

Scientists discover gene for obesity in lab mice

Page 6 • THE BATTALION

NEW YORK (AP) — After a 40-year search, scientists have found a gene for obesity in mice and a likely counterpart in humans — discoveries that could someday help people control their weight.

It is the first gene ever isolated that clearly participates in the normal process of regulating weight, scientists said.

In its normal form, the mouse gene appears to let fat

the animal is, so that the mouse will adjust its feeding and activity to keep its weight

That system goes awry when the gene is flawed. Mice lacking a normal version of the gene get so fat they weigh three times more than their siblings, said researcher Dr. Jeffrey Friedman.

He and colleagues also found gene are associated with obesi-

cells tell the brain how obese a human gene that strongly resembles the mouse obesity gene, and it may play a similar

role in people, Friedman said. If so, the finding could open the door to a better understanding of how people control their weight, which in turn may lead to new treatments for

obesity, he said. He and others will look to see if mutations in the human

ty. While mutations mouse gene produce e fatness, more subtle f the human gene may co to more common degrees

sity in people, he said. Friedman, an assoc vestigator with the H Hughes Medical Institu Rockefeller University York, and colleagues red discoveries in Thursday of the journal Nature.

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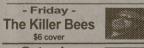
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