

**Precognitive Experiences:
Replicating and Extending Previous Findings¹**

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ABSTRACT: This is the second report from a questionnaire survey of precognitive experiences. The survey successfully replicated a number of Rhine (1954, 1964) and Schouten's (1979, 1981, 1982) findings. Dreams continue to predominate in precognition databases. Sex differences still play the same role with mostly women having experiences about men. There is some support for Schouten's (1979) hypothesis that emotional dependency rather than sex differences is the crucial factor in these male and female divisions. Surprisingly, Hearne's (1984, 1989) finding that women past child-bearing age who had their first psi experience early in life went on to have more children was also confirmed. Having a precognitive experience also appears to produce a discernible effect on the way in which percipients react to the foreseen event. Most participants reported having a physiological response on hearing about the event that was at least in part attributable to believing that they had foreseen the event. The consistency of the findings from this study with those from previous research suggests that these experiences are indeed worthy of inquiry.

There have been a number of studies of spontaneous psychic experiences (e.g., Sidgwick, 1888; Rhine, 1954; Stevenson, 1970; Schouten, 1979;). These studies have generally attempted to find differences between various types of psi experience (e.g., between precognition and telepathy) and to discover patterns within the data that might indicate both how these experiences may function and whether they are worthy of further

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investigation. There have been a number of interesting findings; a few of these are summarized below. My focus will be on precognitive experiences.

Analyses into precognition and other ESP experiences have yielded remarkably similar findings. For instance, Sidgwick (1888), Rhine (1954) and Schouten (1982) all found that precognition databases yielded more dreams than databases for other forms of ESP. Moreover, Hearne (1984, 1989) and Stevenson (1970) also report large numbers of dreams in their collections of precognitive experiences. Rhine (1954) noted that in the 1940's the number of reports of precognitive experiences increased and she postulates that this may be because dreams were coming to be taken more seriously at this time. Stevenson (1970) found that in India precognitive dreams did not predominate. He concluded that dreams were prevalent in the other databases because of the psychological resistance to precognition in the West.

Another common finding for ESP databases is an unusually large number of women percipients (e.g., Rhine, 1964; Schouten, 1982; Hearne 1984). Both Rhine (1964) and Schouten (1979, 1981, 1982) discovered that although most percipients were women, their experiences were generally about men. Rhine found that this relationship held irrespective of whether the percipient was close to the target person (i.e., the person whom the experience was about), whereas Schouten (1981) maintained that if experiences were about strangers, the female percipient to male target person ratio no longer held. Further analyses by Schouten revealed that emotional dependency seemed to be the important factor with the emotionally dependent person being the percipient and the target person being someone on whom the percipient depends. Thus since women were traditionally dependent on men, more women were percipients and more men were target persons. Conversely, when experiences were about strangers, the percipient or an event he found that there were equal numbers of male and female percipients. Schouten concludes that the predominance of women percipients does not mean that women are more psychic than men. Although Schouten's findings may seem to contradict Rhine's (1964) observation that remote relationships contained the same gender differences as in close relationships, Rhine included fiancés, boyfriends and grandparents as "remote"

relationships. It is not at all clear that such relationships are necessarily remote and it is quite possible that definitional differences account for the apparent discrepancy between Rhine and Schouten's findings.

Another finding common to both Rhine (1954) and Schouten (1979) is that intuition cases carried more conviction than other types of experience and both conclude that conviction is probably a separate element to psi experiences rather than a cognitive conclusion.

Encouraged by the findings from these previous analyses the aim of the current survey was in part to replicate and in part to extend existing knowledge. In this paper I will also report on the characteristics of the database participants as a whole, the various forms that the experiences take and on the ways in which having a precognitive experience affects people's perceptions of the event when it happens.

