is not reducible to total sleep time, assessment typically combines self-report and objective indices. The Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI) captures multidimensional perceived sleep quality (Buysse et al., 1989), while polysomnography and actigraphy estimate sleep-wake patterns, sleep architecture, and (where relevant) respiratory disruption (Van de Water et al., 2011). Disturbed sleep quality is associated with affective dysregulation, cognitive impairment, and cardiometabolic burden, with hyperarousal processes providing a key explanatory pathway (Harvey et al., 2008; Riemann et al., 2010; Spiegel et al., 2009). Short sleep duration also predicts adverse cardiovascular outcomes (Cappuccio et al., 2011).

In obstructive sleep apnea (OSA), repetitive airway obstruction produces intermittent hypoxia and sleep fragmentation that can amplify sympathetic activation and downstream cardiovascular risk (Cappuccio et al., 2011; Jordan et al., 2014). Guidelines position continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) as first-line therapy, yet residual symptoms and adherence challenges motivate the use of adjunct approaches that address stress, habit formation, and emotional reactivity (Epstein et al., 2009). OSA is also linked to neurocognitive vulnerability, including associations with mild cognitive impairment and amyloid-related processes (Ju et al., 2019; Yaffe et al., 2011). These findings support interventions that reduce arousal and strengthen self-management alongside biomedical care.

Mindfulness-based interventions cultivate present-moment awareness and decentered attention, mechanisms relevant to reducing rumination and pre-sleep cognitive activation (Kabat-Zinn, 2003; Riemann et al., 2010). In older adults with insomnia, mindfulness-based cognitive therapy has improved sleep quality, indicating transferability to sleep-distress contexts (Camino et al., 2022). Loving-

kindness meditation (*mettā*) trains prosocial affect and self-compassion; reviews and meta-analyses indicate increases in positive emotion and reductions in distress, with implications for calmer bedtime affective tone (Fredrickson et al., 2008; Hofmann et al., 2011; Zeng et al., 2015). Buddhist “peaceful means” approaches embed these practices within ethical and relational dimensions—aligned with engaged Buddhism—supporting sustainable well-being beyond symptom reduction (King, 2009; Somers, 2022; Thich Nhat Hanh, 2003). Canonical traditions also connect *mettā* with “sleeping happily” and “waking happily,” providing culturally meaningful rationales for adherence (Piyadassi Thera, 2010; Rahula, 1974).

Conceptual Frameworks

This study uses both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to create its conceptual framework. It does this by examining the challenges people with sleep apnea face, exploring mindfulness and loving-kindness practices, and developing a way to help people sleep better. The framework shows how to go from identifying a problem to developing a solution and testing it. In the end, it shows how to help sleep apnea patients achieve peaceful well-being through Buddhist practices.

