

## **Investigation of the phenomenology and impact of spontaneous and direct After-Death Communications (ADCs)**

### **ABSTRACT:**

#### **Background**

An ADC occurs when a person unexpectedly perceives a deceased person in a manner that is interpreted as indicative of the continued survival of some aspect of that person. Such experiences are common in the general population, particularly following bereavement, but are poorly understood. More detailed mapping of the phenomenology, circumstances and impacts of ADCs will enable the explanations that have been proposed to be evaluated more thoroughly.

#### **Aims**

Our objectives were to interrogate cases of ADCs reported to us by the general public, analyzing already-collected data from English, French, and Spanish language groups, focusing especially on material that putatively supports the survival interpretation, such as cases involving multiple witnesses, or ADCs that provided previously unknown information to the percipient. We also aimed to launch additional versions of the survey in German, Dutch, and Chinese.

#### **Method**

Mixed methods analysis of the original multinational survey to describe the phenomenology of ADCs, with a particular focus on cases that might provide more direct evidence that would bear on the question of survival. Development and implementation of new surveys using the JISC platform.

#### **Results**

The original database comprises 994 ADC cases. Papers have been published that report on prevalence of different ADC types, and observing that they commonly occur among people without a mental health diagnosis or other comorbidity. We have also reported on the impacts of ADCs upon the percipient's religiosity, spirituality, and attitude towards biological death.

#### **Conclusions**

The analyses conducted reflect a growing awareness within the clinical parapsychology community that anomalous experiences are not usually distressing per se, but rather the negative reactions of others can have adverse effects upon the experiencer's health and wellbeing. An important purpose of the project is to normalize ADCs so as to enable percipients to feel able to disclose them to others without fear of ridicule or pathologisation. In this way, they may be enabled to reflect on and process their experiences in ways that are compatible with their personal belief system so as to promote integration and growth.

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### **Keywords**

After-Death Communication, Deceased, Contact, Bereavement

### **Published Work:**

Elsaesser, E., Roe, C. A., Cooper, C. E., & Lorimer, D. (2021). The phenomenology and impact of hallucinations concerning the deceased. *BJPsych Open*, 7(5), e148. <https://doi.org/10.1192/bjo.2021.960>

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### **Researcher's Contacts:**

Callum Cooper  
Research Centre for Psychology & Social Sciences  
University of Northampton  
Waterside Campus  
University Drive  
Northampton - NN1 5PH, United Kingdom  
Email: [callum.cooper2@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:callum.cooper2@northampton.ac.uk)