THE DATABASES

Participants were recruited in a variety of ways -- through letters and short articles in national and local newspapers, through advertisements on the author's own web site and the Koestler Parapsychology Unit [KPU] web site, through posters on walls, word of mouth and through e-mail messages on the paranormal, prf and psi-I mailing lists. The author wished to recruit only those who had suspected that their experience would come true *before* the event had happened; as a result the survey extends only over a subset of precognitive experiences. It does not include experiences in which people realized only afterwards that their experience had been precognitive. This restriction was in place primarily because of the author's desire to examine why some people act on their precognitive experiences whereas others do not; if people did not suspect beforehand that their experience was precognitive they could not have acted. The analyses investigating why people act on their precognitive experiences have been reported elsewhere (Steinkamp, submitted). This other paper gives further details about methodology and response rates to the questionnaire; here it suffices to say that the main (VALID) database

comprised 224 experiences submitted by 190 people. This database was then split into three subsets – PCG, ESP and OTHER. This division into subsets is primarily descriptive and it should not be understood as implying that the experiences are necessarily due to precognition or to other forms of ESP (or that the experiences in the OTHER database are necessarily due to normal inference). The three database subsets are described in more detail below.

The Database Subsets

OTHER (20 experiences)

The OTHER database included experiences that could easily be understood as being due to normal inference rather than due to precognition or to other forms of psi. An example of an experience in this database is as follows:

“In the autumn of 1957 I had a very vivid dream of flying over a wide green valley with here and there columns of smoke arriving from what appeared to be bush fires. About two months later I was flying out to Kenya and somewhere over Uganda looked out on to a valley which appeared to be identical to that which I had seen in my dream. Even the location of the bush fires appeared in reality to be the same as in the dream.

However, maybe the dream did not come out of the blue. Ten years earlier I had flown down to Nairobi and perhaps I had a residual memory of seeing the same, or similar valley.” [165a]

Here, as the percipient notes, the dream could simply be based on memory. If the person knew that they were soon to fly out to Kenya, these memories may well have been brought back as they slept. Therefore this experience was assigned to the OTHER database.

ESP (38 experiences)

The ESP database included experiences that could be due to real-time psi rather than precognition. Here is an example from this database:

“Newly passed my driving test, I was whizzing along narrow country roads by myself in my father’s car. I had a clear image in my head of a group of cattle blocking the road. I slowed down significantly and within a few hundred yards came across the scene exactly as I’d foreseen it. There is no way at all that I could have spotted the scene from a distance.” [107]

This is not a case of precognition because presumably the cattle were already there at the time the percipient had their experience. It can be ascribed to normal means only if one assumes that the participant was mistaken or that they failed to report relevant detail. For example, one might think that the participant hadn’t realized that they could hear the cattle or that the participant had actually unconsciously spotted them. From the account itself, however, the participant claims that they could not have know about the cattle by normal means and it is this account that we have. Thus the experience is best described as one that is potentially due to real-time ESP.

The ESP database also contained experiences that might have been due to real-time psi and inference. It was hoped that by putting such cases in the ESP database, the resultant PCG database (see next section) would be relatively pure. An example of a real-time psi and inference case is the following:

“I was about to go abroad on holiday alone. At exactly the same moment my sister and I had a ‘bad vibe’ about my intended trip. We looked at each other and I said “Something’s going to happen to me, isn’t it?”. We both knew and felt impending danger. At the time I was unaware of having an ectopic pregnancy. I did not suspect I was pregnant. I cancelled my plans for the holiday, had I gone away I may have collapsed and died as no-one would have known what was wrong with me. When the Fallopian tube ruptures immediate surgery is required. I really believe I would have died had I gone away on my own”. [254]

Here it can be assumed that the pregnancy was not very far advanced because the woman did not even suspect that she was pregnant. Thus the “bad vibe” that both the percipient and her sister had may be due to real-time ESP of the percipient’s pregnancy plus inference from detailed knowledge through ESP about the pregnancy to the consequences that this pregnancy would have (i.e., that it would develop into an ectopic one). To this extent the experience may not be precognitive but may instead potentially be due to real-time ESP and calculation.

PCG (111 experiences).

The PCG database contained those experiences that appeared to be best described as potentially due to precognition. Here is one of the experiences from this database (names and places have been changed to preserve anonymity):

“I dreamt I was in a strange room. I was sitting on a sofa with a policeman. I was wearing clothes I would not have chosen to wear. I was upset. A woman that I did not know rushed into the room. She was wearing flowers round her neck. She kept asking if “Bertha” was alright. I knew no-one at that time called Bertha.

