

Learning and Generalization on Psi Perceptual Tasks

Results:

Results from a series of training experiments suggest that measurable improvements in behavioral performance on psi tasks cannot be trained using the 15-day regimen used here, nor using a longer-term (23-211 day) regimen. Moving on to a series of experiments in untrained participants, we examined heart pulse period and skin conductance (SC) during remote stare detection and precognition tasks. In the first of three remote stare detection experiments, we found a significant increase in pulse period when participants were covertly observed versus when they were not observed; this was not replicated in the remaining two experiments. We also performed five precognition experiments (using a guess-the-future-target task); behavioral performance was at chance. In the first and second experiments, we found a significant increase in pulse period during the ten seconds preceding feedback indicating the guess was correct, but this was not replicated in the third experiment. In a fourth experiment, we found a significant SC difference preceding correct vs. incorrect feedback for one task but not another task, and no heart rate difference for either task. The fifth experiment showed no significant heart rate difference, but a near-significant SC difference in the two feedback conditions. A post-hoc analysis of data from all precognition experiments taken only from the first trial performed (to rule out expectation and other order effects) revealed a large, statistically significant anticipatory SC effect in men, a trend toward an opposing effect in women, and a statistically significant sex x feedback interaction. Based on these results, we reached several conclusions that will influence future examinations of these phenomena.

Published work:

Book review:

Mossbridge JA. (2010). The Spiritual Anatomy of Emotion: How feelings link the brain, the body, and the sixth sense, by Michael Jawer with Marc Micozzi. *Journal of Parapsychology* 74:394-398.

Full paper:

Mossbridge JA, Utts J, and Tressoldi P. 2012. Predictive anticipatory activity preceding seemingly unpredictable stimuli: A meta-analysis. *Frontiers in Psychology* 3:390

Area(s) of interest:

Psychophysiology, temporal perception, pre-stimulus physiological measures, anticipatory response.

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