

YAHOO!7

Conscious man trapped in 23-year 'coma'

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'I dreamed of a better life'

A man thought to be in a coma for 23 years was misdiagnosed by doctors and actually conscious the whole time.

A man thought to be in a coma for 23 years after he was left paralysed by a car crash was misdiagnosed by doctors and actually conscious the whole time.

Due to his paralysis, Rom Houben had no way of alerting doctors, friends or family to the fact he could hear every word they said, the Daily Mail reports.

"I screamed, but there was nothing to hear," Mr Houben told the Daily Mail.

Thankfully, new hi-tech scans revealed the man's brain was still functioning normally.

He told the Daily Mail this moment was like his "second birth".

Aided by therapy, Mr Houben is now able to convey messages on a computer screen. A special device above his head allows him to read books whilst lying down.

His case has only just been revealed in a scientific paper by neurological expert Dr Steven Laureys.

"Medical advances caught up with him," Dr Laureys was quoted as saying.

Laureys believes there may be many similar cases of false comas around the world.

His study claims that patients classed as in a vegetative state are often misdiagnosed.

Mr Houben told the Daily Mail: "All that time I just literally dreamed of a better life. Frustration is too small a word to describe what I felt."

"I shall never forget the day when they discovered what was truly wrong with me - it was my second birth."

"I want to read, talk with my friends via the computer and enjoy my life now that people know I am not dead."