The following year I traveled to a town with a friend from work called Bertha and stayed with her aunt (who was at work when we arrived) and uncle. We (us two) went for a supper/dance. We met two boys. The one who walked me home attacked, tried to rape and strangle me. I faked death – he was frightened and let go I called the police. I had to change into Bertha’s clothes as mine had to have tests. While I sat with the policeman a woman – Bertha’s aunt – walked in, believing Bertha to be the victim. She had been at a Hawaiian night and she wore flowers around her neck”. [69b]

The very unusual details (the flowers, the strange clothes, the policeman) in this case make it implausible that this could come true by coincidence alone. The event did not happen until the following year, so real-time ESP cannot explain the experience. Moreover, it seems extremely unlikely that the percipient could have predicted this scenario through real-time ESP and calculation. Therefore this experience is best described as potentially due to precognition.

In this paper I will be reporting primarily only on those experiences that form part of the ESP and the PCG databases. Beforehand, though, I will give a more detailed profile of the respondents in the more general VALID database.

THE RESPONDENTS

Contrary to Rhine (1964) and Schouten's (1979) findings, this survey produced a roughly equal number of men (43%) and women respondents (56%). The mean age-range was 46-65 and the mean age at which people reported having had their first precognitive experience was between 20-25. The youngest age range represented in answering the questionnaire was 13-19 and the oldest range represented was 66+; people described themselves as having had their first precognitive experience at all ages – from under 12 years of age right up to 66+ - indicating that within reason it is never too early or too late to have such experiences and that they do not necessarily first happen in people's formative years.

The mean number of precognitive experiences that people thought they had had was 6-10 and the vast majority of people who had had more than one experience (N = 139) thought that their experiences occurred randomly (82%) rather than regularly (2%) or randomly but in batches (16%). It therefore seems unlikely that this population could inform researchers about when they would be likely to have such experiences. Nevertheless 18% of all respondents reported themselves as having made a serious attempt to tell someone's future for them and of these 26% had asked for money for so doing. That is, more people reported themselves as making a serious attempt to tell someone's future for them (N = 35) than reported themselves as having precognitive experiences in any way other than totally random (N = 25). The ability to feel that one can control whether or not one can foresee the future does not seem to depend solely on the ability to have spontaneous precognitive experiences in anything like a regular manner.

The mean range of déjà vu experiences that this population reported having had that were not connected to their precognitive experiences was 6-10. Most of the database population were British (73%), although participants came from as far afield as the Americas, Australia, New Zealand and Thailand.

SEX DIFFERENCES

I noted in the introduction that both Rhine (1964) and Schouten (1979, 1981, 1982) had discovered in all their databases that women percipients dominated and that men were very often the subject of the women's experiences. A few qualifications to this statement are necessary at this point. Firstly, both Rhine and Schouten's analyses were undertaken independently of the initial collection of cases. That is, people submitted experiences to the databases in response to lectures or to knowing that the people compiling the databases were interested in collecting such reports. As a result it was not always the percipient who submitted the experience; some of the cases were second-hand accounts or more. Indeed, Schouten (1982) concludes that in Rhine's collection men appear to be more reluctant to write in with their experiences. Moreover two of Schouten's studies (1979, 1981) were of databases that included only experiences that were of people and not experiences that were of events. To this extent the conclusions from these databases may not accurately reflect those to be found in the current database.

Nevertheless women percipients were prevalent in all the databases that Schouten examined and in each database men were predominantly the target person (i.e., the person whom the experience was about). The distribution of men (64%) and women (36%) target persons remained roughly the same for all of Schouten's analyses (cf Schouten, 1982). However, in his analyses on Rhine's database which included the most recent set of experiences (1940's-1960's) sons were no longer more frequently a target person than daughters and sons did not have more experiences about their parents than daughters. Schouten regarded this as an indicator of the changing relationships within families (and presumably within society as a whole).

For the current survey it was thought to be of interest to see if the same female percipient and male target person predominance remained or whether a more recent survey would show a more level relationship between the sexes, perhaps reflecting the trend towards equal opportunities in the 1990's. The mean year in which experiences in the current database took place was three years ago (i.e., in 1995; median two years ago (1996)), although experiences spanned from just one day prior to reporting the experience to the author to 59 years ago (1939). Thus although experiences in this database span the 1940's-1990's, the majority of experiences are from the 1990's and are thus reflective of an even more modern era than that of Rhine's database.

