

Could a pill make you need less sleep? This genetics research suggests it could happen

We all wish we could get by on less sleep, but one father and son actually can—without suffering any health consequences and while actually performing on memory tests as well as, or better than, most people.

To understand this rare ability, researchers at the University of California, San Francisco, first identified a genetic mutation—in both individuals—that they thought might deserve the credit. Then the scientists intentionally made the same small genetic spelling mistake in mice. The mice also needed less sleep, remembered better and suffered no other ill effects.

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Although a medication with the same benefits will not be available anytime soon—and might never materialize—the idea is incredibly appealing: take a pill that replicates whatever the father and son's body does and sleep less, with no negative repercussions.

"I find the concept of a gene product that might potentially provide protection against comorbid disorders of restricted sleep tantalizing," says [neurologist] Patrick Fuller.

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"If true, this would indeed have 'potential therapeutic implications,' as well as provide another point of entry for exploring and answering the question 'Why do we sleep?' which remains [one] of the greatest mysteries in neuroscience."

Read full, original post: [Why Do Some People Need Less Sleep? It's in Their DNA](#)