

Near—Death, Out—of—Body and Lucid Experiences: Additional Comments and Data

I was quite interested to read the material regarding the relationship between near—death experiences (NDE), out—of—body experiences (OBE) and lucid dreamers (LD). Here, I would just like to add a comment or two. One point is obvious, I think, but perhaps needs to be stated all the same. Because OBEs/NDEs and LDs may be correlated, it doesn't follow that NDEs are a variety of lucid dreams. It may, instead, simply be that individuals prone to lucid dreams are more likely to have OBEs/NDEs or that the likelihood of lucid dreaming is increased subsequent to an OBE/NDE. Clearly, the correlational data mentioned in your newsletter in themselves do not permit one to distinguish among these (and possibly other) interpretations. Nevertheless, the relationships noted are intriguing and deserve to be further researched. A second point is that I believe that there may be some connections between the findings just alluded to and the work of Sheryl Wilson and Theodore X. Barber on women who make extremely good hypnotic subjects (they have a fantasy life that is extraordinarily rich).

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I have already asked about the occurrence of lucid dreams in one questionnaire (a shortened version of John Palmer's Survey of Psychic Experiences) administered to self—selected members of the International Association for Near—Death Studies (IANDS). Among the "controls" (i.e., IANDS members who have not had NDEs), 83 out of 155 respondents (54%) reported having had lucid dreams, which is roughly what Palmer found among his sample from the general population. Among near—death experiencers, 13 out of 62 respondents (21%) reported having had lucid dreams prior to their NDEs, and 33 (53%) reported had Lucid dreams since their NDEs. Thus, a fairly low percentage of near—death experiencers had Lucid dreams before their NDEs, while after the NDE, this percentage rises to the level among the IANDS controls and the population Palmer sampled.

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Here is some recent unpublished data from Iceland which is of interest as most results are from American or European cultures. In a manuscript "Some Results Concerning Reported OBEs in Iceland" by K. D. Wiedmann and E. Haraldsson the following data are reported.

		Lucid Dreams		Corrected X ² = 16.956 p < .00005
OBEs		Yes	No	
	Yes	43	16	
	No	26	343	

No relationship between OBEs and either frequency or recall of other dreams was found. The sample was a group of Icelandic adults between 30 and 70 years of age selected at random from the National Registry.

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