The first thing to note about the VALID database is that overall there was not a large predominance of women percipients. Of all respondents (all of whom were the percipients) 43% were men and 56% were women. The percentages of men and women percipients were also similar over all experiences (respondents being able to submit more than one experience) – 57% of all experiences were from women and 42% were from men. Unlike previous databases, then, this one did not have the same high proportion of women. Nevertheless, this database includes all experiences irrespective of whether they were assessed probably to be due to psi or to normal means. A better replication will be found on a restricted database. As a result all further analyses in this section will be performed on the PCG database only. All of the following analyses were preplanned unless otherwise specified.

The PCG database had a wider difference between male and female percipients with 36% men respondents and 64% women respondents. There were similar percentages for the total number of experiences submitted (35% from men, 62% from women). That is, the PCG database did replicate previous findings even if the general submissions did not. This may suggest that the predominance of female percipients relates specifically to psi experiences. A post-hoc analysis also revealed that 64% (N = 36) of all target persons were male, whereas only 36% (N = 20) were female. These latter percentages are very close to Schouten's findings, despite the relatively low N in the current database. There

was no significant difference between men and women as to whether they had experiences about men or women ($\chi^2 = 0.47, p = 0.25$); 54% men had experiences about men and 65% women's experiences were about men. Thus, although women predominantly have experiences about men, this is in part due to the fact that there are more men as a whole as target persons in the database.

Post-hoc analyses to show whether or not experiences about people were more frequently those in which there was an emotional attachment to the person in the experience showed that 67% (N = 37) were either about the percipient or a person close to the percipient, whereas only 33% (N = 18) were about acquaintances, famous people or strangers. This may further support Schouten's (1979) finding that emotional dependency plays a crucial role in psi experiences, although it is also possible that people will remember more experiences about people who are close to them. A further post-hoc analysis revealed a suggestive trend for men to be the target person more often when the experience was about someone close to the percipient than when the experience was about either the percipient, an acquaintance, a famous person or a stranger (N = 53, $\chi^2 = 2.06, p = 0.076$). This result more firmly supports Schouten's hypotheses that there are more male target persons because more people are emotionally dependent on them. Indeed, these results generally indicate that Schouten's findings still hold even as we approach the 21st Century. From the view of sex equality these results might be a bit disappointing, but from the perspective of discovering characteristics that seem to single out psi experiences as a distinct set of experiences worthy of their own study, the results are encouraging.

PRECOGNITION AND FECUNDITY

Hearne (1984, 1989) undertook a survey of precognitive experiences in 1982 after calling for people to write in to him with their experiences in a National UK newspaper (the *Sunday Mirror*). Women constituted about 90% of his database percipients. He found, rather surprisingly, that for women who were past child-bearing age (over 40) there was a significant negative correlation (N = 44, $\rho = -0.38, p < 0.01$) between the

age at which they had their first premonition and their number of children. That is, he found that generally the earlier in life a woman has a precognition, the more children that woman is likely to have later on. To explain this finding Hearne offered a “group replenishment theory”. He reasoned that female percipients who have premonitions early in life (before 21) will be naturally more fertile and more likely to be able to avoid future disasters (thus further protecting their natural ability to produce more offspring). He calls this group the “group breeders”. Those women who do not have precognitive experiences until later in life, however (“group depleters”), may act as “Seers” for the group as a whole (presumably instead of producing children with which to replenish the society).

Hearne’s finding was interesting, but it was quite possible that the result could have been artifactual due to multiple analysis. However, somewhat surprisingly, this same finding was replicated in the current survey. For women over 45 there was again a significant negative correlation between the age at which they had their first premonition and their number of children ($N = 31$, $\rho = -0.56$, $p < 005$ (1-t)). Here too, then, those who had precognitive experiences early in life had more children later on.

Hearne’s theory also implies that those with fewer children will have more experiences in general if the natural role of “group depleters” is to act as “Seers” for the society rather than to provide it with heirs. A post-hoc analysis of women over 45 supported this hypothesis with a negative correlation between the number of children they had and the number of precognitions they reported having experienced ($N = 31$, $\rho = -0.46$, $p < .02$ (2-t)); that is, the fewer children women over 45 had borne, the more precognitions they reported having had in general.