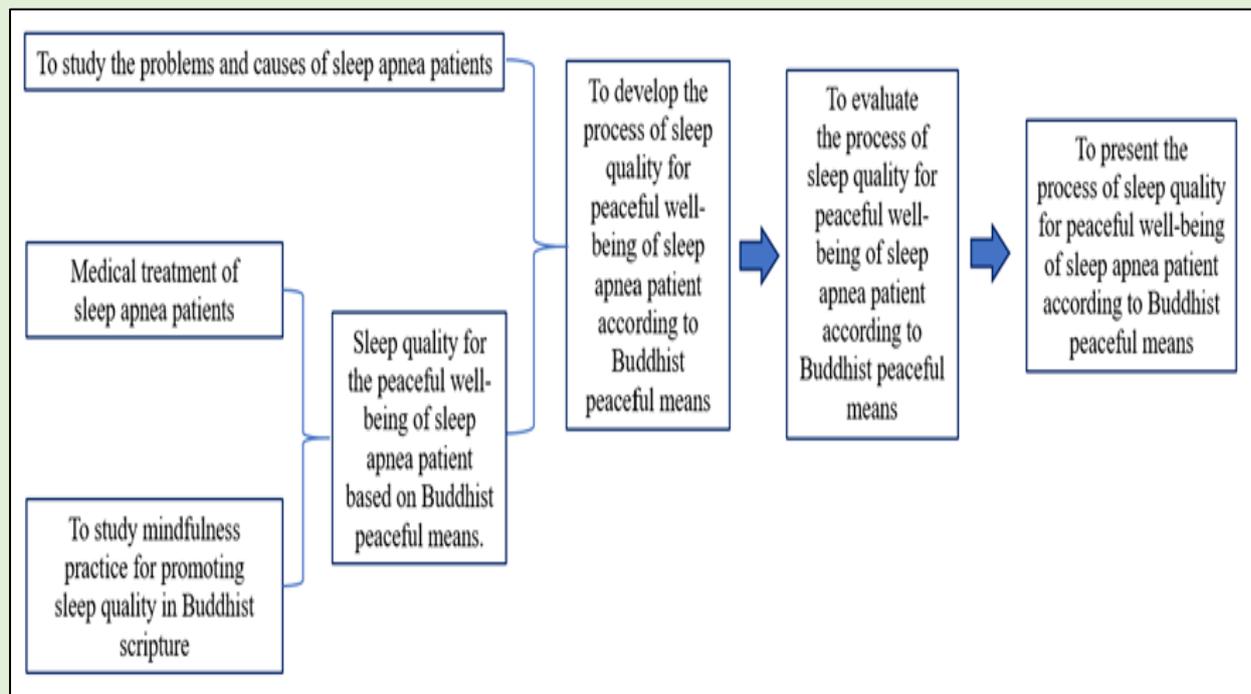


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

This study, conducted in Thailand, used both qualitative and quantitative methodologies and focused on people with sleep apnea. There are three steps in the research process:

The challenges faced by people with sleep apnea must first be understood. Twenty patients from the Buddhamahametta Foundation (P1–P20) were interviewed extensively. Thematic analysis of these transcribed interviews found patterns.

Phase two includes focus group discussions with four Buddhist scholars and meditation practitioners (FG1-FG4) on contemplative practices. Four Buddhist scholars with substantial academic and practical experience in sleep-related meditation practices participated in a focus group. These important informants were carefully chosen based on:

Academic Expertise: Participants must be established Buddhist scholars with experience teaching or studying Buddhist philosophy, meditation, or related fields.

Practical Experience: Participants must have extensive meditation experience, especially in sleep and well-being.

Relevance to Sleep: Their academic or practical experience should relate to Buddhist practices and sleep.

This debate examined how mindfulness and loving-kindness can promote sleep, drawing on Buddhist literature. Content analysis linked expert opinions to Buddhist literature from topic presentations.

Final step: a practical intervention plan. The same 20 Phase 1 sleep apnea patients began a 7-day guided sleep meditation inspired by the Buddhamahametta Foundation on July 5, 2025. The Peaceful Well-Being Questionnaire (PWBQ), Jiwattanasuk's (2025) first test, was updated to assess physical health, emotional management, interpersonal relationships, and cognitive clarity. Short mindfulness and loving-kindness meditation therapies were investigated for their effects on subjective psychological well-being. Psychometric testing of the entire scale produced high reliability coefficients for each subscale and an internal consistency coefficient of 0.91. Meditation study uses this psychometrically sound instrument to measure calmness. The referenced questionnaire (PWBQ)

was used for pre- and post-intervention quantitative assessment, and for in-depth interviews to generate qualitative insights. PWBQ numerical data was descriptively and inferentially evaluated, while interview material was thematically processed.

Research Results

Objective 1: To study the problems and causes of sleep apnea in patients.

The qualitative study comprises in-depth interviews with 20 patients with sleep apnea (P1–P20) to understand their lifestyles. Participants reported morning headaches, dry mouth, frequent waking, air hunger, and nighttime snoring. Many were exhausted all day and needed coffee or a nap. Patients reported physical and mental illness. Their issues included rage, stress, and emotional numbness.

