

Testing Mediums' Accuracy Under Controlled Laboratory Conditions



BACKGROUND

Mediums are individuals who experience regular communication with the deceased (called *discarnates*) and report the resulting information to the discarnates' living friends or relatives (called *sitters*) during specific events (called *readings*). Mediumship research at the Windbridge Research Center is currently overseen by Director of Research **Dr. Julie Beischel** who holds a PhD in Pharmacology and Toxicology with a minor in Microbiology and Immunology. Windbridge primarily studies mediums whose abilities have been demonstrated under controlled laboratory conditions. Upon successful completion of eight peer-reviewed screening, testing, and training steps (Beischel, 2007), the mediums are termed **Windbridge Certified Research Mediums (WCRMs)**.

A collection of experimental methods exists (Beischel, 2007) which **optimizes the research environment** by replicating in the laboratory the natural mediumship setting while also **maximizing experimental blinding** and controlling for normal explanations for positive results including intentional or unintentional sensory leakage, cold reading (including information so general it could apply to almost anyone), rater bias, experimenter cueing, and fraud. The portion of the study (Beischel, Boccuzzi, Biuso, & Rock, 2015) described below used these methods to test the accuracy of 20 WCRMs performing 58 mediumship readings.

METHODS

Mediumship readings were performed **over the phone** under controlled conditions that prevent any passage of sensory information and any use of fraud or deception. The peer-reviewed protocol (Beischel, 2007) involved **five levels of blinding** in which the mediums (WCRMs), sitters, and experimenters were all blinded:

- (1) **the WCRM** is blinded to information about the sitter and the discarnate before, during, and after the reading and asked questions about the discarnate's appearance, personality, activities, and cause of death;
- (2) **the sitters** do not hear the readings as they occur; they score blinded transcripts of two readings, one for their discarnate (**target**) and one for another sitter's discarnate (**decoy**) without knowing which is which;
- (3) the experimenter who consents and trains the sitters (**Experimenter 1**) is blinded to which mediums read which sitters and which readings were intended for which sitters;
- (4) the experimenter who interacts with the mediums during the phone readings and formats the readings into item lists for scoring (**Experimenter 2**) is blinded to information about the sitters and the discarnates beyond the discarnates' first names;
- (5) the experimenter who interacts with the sitters during scoring (i.e., e-mails and receives by e-mail the blinded readings; **Experimenter 3**) is blinded to all information about the discarnates, to which medium performed which readings, and to which readings were intended for which sitters.

During the scoring of 58 readings, blinded sitters provided an **overall score** (0-6) for each reading (target and decoy) and **chose which reading** of the two they believed was intended for their discarnate. For 31 of those readings, the sitters also scored **each item** in each of the two readings for accuracy.

It is important to note that sitters are the only people with the knowledge and expertise required to appropriately score items describing discarnates and/or their messages. The purpose of mediumship readings is to share discarnates' messages with sitters. Thus, the only people able to effectively score the accuracy of those readings are the sitters themselves. How could anyone determine if you experienced communication from your discarnate by reading a list of statements that refer to a person they've never met?

RESULTS

The percentage of items scored as accurate (Fig. 1), the overall reading scores (Fig. 2), and the reading choice data (Fig. 3) were all statistically significantly higher for target readings than for decoy readings (mean \pm SEM; $p=0.002$, 0.001 , 0.01 , respectively). Blinded sitters scored readings—performed by blinded mediums—for their own discarnates (targets) as more accurate than readings for other sitters' discarnates (decoys).

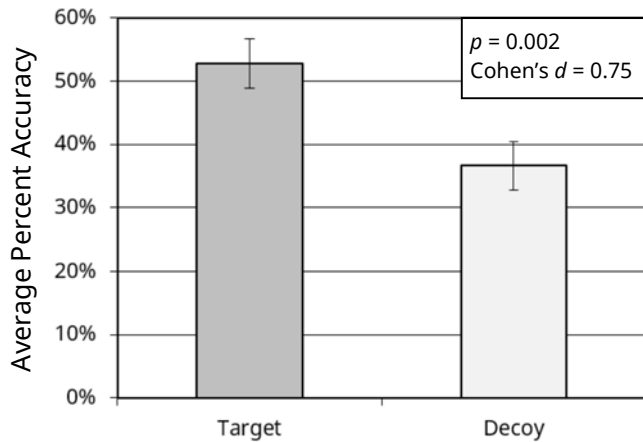


Fig. 1. Item Percent Accuracy (n=31)

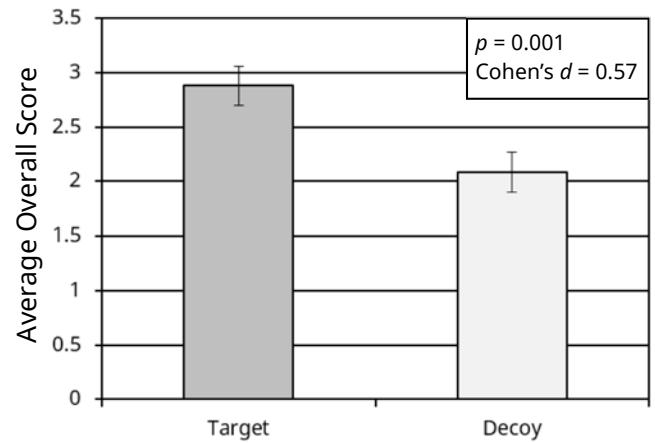


Fig. 2. Overall Score (n=58)

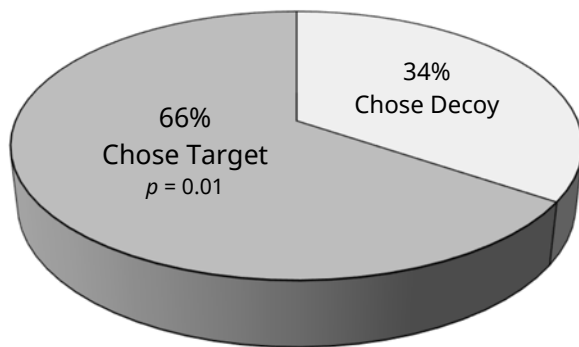


Fig. 3. Reading Choice (n=58)

CONCLUSIONS

These data demonstrate *anomalous information reception* (AIR), that is, the reporting by mediums of accurate and specific information about discarnates without prior knowledge of the discarnates or sitters, in the absence of any sensory feedback, and without using deceptive or fraudulent means. Because the experimental conditions eliminated normal sources for the reported information, a nonlocal (“psi”) source (however controversial) remains the most likely explanation for the mediums’ statements.

References

- Beischel, J. (2007). Contemporary methods used in laboratory-based mediumship research. *Journal of Parapsychology*, 71, 37–68.
- Beischel, J., Boccuzzi, M., Biuso, M., & Rock, A. J. (2015). Anomalous information reception by research mediums under blinded conditions II: Replication and extension. *EXPLORE: The Journal of Science & Healing*, 11(2), 136–142. doi: 10.1016/j.explore.2015.01.001

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