Turning nightmares off: Genes related to sleep may answer why we dream

Waking suddenly sweating and with your heart pounding after a vivid nightmare can be terrifying no matter how old you are.

But now experts say that for the first time they have identified the genes which regulates dreams and could even switch them off.

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The US study on mice shows that a single gene controls the amount of non-rapid eye movement (REM) sleep, which includes deep sleep.

[Another] gene controls the amount or need for REM sleep, associated with vivid dreaming.
The researchers say the findings will explain how sleep works and could treat sleep disorders. By controlling the genes, they could switch off vivid dreams and nightmares.

Study co-author Dr Joseph Takahashi, of the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Centre, said: "This research is just the beginning. We believe that these two genes are the first of many that regulate sleep."

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Study co-author Dr Masahi Yanagisawa said: "We hope this is the entry door to the black box that explains how our sleep is regulated."

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: The end of nightmares? Scientists identify genes which make dreams and know how to turn them off