

Human hibernation eyed as solution for severe trauma, weight loss and deep-space travel

A small group of scientists is taking human hibernation extremely seriously. They are studying the basic mechanisms with an eye to all kinds of applications, such as preserving pulseless trauma victims while critical injuries are repaired, deep-space travel, and altering metabolic rates to help people lose weight.

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What's really needed is a drug that could drop a person's core temperature safely, inducing torpor of the sort that so many other species enjoy. [Aerospace engineer John] Bradford and [surgeon Samuel] Tisherman both point to this sort of drug as a potential breakthrough—a way to address the clearest limiting factors in their work. And, in fact, the arctic-squirrel biologist [Kelly] Drew has a drug that she believes could do exactly this. She describes its function as “turning down your thermostat.” It works reliably [in rats](#), a nonhibernating animal that has served as her experimental model, and Drew is in talks with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration about human testing. In 2019, the National Institutes of Health [funded](#) her work with an \$11.8 million dollar grant, suggesting the appeal of such therapies for humans is not limited to those who are technically deceased or en route to Mars.

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