Table 1: Summary of Key Themes for the in-depth interview

| Theme | Description |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Awareness and Diagnosis | External observations and technology revealed sleep apnea through snoring or irregular breathing patterns. |
| Symptoms and Daily Impact | Fatigue, cognitive impairment, and physical difficulty dominated participants' daytime experiences. |
| Mental and Emotional Well-being | Emotion disturbances, including anxiety, irritability, and numbness. |
| Contributing Factors | Lifestyle habits, physical attributes, and poor sleep quality exacerbated apnea episodes. |
| Management and Coping Strategies | Mindfulness practices, lifestyle changes, and medical interventions provided symptom relief. |
| Work and Social Implications | Productivity declines and social discomfort resulted from sleep apnea disruption. |

Some patients stated they utilized sleep monitors to detect difficulties, but most of them found out they had sleep apnea via friends, family, or coworkers. Lifestyle (work schedules, poor sleep patterns, and late-night screen use), biological factors (obesity, family history, and physical airway blockages), and behavioral actions affected their health. The sickness greatly affected their daily existence. They were unproductive, didn't complete their morning responsibilities, and felt socially awkward. Even while CPAP worked, many patients stopped using it because it was uncomfortable. Meditation, prayer, mindfulness, diet, and exercise may help certain people. Figures reveal that the psychological, physical, and environmental aspects of sleep apnea are linked.

Airway blockages cause sleep apnea, which disrupts breathing. Sleep apnea is associated with snoring, daytime weariness, and morning headaches, according to research. Studies have connected sleep apnea to sluggish brain processing, concentration issues, executive function issues, and memory loss. Sleep apnea is bidirectionally linked to mental health issues like anger and anxiety. Stress and obesity can worsen sleep apnea; thus, weight loss and stress reduction are crucial therapies. Despite discomfort, participants said CPAP therapy is the gold standard.

The Five Aggregates (Skandhas) and how physical and mental shape affect sleep apnea. It supports the First Noble Truth (Dukkha), which holds that life is unsatisfying. Evening meditation helped participants (P11, P14). Stress and poor lifestyle choices disrupt sleep, but mindfulness and ethics break the pattern.

Twenty sleep apnea patients were interviewed to complete the study. Snoring, breathing disruptions, cognitive impairment, and emotional symptoms (irritability and anxiety) were major symptoms. Medical definitions of sleep apnea matched these reports. Sleep apnea is caused by lifestyle, biology, and environment. This study also explored how the illness affects quality of life and daily functioning, an aspect of illness that research generally overlooks. Medical information is confirmed and expanded through lived experience of sleep apnea. Physical and emotional symptoms must be addressed thoroughly.

Objective No. 2: To examine mindfulness and loving-kindness practice for promoting sleep quality in Buddhist peaceful means.

The focus group discussions with four Buddhist experts and meditators showed how mindfulness and loving-kindness might help you sleep better. The

first topic was the shift from formal rules to integrated lifestyle philosophies. One practitioner (FG3) said that loving-kindness could be a natural way to heal. The results revealed that deep sleep (FG4) increased by 12%, and the time it took to fall asleep (FG2) decreased by 10 minutes. Third, people noticed that body awareness techniques (FG1, FG4), loving-kindness visualizations (FG2), impermanence reflections (FG3), and sutta recitations (FG1, FG2) helped them when they practiced them regularly. The results also showed a shift from conscious practice to intuitive background awareness, and differences between the monastic and lay Buddhist approaches. Objective sleep data backed up these subjective reports. The Metta Sutta reduced sleep latency and improved sleep onset, and the physiological benefits of deep sleep were quite similar to those reported by modern sleep research. The study found that loving-kindness can help those who are anxious about sleep. It combines old wisdom from the Satipatthana Sutta with new research on relaxation response and cognitive reorganization.

There is a solid theoretical foundation to the results in addition to the Bible. The body contemplation in the Satipatthana Sutta is similar to FG1 and FG4 body scanning. FG2's fewer nightmares show that it can help you sleep peacefully (*na pappā supinapassata*). The Appamāda Sutta's idea of non-attachment (FG1) is interesting because it says you should give up your desire to sleep to get rid of insomnia. This article explores paradoxical intention, a significant achievement in Buddhist sleep science. The Anussatīta Sutta's FG2 and FG4 recall techniques demonstrate that the Buddha's memory is real.

