

Under Pressure: A Systematic Review of Weighted Blankets for Treatment of Anxiety and Insomnia

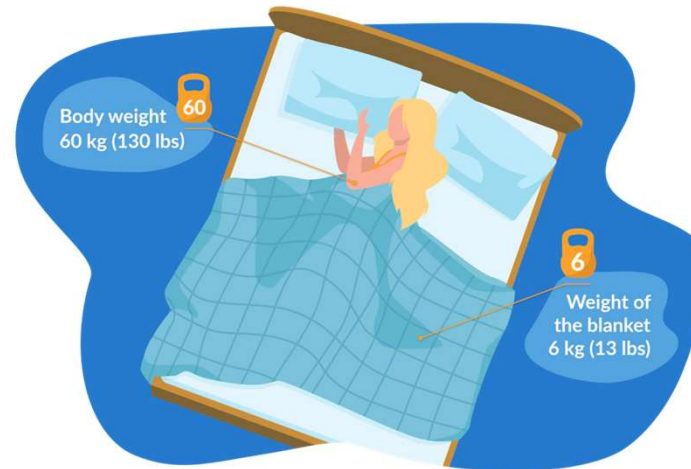
Introduction

- Weighted blankets provide deep pressure stimulation that offers relief to individuals who experience anxiety and insomnia as symptoms of other diagnoses and treatments, such as
 - ADHD
 - chronic pain
 - eating disorders
 - chemotherapy
- Annual economic burdens of anxiety and insomnia range from \$1431 to \$5010 per person.^{3,4}
- Weighted blankets cost an average of \$25 to \$250 per person.
- Pharmaceuticals pose risk of addiction or dependency on medications.
- Goal: investigate efficacy of weighted blankets to treat a diverse range of diagnoses by reducing anxiety and insomnia.

Methods

Databases used included CINAHL and Google Scholar. Keywords for searches were weighted blanket, effects, anxiety, insomnia, and uses. After screening, seven articles were chosen.

Macie Holmes
Dept. of Health Sciences
Carroll College



The recommended weight of a weighted blanket is 10% of a person's body weight.

References

1. Creasey N, Finlay F. Question 2: Do weighted blankets improve sleep in children with an autistic spectrum disorder? *Archives of Disease in Childhood*. 2019;98(11):919. doi:10.1136/archdischild-2019-305091
2. Ohene R, Logan C, Loresto F, et al. Assessing the Impact of Weighted Blankets on Anxiety Among Patients With Anorexia Nervosa and Avoidant-Restrictive Food Intake Disorder: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *AM J OCCUP THER*. 2022;76(6):1-9. doi:10.5014/ajot.2022.49295
3. Shirmeshan E. Cost of Illness Study of Anxiety Disorders for the Ambulatory Adult Population of the United States. *Doctor of Philosophy, University of Tennessee Health Science Center*; 2015. doi:10.2107/etd.cghs.2015.0289
4. Daley M, Morin CM, LeBlanc M, Grégoire JP, Savard J. The Economic Burden of Insomnia: Direct and Indirect Costs for Individuals with Insomnia Syndrome, Insomnia Symptoms, and Good Sleepers. *Sleep*. 2009;32(1):55-64.
5. Baric VB, Skuthalla S, Pettersson M, Gustafsson PA, Kjellberg A. The effectiveness of weighted blankets on sleep and everyday activities - A retrospective follow-up study of children and adults with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and/or autism spectrum disorder. Published June 29, 2021. Accessed February 18, 2023. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.1080/11038128.2021.1939414?needAccess=true&role=button>
6. Baumgartner JN, Quintana D, Leija L, et al. Widespread Pressure Delivered by a Weighted Blanket Reduces Chronic Pain: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *The Journal of Pain*. 2022;23(1):156-174. doi:10.1016/j.jpain.2021.07.009
7. Oddeis E, Paull E, Steingrimsson S, et al. Weighted blankets for sleep problems - prescription, use and cost analysis. Published May 2, 2022. Accessed February 18, 2023. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.1080/11038128.2022.2066017?needAccess=true&role=button>
8. Steingrimsson S, Oddeis E, Cederlund M, et al. Weighted blanket and sleep medication use among adults with psychiatric diagnosis - a population-based register study. *Nordic Journal of Psychiatry*. 2022;76(1):29-36. doi:10.1080/08034838.2021.193713
9. Vinson J, Powers J, Mosesso K. Weighted Blankets: Anxiety Reduction in Adult Patients Receiving Chemotherapy. *Clin J Oncol Nurs*. 2020;24(4):360-368. doi:10.1188/20.CJON.360-368
10. Hjort T, Helldén E, Arvidsson S, Karlsson S, Ivarsson A. Weighted Blankets' Effect on the Health of Older People Living in Nursing Homes. *Geriatrics (Basel)*. 2022;7(4):79. doi:10.3390/geriatrics704079
11. <https://media.sleee-hero.co.uk/MUK/Graphics/Sleep2toAccessories/Duvets2toand20Weighted20Blankets/Weighted20Blankets/Ideal-weight-of-weighted-blanket.png?w=100&h=100&crop=n&v=5&e=6&width=100&75&height=100&func=bound>

Results

- Weighted blankets relieved people of anxiety associated with various diagnoses. When measured, anxiety decreased significantly.^{2,6,7,9}
- Heavier blankets were favored in comparison to lighter blankets.^{6,7}
- In one study, 89% of participants reported better quality of sleep.⁵

Discussion

- Weighted blankets are a safe, affordable, easily accessible, non-pharmacological intervention for anxiety and insomnia associated with other diagnoses.
- Weighted blankets are safer and cheaper than sleep medications.
- With adult supervision, weighted blankets can safely offer aid to children.

Acknowledgments

I acknowledge Gerald Schafer for providing guidance to my review process.