



Commentary: How to Make the Ghosts in my Bedroom Disappear? Focused-Attention Meditation Combined with Muscle Relaxation (MR Therapy) – A Direct Treatment Intervention for Sleep Paralysis

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A commentary on

How to Make the Ghosts in my Bedroom Disappear? Focused-Attention Meditation Combined with Muscle Relaxation (MR Therapy) – A Direct Treatment Intervention for Sleep Paralysis
by Jalal, B. (2016). *Front. Psychol.* 7:28. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2016.00028

We read with interest Dr. Jalal's recent publication on another potential treatment option for recurrent isolated sleep paralysis: *Meditation Combined with Muscle Relaxation* (MR Therapy). The author is to be commended for adding to the limited literature on ameliorating problematic cases of isolated sleep paralysis (ISP). As recently reviewed (Sharpless, 2016), there are few options available, pharmacological or otherwise, for the chronic and severe cases of ISP, and none of these yet possess compelling evidence in favor of their efficacy.

We appreciate the citation of our work in his article. However, we disagree with the author's claim that MR Therapy is the "first direct treatment" for ISP (Jalal, 2016, p. 1). This comment is puzzling given that our 2015 book (i.e., Sharpless and Doghramji, 2015) was cited in this same manuscript. Contained within is a manual titled *Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Isolated Sleep Paralysis* (CBT-ISP) and a corresponding adherence measure (pp. 257–272).

CBT-ISP is a brief, systematic approach that focuses upon helping patients both prevent and disrupt recurrent ISP episodes. In order to better clarify the nature of our own approach and to compare and contrast it to MR Therapy, we detail CBT-ISP in Table 1 below.

As can be seen, there are areas of substantial overlap between CBT-ISP and MR Therapy. Both have strong emphases on various forms of relaxation, symptom reappraisals, shifts in attention away from episode content, and the practice of disruption techniques while patients are in a supine position. We should also note that both approaches are based upon panic disorder models.

However, there are some notable points of divergence. First, MR Therapy discourages attempts to move, whereas CBT-ISP actively encourages these attempts in order to directly disrupt episodes and shift attention away from potentially frightening symptoms (e.g., hallucinations). Our approach is based upon empirical work with sufferers who reported that these attempts were effective (Sharpless and Grom, 2016). Second, the author discourages attempts to control breathing whereas we view this as a potential source of relaxation to be used "in the moment." Third, he encourages the use of prayer as a form of relaxation/meditation whereas we are more cautious

Sleep Therapy A Bibliography And Commentary

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