

## SLEEP AND DREAMING AFTER A NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCE

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**Background:** Both informal and scholarly literature has outlined potential psychophysiological changes relating to near-death experiences (NDEs) and sleep, including shorter sleep duration, increased sleep disturbances, and more vivid dreams. Currently, it is unclear whether changed sleep patterns are associated with the actual NDE, the physical event of coming close to death or a general consequence of psychological trauma.

**Aims:** To explore sleep and dreaming among near-death experiencers via a cross-disciplinary partnership between NDE researchers and sleep scientists to determine if and how NDEs affect sleep status and dreaming experiences.

**Methods:** A multi-method study was conducted over three years. Study one assessed sleep quality using wrist-worn actigraphy to record core details concerning the timing, duration, efficiency and regularity of sleep. Study two examined the association between NDEs, trauma and a range of dream related variables via a quantitative survey of 312 participants. Study three explored unusual dreaming experiences following NDEs using a qualitative interview-based methodology.

**Results:** *Study 1* - Subjectively poorer sleep was reported by NDE participants however objective indicators signaled 'normal' sleep and scores did not differ significantly from others. Moderate levels of sleep state misperception were observed in the NDE group. *Study 2* – There were significant differences with large effects between groups for the majority of dream variables, in particular increased lucid dreaming, precognitive dreaming and out-of-body experiences. *Study 3* - Participants noted that dreams were more vivid, more spirituality significant and featured a greater degree of coherence, realism and psi content following their NDE.

**Conclusions:** Combined, our results revealed a broad of array of unusual phenomena experienced in and around sleep, suggesting possible neurological changes stemming from or enhanced by the NDE and a transformation in global consciousness.

**Keywords:** Near-death experiences, NDEs, Lucid dreaming, Precognitive dreams, Psi

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