

## Genes of best sleepers might offer clues for many diseases

In a lab at the University of California, San Francisco, a husband-and-wife team is working to unravel the secrets of sleep, gene by gene.

Louis Ptá?ek is studying why some people are genetically wired to be morning larks—an estimated 3% of the population who go to bed unusually early and rise early—while others are night owls.

His wife, Ying-Hui Fu, is researching another phenomenon: why some people require unusually short amounts of sleep, a group that is estimated to be less than 1% of the population. These hardy few, called short-sleepers, can biologically get by with less than six hours of sleep a night and feel fully refreshed.

Dr. Fu is studying the genetics of a database that currently includes more than 50 families of short-sleepers. Many in the group seem to share characteristics in addition to sleep patterns, the research team has observed. They are generally optimistic and appear to have a high pain threshold, Dr. Fu says. One participant doesn't need Novocaine for dental work. Another said she had little pain during childbirth even without a painkiller.

**Read the full, original story: [Scientists Search for the Best Sleepers](#)**