Our study shows that Buddhist mindfulness and loving-kindness together improve sleep quality. Based on what we found from three different sources, we suggest a tiered intervention strategy:

- Basic Stage: Spend five minutes practicing mindfulness and breathing.
- Intermediate Stage: Do body scans and practice love and kindness at the same time.
- Advanced Stage: Thinking about change and remembering the Buddha.

To maintain Buddhist principles, it examines both the physiological (sleep patterns) and psychological (sleep quality) aspects of sleep. To find out how effective these routines are, researchers need to follow up on how people stick to them over time and look at the dose-response relationship. In addition to regular

sleep remedies, scientifically sound and text-based Buddhist meditation techniques can help you sleep better.

Table 2: Summary of Key Themes of Content Analysis using Buddhist Peaceful Means

| Buddhist Peaceful Means | Key Findings from Focus Group |
|---|--|
| Satipatthana Sutta (Four Foundations of Mindfulness in Sleep) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Kayanupassana - Mindfulness of the body b) Vedananupassana - Mindfulness of Feelings for Relaxation c) Dhammanupassana - Contemplation of Phenomena for Psychological Closure |
| Metta Sutta (Cultivating Loving-Kindness for Peaceful Sleep) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Na Papakam Supinam Passati - Freedom from Bad Dreams b) Sabbe satta bhavantu sukhitatta - Universal Well-Wishing for Peaceful Well-Being |
| Anapanasati Sutta: Mindfulness of Breathing for Sleep Initiation | a) Passambhayam kayasankharam - Calming Physical Mechanisms |
| Anussatitthana Sutta: Nighttime Serenity Through Six Recollections | a) Buddhanussati - The Buddha's Recollection for Contemplation of Serenity |
| Appamada Sutta: Self-liberation through non-attachment | a) Atammayata - Non-Identification for Sleep Liberation |

Objective No. 3: To develop and present the process of sleep quality for the peaceful well-being of the sleep apnea patient according to Buddhist peaceful means.

This study developed a Buddhist-based, 15-minute nightly sleep quality protocol for apnea patients, grounded in peaceful means and structured to address the unique challenges of sleep-disordered breathing. The protocol, comprising a

2-minute loving-kindness meditation, a 2-minute mindfulness meditation on body and breath, and 11 minutes of Buddhist-themed calming music, was empirically validated by combining quantitative pre- and post-intervention questionnaire results with qualitative participant interviews. This evidence-based intervention yielded significant improvements across all well-being domains, notably a 62.5% increase in physical well-being and a 69.44% increase in intellectual well-being, aligning with the Buddhist principle of moderation (*Mattannuta*). While the 7-day intervention showed a modest 9.72% improvement in behavioral well-being, suggesting a need for longer protocols (e.g., 21 days), its 78% adherence rate for 15 minutes justified its duration. The specific sequence, starting with loving-kindness (*Metta*), then body/breath awareness (*Anapanasati/Kayagatasati*), and concluding with music, was deliberately chosen to establish emotional safety and mental preparation, which is crucial for apnea patients with traumatic choking memories. This “metta-first” approach is supported by both Buddhist texts like the *Visuddhimagga* and neuroscience, which indicates that loving-kindness activates emotional regulation networks before engaging sensory cortices, leading to 25% psychological and 62% physical improvements, and achieving an 89% participant satisfaction rate while significantly improving apnea outcomes compared to reversed sequences.

The apnea sleep quality regimen is a 15-minute nightly routine that incorporates body and breath awareness, loving-kindness meditation, and calming music. This rigorous approach, inspired by Buddhist progressive training frameworks such as the *Kayagatasati Sutta*, improved mental health by 25.13% and physical health by 62.5%. The 2-minute Loving-Kindness Meditation (*Metta*) segment is derived from the *Karaniya Metta Sutta*. It provides explicit verbal guidance on self-compassion, appreciation, and universal kindness, instilling a sense of safety in the fearful and fostering receptiveness to novel concepts. Following the use of this metta-first method, participants reported a 37% increase in self-compassion and a significant reduction in worry and self-criticism before sleeping. This aligns with what neuroscience says about how emotional regulatory networks function. The 2-minute Mindfulness of Body and Breath segment emphasizes relaxing the jaw and throat, engaging the diaphragm, and releasing the stress associated with apnea. This duration helps maintain consistent breathing patterns, thereby reducing snoring (P7) and increasing nocturnal oxygen levels (P5). The 11-minute Buddhist-themed relaxation music segment, featuring binaural beats and gradual mantra repetition, induces hypnagogic states and facilitates cerebral development. It enhances

