
One in 10 People Have 'Near-Death' Experiences



In a new study presented at the 5th European Academy of Neurology (EAN) Congress, it was found that 10% of participants from 35 countries had endured a Near-Death Experience (NDE).

Researchers from the Rigshospitalet, Copenhagen University Hospital, University of Copenhagen, Denmark, the Center for Stroke Research, Berlin, and the Norwegian University of Technology, Trondheim, Norway, recruited 1034 people over a crowdsourcing platform.

The NDEs reported were found to give both spiritual and physical symptoms, from out-of-body experiences to abnormal time perception.

The most frequent of these symptoms was abnormal time perception, with 87% of NDE survivors reporting this. Next was fast-thinking at 65%; vivid senses at 63%; and 53% of people confirm an out-of-body experience.

Data was measured using the Greyson Near-Death Experience Scale, which notes 16 specific symptoms reported in NDEs. Using this scale, participants must reach a threshold of 7 for their experience to be confirmed as an NDE. Out of the 1034 participants, 239 reported they had experienced an NDE, whilst 106 of these had reached the threshold on the Greyson NDE Scale.

The study group described various feelings of total peace and some even saw 'bright lights at the end of a tunnel'. However, the recent study reported a higher rate of people labelling their NDE as an unpleasant experience; differing from previous studies. With 73% of those who claimed an NDE describing their experience as unpleasant and only 27% describing a pleasant experience. It's only after considering the Greyson NDE threshold (confirming an NDE) that these values change and 53% of confirmed NDEs were seen as pleasant and 14% unpleasant.

Also, this study confirmed results of previous studies linking NDEs with Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep intrusion. When REM sleep intrudes on wakefulness, this can lead to hallucinations and was a very common symptom in NDE experiences that reached the 7 threshold on the Greyson Scale. Dr. Daniel Kondziella, lead researcher of the study and neurologist at the University of Copenhagen, confirmed this link and suggested that by understanding the mechanisms behind REM sleep we might be able to gain a deeper understanding of NDEs.

Comparing his study to previous studies, Dr. Kondziella reported the occurrence of NDEs was 10% higher than was found in previous studies. He explained that this could be explained by population, as previous studies were only conducted on cardiac arrest survivors.

Dr. Kondziella also confirmed his study reported the same findings as those found in the Nelson *et al* in 2006. However, the findings of Nelson *et al* were criticised due to selectional bias; Dr. Kondziella confirms this was overcome in the recent study by instead using a crowdsourcing platform to gather participants.

Source: 5th Congress of European Academy of Neurology

Image Credit: European Academy of Neurology

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