

Human sleep deprivation for 17 days: the Science Fair project of Randy Gardner

In 1963, Randy Gardner, a 17 year old High School senior in San Diego, decided to deprive himself of sleep for 11 days as a Science Fair project. This duration would break the then “world record” of human sleep loss. This project was elevated when media publicity attracted the attention and participation of well-established sleep researchers in San Diego and Palo Alto, California. Randy won first place in the Science Fair.

The two attached papers were written by the researchers who participated (Johnson et al., 1965; Gulevich et al., 1966) and the films were made by William Dement near the end of the deprivation period.

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Johnson LC, Slye ES, Dement W (1965) Electroencephalographic and autonomic activity during and after prolonged sleep deprivation. *Psychosomatic Medicine* 27:415-423.

Gulevich G, Dement WC, Johnson L (1966) Psychiatric and EEG Observations on a Case of Prolonged (264 Hours) Wakefulness. *Archives of General Psychiatry* 15:29-35.