

Birth, Lucid Dream and the OBE

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Honegger (1983) recently put forward the theory that the OBE is a form of lucid dream in which the cord, tunnel and out—of—body imagery result from a fetal OBE occurring during the stress of birth. This theory predicts that people born by Caesarean section should be less likely to have these experiences.

A questionnaire on OBEs, dreams and type of birth was administered to 234 Bristol, England residents, Honegger's hypothesis was not supported as 40 (17%) had been born by Caesarean section and they were just as likely to have had OBEs and tunnel experiences as those born normally. However, they were more likely to claim they could control or create pleasant dreams and less likely to report falling dreams.

Other dream and related phenomenon questions were also analyzed and 29% of the respondents reported at least one OBE and of these 79% had had more than one with 3 claiming that they could have one at will. Regarding lucid dreams, 61% claimed to have had them and 96% of these claimed more than one with 6 individuals reporting they could have them at will. Two by two contingency tables were constructed for those who had or had not had the various experiences, and associated χ^2 values calculated (see Table 1). The expected relationship between OBEs and lucid dreams was

Table 1
Relationships Between the Experiences

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------|-----|---------|---------|---------|-------|-----|---|--|
| Hypnagogic ¹ imag. | | | | | | | | | | |
| Falling dream | 2 | | | | | | | | | |
| Flying dream | 1.3 | 0.9 | | | | | | | | |
| False awakening | 7.5** | 0 | 0.3 | | | | | | | |
| Dream control 1 | 2.7 | 0.8 | 3.7 | 2.5 | | | | | | |
| Dream control 2 | 5.7** | 0.1 | 0 | 11.6** | 44.3*** | | | | | |
| Lucid dream | 4.2* | 4.4* | 0.8 | 15.6*** | 4.9* | 17.4*** | | | | |
| OBEs | 5* | 4.4* | 0 | 6.3* | 2.7 | 14.2*** | 7.1** | | | |
| Tunnel exp. | 0 | 0 | 3.3 | 0 | 1.4 | 1.3 | 1.9 | 0 | | |
| Type of birth | 0 | 7.2** | 2.4 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 8.7** | 2.1 | 2.6 | 0 | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | |

¹Values given are for chi squared with 2 degrees of freedom, comparing those who do and do not claim each experience. All significant associations are positive, except for birth type.

* = $p > .05$ ** = $p > .01$ *** = $p > .001$

found that is, the same people tended to have both. Also lucid dreams and OBEs were both significantly associated with having hypnagogic imagery falling dreams, false awakenings and the ability to control ones dreams.

There were two questions about dream control. One asked about stopping unpleasant dreams (dream control 1), but It was the one (dream control 2) which asked about ability to cre-ate or control pleasant dreams which was highly associated with the other experiences.

The results imply that there is a cluster of experiences in which dream control and false awakenings are central, and are related to lucid dreams, OBEs and hypnagogic imagery. There may be something crucial in the ability to control one's pleasant dreams which aids in having OBEs and lucid dreams. It seems we shall learn more about OBEs by studying their relationships to dreaming than from the anal-ogy with birth.

Honegger B. 1982 The OBE as a near—birth experience. *Research in Parapsychology* 1982, Scarecrow Press, in press.

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