Nevertheless, this last analysis has a number of possible confounding variables. For example, those with fewer children may have more time to notice any putative precognitive experiences; alternatively those with fewer children may be more concerned about the children they have and thus have more precognitions about them.

In sum, although Hearne's theory is interesting, it is difficult to find failsafe ways of testing the theory that are not open to confounding variables or alternative interpretations. It would certainly be worthwhile for future research to replicate this finding again and to give some thought beforehand about how to test the theory in more depth.

CONTEXT OF PREMONITIONS

Participants were asked whether their premonitions occurred at stressful, relaxed, normal or other unusual times in their life. Over half (56%) of those who answered the question (N = 103) in the PCG database reported nothing unusual going on in their life at the time they had their experience. The other three categories were selected a roughly equal number of times by the participants – 11% said their life was more relaxed at the time, 16% said their life was more stressed and 17% said something else unusual was happening at that point. These results suggest that there is no particular pattern to the time in life that a person will have a precognitive experience.

EXPERIENTIAL FORMS

Dreams.

The current study replicated previous findings (e.g., Sidgwick, 1888; Rhine, 1954) that dreams predominate in precognition databases. Fifty percent of the cases in the precognition database were dreams, whereas only 36% of experiences in the ESP database were. Rhine (1965) also reported that there were more intuition cases in her ESP database than in the precognition one and this too held for the current survey. Forty-two percent of the ESP cases were intuitions compared to only 19% in the PCG database. The results are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1
 DISTRIBUTION OF FORMS OF EXPERIENCE
 FOR ESP AND PCG DATABASES

	ESP (N)	PRECOGNITION (N)
Dream	34% (13)	50% (56)
Intuition	42% (16)	19% (21)
Hallucination	13% (5)	13% (14)
Other	8% (3)	14% (15)

Schouten's finding (1979, 1982) that dreams are more likely to be about events, whereas waking experiences are about persons held true for the PCG database too ($\chi^2 = 3.79, p = 0.026$). It is possible that this difference may be due to dreams being more prolonged than waking experiences and thus dreams may be able to show more sequential information. Waking experiences, however, may be confined to very quick pieces of information and thus images of people may be the easiest to be conveyed. Moreover, dreams about people may be more likely to be put down to coincidence – especially if the person is close to the percipient – whereas more specific and perhaps unusual events in dreams may be taken more seriously. Similarly, Schouten (1982) notes that events may be identified more easily in dreams because dreams contain more details.

Both Schouten (1982) and Rhine (1965) found that in the precognition databases dreams were more likely to be of trivial events. However, this finding may be confounded with the fact that dreams are more often of events in the first place. Thus, if precognitions of deaths are usually interpreted about being of a person and if people-centered experiences are usually in the waking state, then trivial events are bound to predominate in precognitive dreams. Rhine (1965) also notes that very emotional content in a dream would wake the person up, whereas trivial events can be portrayed in a dream. Thus, because dreams are of events and because sleep can continue when dreaming about

trivial events, this may explain why the precognition database has more dreams of trivial events. Because of all these possible confounding variables, it was not thought worthwhile to conduct any analyses relating the content of experience (e.g., trivial or serious) to experiential form (e.g., dreams or intuitions).

Intuitions.

Schouten's (1979) and Rhine's (1954) work revealed that intuition cases carried more conviction than other experiences. This was not found to hold for the current PCG database ($N = 107$, $U = 796$, $p = .19$). It is possible that Schouten's and Rhine's findings are artifactual. The current survey included a question specifically about how convinced people were beforehand that the event would happen. This question gave participants four categories to choose from – from “absolutely convinced” to “not at all convinced”. Schouten and Rhine, however, had to determine how convinced people were purely from the experiential accounts submitted. It may be that because there is not much for a person to describe when they report an intuitive experience that they are more inclined to include details in their experiential account about how convincing the experience nevertheless was. When people are reporting dreams, however, there may be a lot of detail to report (cf Schouten, 1982) and people may either forget to mention a feeling of conviction or they may feel that the detail itself is of enough interest. This alone could account for the greater conviction in intuition cases reported before.

Call experiences.