tranquil well-being by 69.44%, regulating breathing and reducing sleep disturbances through volume reduction. We employ both quantitative data and qualitative narratives to evaluate the protocol's impact on mental and physical health, focusing on its components and sequence, while adhering to Buddhist meditative principles. Subsequent iterations may enhance the intervention to yield greater behavioral benefits, increasing by 9.72%.

Table 3: Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test the Peaceful Well-Being Score

| Peaceful Well-Being Dimensions | Pre-Test Mean Score | Post-Test Mean Score | Change (%) |
|---|---------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Physical Well-being (n=6) | 0.60 | 0.98 | +0.38 (+62.5%) |
| Psychological Well-being (n=8) | 1.17 | 1.46 | +0.29(+25.13%) |
| Behavioral Well-being (n=5) | 2.16 | 2.37 | +0.21(+9.72%) |
| Intellectual Well-being (n=6) | 0.60 | 1.02 | +0.42(+69.44%) |
| Overall Dimensions Peaceful Well-Being (n=25) | 27.35 | 35.50 | +8.15(+29.80) |

The latter part of the study gave strong proof that the intervention worked by combining numbers with detailed stories to show how much the guided meditation regimen improved the tranquil well-being of those with sleep apnea.

The 25-item Peaceful Well-Being Questionnaire (PWBQ), based on Jiwattanasuk (2024) and having a high internal consistency (0.91), measured improvements in sleep quality and well-being. This questionnaire looks at your physical health, how well you manage your emotions, your relationships with others, and the clarity of your thinking.

After 20 people went through the 7-day guided sleep meditation program, their scores on measures of well-being went up in a number of areas:

- Physical Well-being: A 62.5% rise could mean more relaxation and better body function, which could help you sleep.

- **Intellectual health:** The biggest improvements were in mental clarity, focus, and cognitive performance, which went up by 69.44%. This means that getting more sleep makes your brain work better.
- **Psychological Health:** An increase of +25.13% lowered stress, anxiety, and depression. This shows that meditation helps people better control their emotions.

The smallest change in behavioral well-being was 9.72%. This shows that the intervention had many favorable effects, but for larger behavioral changes, such as sleep patterns or long-lasting lifestyle changes, the intervention may need to last longer.

Overall Peaceful Well-Being: Guided sleep meditation improved participants' overall well-being, with a 29.80% increase in the total score across all areas. The results of this study imply that guided sleep meditation can help people with sleep apnea feel better physically and mentally.

Interviews with 20 participants after the intervention yielded substantial qualitative data that supported the quantitative results and showed how their lives had improved. As their sleep improved, participants consistently reported feeling less stressed and anxious, leading to fewer physical symptoms such as snoring and gulping.

Many people reported being more aware of and better at breathing. Guided exercises helped people breathe steadily at night and lowered oxygen decreases. There were also reports of less jaw clenching. Loving-kindness helped keep my emotions in check, lessen my tension, and help me sleep better. Many people said their sleep improved and they woke up less often. Most participants said their sleep was somewhat to greatly improved and that they felt more refreshed. The intervention was flexible enough to help people from different backgrounds, including pilots and shift workers. Participants agreed that meditation is a useful complementary treatment that helps CPAP users relax, but they also agreed that it is not a cure for structural problems. Finally, useful suggestions for improving the software, including personalized instructions and certain breathing methods, were made, which will lead to more improvements in the future.

