

Scientists find brain area that inhibits fear

A recent study, published in the journal Nature Communications, has identified a new brain area that controls the expression and inhibition of fear. The study findings have important implications for the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder.

According to recent estimates, 3.6 per cent of the adult population in the United States have experienced post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the past year, while almost 7 per cent has

had the condition at some point in their lives.

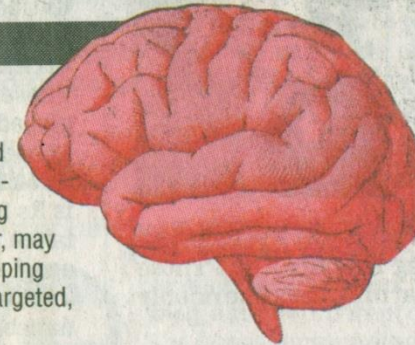
Although almost half of all US adults experience at least one traumatic event during their lifetime, not all of them develop PTSD symptoms, which include frightening flashbacks of the traumatic event, sleep problems, and difficulty fighting off fear.

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NEW VS OLD

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the neurons in the brain indiscriminately, while behavioural therapy does not entirely prevent relapse.



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and long-lasting.

Stephen Maren, the University Distinguished Professor of psychological and brain sciences at Texas A&M University in College Station, led a team of researchers who found a new area in the brain's thalamus that controls our response to fear.

Although the study was in rodents, the findings help illuminate the human brain's response to fear, as well as potential new clinical strategies for treating PTSD.

—Agencies