Rhine (1953) singled out a peculiar form of psi experience that she named “call” cases. In these experiences the person hears their name being called but they get no further information. Rhine found that when these cases occurred in precognitive experiences the voice was always an anonymous one, whereas for other ESP experiences the voice was more often identified as that of a living person or of someone who had died. It had been hoped that this finding could be replicated, but no call cases were present in the current database.

CONTENT OF EXPERIENCES

Schouten (1982) reported that precognitions were often of deaths and relatively rarely of trivial events. Rhine (1964), however, found that her precognitive database had both more deaths and more trivial events than other ESP databases. Vaughan (1973) supported Rhine by claiming that precognitive experiences divide themselves between the terrible and the trivial.

The current database supported Schouten's (1982) findings. The results are presented in Table 2. The percentages are calculated in respect of the total experiences in the ESP (N = 38) and PCG (N = 111) databases; they do not add up to 100% because a substantial number of the experiences did not fall into any of the categories. It can be seen from Table 2 that in the PCG database most events (51%) were of death or of serious accidents whereas in the ESP database a high proportion of events (40%) were either trivial or positive. In both databases there were very few experiences about slight injuries or material damage. This latter also replicates Schouten's (1979) findings.

A post-hoc analysis dividing the experiential content as either trivial (slight injuries, slight material damage, trivial event, positive event) or important (death, serious accident, serious material damage) confirms the notion that precognitive experiences are directed to more serious events than real-time ESP ones as a significant difference between the two databases ($\chi^2 = 7.42, p = .003$). This finding may indicate that precognitive experiences serve to warn percipients about potential disasters (cf Stevenson, 1970). Indeed I have suggested elsewhere (Steinkamp, submitted) that precognitions may forewarn people about what might happen.

Table 2
 CONTENT OF EXPERIENCES FOR PRECOGNITION
 AND REAL-TIME ESP CASES.

	ESP (N)	PCG (N)
Death	16% (6)	32% (36)
Serious Accident	11% (4)	19% (21)
Slight Injuries	0% (0)	2% (2)
Serious Material Damage	5% (2)	8% (9)
Slight Material Damage	3% (1)	1% (1)
Trivial Event	29% (11)	7% (8)
Positive Event	11% (4)	14% (16)

EMOTIONAL AFFECT

Stevenson (1970) postulates that precognition occurs mostly in situations in which our emotions are strongly aroused. This theory would certainly be consistent with the finding above that precognitive experiences have as their content more important events than real-time psi experiences do.

In the current survey percipients were asked whether they had any physiological responses (such as a feeling of nausea, a rush of excitement etc.) either before or after the event happened. In both cases the PCG database elicited a higher positive response to these questions. For the ESP database 47% of participants reported having had some physiological response prior to the event taking place (obviously, for the ESP database, participants had understood “prior to the event” as “prior to their knowledge that the event had taken place”). For the PCG database this percentage rose to 62%. A post-hoc analysis reveals that this difference is almost significant ($\chi^2 = 2.54, p = .06$). If physiological responses prior to the event’s occurrence are psychic reactions to the impact the event will have on the percipient, this finding would appear to support

Stevenson's (1970) hypothesis that precognitive experiences are of emotionally important events.

However, not all respondents gave a description of the physiological reaction they had and it is hard to say whether they had always understood the question. Moreover, the difference between the ESP and the PCG databases may be due to precognitive experiences having a longer time span in which to provoke a response, because in the PCG database the foreseen event has not yet happened.

Another possible explanation for the predominance of physiological responses in the PCG database may be that physiological responses aid the percipient in taking more notice of their experience. However, a prior analysis on the PCG database (Steinkamp, submitted) had already shown that a prior physiological response did not correspond to the person being more likely to act on their experience ($\chi^2 = 0.001$, $p = .49$ (1-t)). Thus if the finding that precognitive experiences have more physiological reactions is not artifactual or due to chance, it appears to support Stevenson's hypothesis more than the hypothesis that such reactions make percipients take the experience more seriously.

More participants in the PCG database (72%) also reported having had a physiological response when they heard that the event had happened than in the ESP database (63%). However, when these participants were asked whether they thought they had the response because they had previously suspected that the event would happen or because of the nature of what it was they foresaw, the vast majority in both the ESP database (83%) and the PCG database (82%) said that their response was at least in part due to the fact that they thought they had foreseen that event. Thus any conclusion derived from physiological responses to determine how emotionally impactful that event was will be confounded with the extent to which believing one has had a premonition itself affects the future perception of that event.