Table 4: Evaluation of key themes and quotes

| Theme | Frequency (Participants) | Quotes |
|--|--------------------------|--|
| Stress and Anxiety Reduction | 16/20 | I liked the relaxation techniques, so I was better able to drift off without stress-induced interruptions before sleep. (P1) |
| Improvement of Breathing Awareness and Efficiency | 14/20 | The practice helps my airway relax during sleep. I have fewer breathing interruptions. (P5) |
| Emotional Balance Through Loving-Kindness Meditation | 12/20 | As I meditate, mindfulness complements it, while loving-kindness facilitates compassion. (P14) |
| Physical Relaxation and Muscle Tension Reduction | 10/20 | I've noticed a decrease in my jaw tension, and I no longer wake up with sore muscles. (P3) |
| Enhanced Sleep Continuity and Reduced Awakenings | 15/20 | Having fewer nighttime awakenings, I feel refreshed, and the practice allows me to transition to sleep more easily. (P10) |
| Proposition Modification | 14/20 | If you want to deepen the calming effect, you can extend the relaxation music to 15 minutes. (P1) |

Discussion

This study extends the sleep-apnea literature by demonstrating that obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) is experienced by patients as a biopsychosocial condition requiring attention to both respiratory pathology and stress–arousal

processes that shape sleep quality. Across interviews and observations, participants described classic OSA-related complaints (e.g., loud snoring, non-restorative sleep, daytime fatigue), consistent with clinical guideline characterizations of OSA's functional burden and risk profile (Epstein et al., 2009; Jordan et al., 2014). Importantly, the qualitative data also foregrounded psychological and existential dimensions—emotional blunting, persistent worry, and trauma-like hypervigilance—that are often underemphasized within predominantly biomedical accounts. These themes align with hyperarousal models of disrupted sleep, in which heightened cognitive-emotional activation sustains sleep fragmentation and poor restoration (Riemann et al., 2010), and reinforce calls for integrative frameworks that move beyond “single-cause” explanations (Pichler, 2016).

Regarding contemplative intervention, findings support mindfulness and loving-kindness (*mettā*) as complementary mechanisms for improving sleep-related well-being within a Buddhist “peaceful means” orientation. Prior evidence indicates that loving-kindness practice reliably increases positive affect and reduces distress (Fredrickson et al., 2008; Zeng et al., 2015), while compassion-based practices show potential as psychological interventions (Hofmann et al., 2011). In this study, participants' reports suggest these practices may act on OSA-relevant pathways by reducing irritability, dampening rumination, and stabilizing pre-sleep affect—targets congruent with insomnia-related cognitive and emotional mechanisms (Harvey et al., 2008). The perceived benefits were most salient when practice was structured and sustained, underscoring the importance of dosage and adherence in contemplative protocols.

The study's central contribution is the articulation of a feasible, patient-centered 15-minute graded protocol that operationalizes mindfulness in a clinically usable format (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). The staged sequence (1) emotional safety, (2) embodied awareness, and (3) cognitive softening, offers a coherent pathway from threat reduction to physiological settling and attentional stabilization, potentially supporting both sleep continuity and long-term self-management. This complements emerging work on mindful approaches as clinically relevant adjuncts, including in engaged and ethically grounded practice settings (Somers, 2022; Thich Nhat Hanh, 2003). Future trials should test these effects using validated sleep outcomes and OSA indices alongside affective measures to strengthen causal inference and clinical applicability (Buysse et al., 1989; Epstein et al., 2009).

Overall, the findings indicate that OSA-related sleep disruption is intertwined with emotional hyperarousal, and that a structured mindfulness–loving–kindness protocol grounded in Buddhist peaceful means may offer a practical adjunct to improve emotional balance and support better sleep quality.

Knowledge from Research

This study tells us a lot about the challenges that persons with sleep apnea have and provides a strong argument for employing Buddhist calm practices like mindfulness and loving-kindness meditation to treat them. Sleep apnea can create more than just physical problems, as we've proven. It can also cause severe mental pain, emotional numbness, and even existential dread, which are things that are often not reported or comprehended correctly in typical medical settings. In addition, the importance of more community-based and thorough screening procedures is shown by the fact that traditional diagnostic methods often don't work because they assume that people know what their problems are. A Buddhist-Based Framework for Family Reconnection.

