WHO's CALLING?
EVALUATING THE ACCURACY OF GUESSING WHO IS ON THE PHONE

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Background: Some people claim to occasionally know who is calling them without using traditional means, known as telephone telepathy. Controlled experiments testing these claims report mixed results.

Aims: The objectives of this study were to evaluate: 1) the accuracy of participants in guessing who was calling them and any difference between telepathic/pre-selected versus precognitive/post-selected trials; 2) the relationship between genetic relatedness, emotional closeness, communication frequency, physical distance, and accuracy.

Method: We conducted a cross-sectional study of groups of three participants (triads) who tried to guess who was calling them in 12 trials, six of which the web server randomly chose the caller before the callee's guess (telepathic/pre-selected) and six of which the caller was selected after the callee's guess (precognitive/post-selected). We also performed exploratory multilevel mixed-effects logistic regressions on the relationship of genetic relationships, emotional closeness, communication frequency, and physical distance data with accuracy.

Results: A total of 177 participants completed at least one trial (105 "completers" completed all 12 trials). Accuracy was significantly above chance for the 210 completers telepathic/pre-selected trials (50.0% where the chance expectation was 33.3%, p<.001) but not the 630 completers precognitive/post-selected trials (31.9% where the chance expectation was 33.3%, p = .61). We discuss how these results favor the psi hypothesis, although conventional explanations cannot be completely excluded. Genetic relatedness significantly predicted accuracy in the regression model (Wald $\chi 2$ = 53.0, P < .001) for all trials. Compared to 0% genetic relatedness, the odds of accurately identifying the caller was 2.88 times (188%) higher for 25% genetic relatedness (Grandparent/Grandchild or Aunt/Uncle or Niece/Nephew or Half Sibling; β = 1.06, z = 2.10, P = .04), but the other genetic relatedness levels were not significant. In addition, communication frequency was significant (β = 0.006, z = 2.19, P = .03) but physical distance (β = 0.0002, z = 1.56, P = .12) and emotional closeness (β = 0.005, z = 1.87, P = .06) were not for all trials. To facilitate study recruitment and completion, unavoidable changes due to persistent recruit difficulties to the protocol were made during the study, including changing inclusion/exclusion criteria, increasing total call attempts to participants, adjusting trial type randomization schema to ensure trial type balance, and participant compensation.

Conclusions: We observed significantly above-chance results for trials in which the web server pre-selected the callee and the caller was asked to direct their attention toward them, aligning with results from previously reported studies. Communication frequency between pairs of people was also associated with greater accuracy. The influence of emotional closeness and genetic

relatedness did not appear to influence accuracy. Our findings add to the mixed results on these potential relationships. Continued research is needed to evaluate claims that people sometimes know who is calling without any conventional cues. Thus, future research will be needed to continue to improve the methodology and examine the mechanism by which people claim to know who is calling, as well as factors that may moderate the effects.

Keywords: Anomalous cognition, Telepathy, Precognition, Telephone

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