Therefore these analyses on the physiological responses provide at most only tentative support for the hypothesis that precognitive experiences are more emotionally arousing

than other psi experiences. However, what these findings do illustrate is that having a premonition has an impact on the way the future event is later experienced. These findings also suggest that precognitive experiences – whether genuine or not – have a discernible effect on the percipients. Moreover, this may at least in part be why such experiences are generally so vividly remembered.

EXPERIENCING THE EVENT

The survey had two other questions that related to ways in which a precognitive experience may affect the perception of the event when it does come about. The first question was whether the actual event appeared more or less real than usual. The actual event could seem more real than normal because, in contrast to the premonition of it, the event is now happening for real. Alternatively, the future event could seem less real because the percipient has already foreseen the event and consequently the percipient may feel distanced from its actual occurrence. It is also possible, of course, that having a precognitive experience will have no effect at all on the way in which the future event is perceived.

In both ESP and PCG databases participants were evenly divided between thinking the event seemed more real (39% for ESP, 41% for PCG) and thinking that the event seemed no different from usual (37% for ESP, 41% for PCG). Only a few (3% for ESP, 11% for PCG) thought that the event felt less real. These findings are consistent with the high number of physiological responses reported in the previous section; the physiological responses indicating that the actual event had a real impact on the percipients. This alone might be enough to make some people feel that the event was somehow more real than usual.

The other question focused on whether participants had had a feeling of *déjà vu* when they experienced the actual event. This had been reported earlier by Sondow (1985). If future events have in some sense already happened (as suggested by their being perceived in the present), one might expect precognitive experiences more than other types of ESP

experiences to provoke a feeling of déjà vu when the event actually comes about. There were not enough cases in the ESP and PCG databases to do a formal analysis for this question but the percentages do suggest that there might be some support for this point of view. In the ESP database (coded by colleagues as ESP – the participants understood them as precognitive) only 11% (N=4) of the experiences involved a feeling of déjà vu when the event took place, whereas in the PCG database this percentage rose to 30% (N = 33). These results suggest that this question may well be worth further research.

CONCLUSIONS

This database successfully replicated a number of previous findings. Women percipients still predominate in the precognition database and this does not appear to be due to a response bias, given that the overall database contained similar numbers of male and female respondents.

There was some support for Schouten's hypotheses that percipients are emotionally dependent on the target person and if women are still dependent on men, this may explain the higher proportion of female percipients in the PCG database. Moreover, it would be interesting to see whether participants who are in unequal relationships (e.g., supervisors and students) show this same relationship (i.e., results being better when a dependent person is the receiver and their sender is someone who is socially more powerful).

The replication of Hearne's finding that women past child-bearing age who had their first precognitive experience when young have more children than those who did not have their first premonition until later in life was perhaps the most surprising result. It is hard to see how this could be artifactual. It is strongly recommended that others should try to replicate this finding and to devise further analyses that may put Hearne's models more thoroughly to the test. Additionally, experimenters may like to see whether women over 45 who had their first psi experience relatively late make better participants (as this is supposed to be the group that acts as "Seers"), than women who had their first experience early on in life (as their psi ability is putatively connected to their fertility).

Moreover, the results from the current survey confirmed Schouten's observation that precognitive experiences are of deaths and serious events, whereas other ESP experiences are more likely to be of trivial events.

In addition, when participants learned that their experience had come true many of them had a physiological response of some kind and most of them attributed this response at least in part to their having had a premonition about the event. If this finding is taken in conjunction with the relatively high proportion of people regarding the actual event as feeling more real than normal, it appears that precognitive experiences have a real effect on the way in which the future event is experienced.

In sum, many of the more striking findings about precognitive experiences are based on social relationships – e.g., emotional dependency, women's role in society. Other findings – such as dreams being of events and the alleged correspondence between conviction and intuition – merely serve to show how easily response bias can come into play. Those findings based on social relationships can receive further testing in the laboratory as well as confirmation in future surveys. It is hoped that other researchers will explore both of these potential paths.

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