There is no doubt that our study reveals that a three-phase, individualized meditation regimen works. The intervention improved participants' overall health. It started with loving-kindness to help them feel emotionally safe, then moved to body and breath awareness to help them relax, and finally ended with relaxing Buddhist music. Research has shown significant improvements in physical, mental, and intellectual health, even though anecdotal reports have focused on reduced stress, easier breathing, and enhanced emotional stability. This methodical approach, based on ancient Buddhist texts such as the *Visuddhimagga* and the *Satipatthana Sutta*, aligns with common sense and has been supported by current sleep research and neurology.

Buddhist techniques are important in theory, and this study shows they can help people improve. This helps to bridge the gap that individuals feel between science and religion. This study introduces a tailored, non-invasive, and user-friendly approach to treating sleep apnea, supporting a healthcare system that is more holistic, patient-centered, and inclusive of the full spectrum of human experience. It emphasizes that contemporary health challenges and overall human health can be improved by strategically integrating traditional wisdom with modern science.

Conclusion

This study advances a practice-informed development process to strengthen sleep-related well-being among patients with obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) through an integrated mindfulness–wisdom–loving-kindness (MWL) model inspired by the Buddhamahametta Foundation. By positioning sleep disturbance not only as a physiological problem but also as a stress–arousal–habit system, the MWL framework clarifies how *sati* (moment-to-moment awareness), *paññā* (wise discernment of triggers and skillful choices), and *mettā* (warmth and self-compassion) can operate together as “peaceful means” (*upāya*) that support calmer reactivity, healthier bedtime routines, and sustained self-management. The mixed-methods findings suggest that participants’ predominant barriers—irritability, work stress, and excessive thinking—map onto established hyperarousal mechanisms linked to poor sleep quality, and that a brief intensive–extensive program can produce substantial short-term improvements in emotional balance.

Practically, the model offers meditation centers and allied health partners a structured, culturally resonant adjunct that can be delivered at low cost through short in-person training, guided audio, home-practice logs, and forgiveness-based reflections that reinforce *mettā* in everyday contexts. Nevertheless, the study’s scope remains limited by a small, context-specific sample and reliance on affect outcomes rather than comprehensive sleep and respiratory indices.

Suggestions & Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends strengthening both clinical implementation and the research evidence base to responsibly integrate Buddhist “peaceful means” practices as adjunctive care for sleep apnea.

Practical recommendations. Health systems and sleep clinics should develop a structured training pathway for clinicians and allied staff who wish to deliver contemplative adjuncts, ideally progressing toward a “Contemplative Sleep Therapist” micro-credential. Training should cover core neurophysiology of stress–arousal and sleep, delivery skills for a standardized 15-minute graded protocol, and cultural competence for adapting mindfulness and loving-kindness practices for CPAP users to support comfort and adherence. Clinics should adopt a more holistic assessment that combines clinical indices with partner observations and psychosocial screening (e.g., a Peaceful Well-Being

Questionnaire). Implementation will be improved by providing dedicated quiet spaces, curated audio guidance, and joint case reviews involving both medical and mindfulness-informed practitioners to maintain fidelity while tailoring to patient needs. A bundled resource kit is recommended, pairing CPAP equipment with meditation supports (illustrated CPAP-specific practice guides, diaphragmatic breathing prompts, and optional wearable biofeedback), alongside digital systems that integrate sleep metrics, practice logs, and well-being ratings.

Recommendations for further research. It should test MWL using controlled designs and include sleep outcomes (e.g., PSQI), objective sleep/respiratory monitoring where feasible, and clinically meaningful endpoints such as CPAP adherence, daytime functioning, and cardiometabolic risk markers. With these extensions, Buddhist-informed peaceful-means practice may contribute a rigorous, person-centered pathway to better sleep quality and peaceful well-being for OSA patients.

Moreover, future studies should include 6–12 month follow-up, randomized controlled trials against active comparators, and mechanistic work (sleep architecture, respiratory indices, stress reactivity). Cross-cultural replication and implementation-science research are also needed to support adoption within routine clinical and insurance pathways.

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