

Why do we sleep?

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.

why do we sleep? Now we have the best evidence yet of what sleep is for – allowing housekeeping processes to take place that stop our brains becoming overloaded with new memories.

Support is growing for a theory that sleep evolved so that connections in the brain can be pruned down during slumber, making room for fresh memories to form the next day. “Sleep is the price we pay for learning,” says [Giulio Tononi](#) of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, who developed the idea.

Now we have the most direct evidence yet that he’s right. Tononi’s team measured the size of these connections or synapses in brain slices taken from mice. The synapses in samples taken at the end of a period of sleep were 18 per cent smaller than those in samples taken from before sleep...

If the housekeeping theory is right, it would explain why, when we miss a night’s sleep, the next day we find it harder to concentrate and learn new information...

Read full, original post: [Mystery of what sleep does to our brains may finally be solved](#)