

Varieties of voice-hearing and Auditive Paranormal Experiences (APE): Examining "White Christmas" task and hallucinatory experiences in voice-hearers and non-voice-hearers with and without DPD

ABSTRACT:

Hearing voices is a prominent symptom of serious mental illness. However, these experiences may be common in the non-help-seeking population. The present research project comprised two studies aimed: (1) To evaluate the varieties of voice-hearing and (2) to evaluate "White Christmas" task in relation with voice-hearing experiences. We compared different groups ($N = 200$): (i) voice-hearers with and without diagnosable psychotic disorder (DPD) and (ii) non-voice-hearers with and without diagnosable psychotic disorder on Schizotypy, Hallucinations, Paranormal beliefs, Delusions and the Religious/spiritual Engagement.

We found that the hallucinatory experiences of psychic voice-hearers tend to be similar to those of patients with diagnosable psychotic disorder. We also found that the sample of normal people who hear voices are able to control the onset and offset of their voices, they are less distressed by their voice-hearing experiences and the first time they admitted to hear voices, the reception by others was much more likely to be positive. Patients who had much more negative voice-hearing experiences, were more likely to receive a negative reaction when sharing their voices with others for the first time, and this was subsequently more disruptive to their social relationships.

A secondary aim was to compare groups: voice-hearers with (1) and without diagnosable psychotic disorder (2) and non-voice-hearers with (3) and without (4) diagnosable psychotic disorder on "White Christmas" task. The hypothesis was confirmed, that is, Groups 1 and 2 (Voice-hearers with and without diagnosable psychotic disorder) scored higher than Groups 3 and 4 (Non-voice hearers with and without diagnosable psychotic disorder). Groups (i) voice-hearers with and without DPD and (ii) non-voice-hearers with and without DPD, did not differ in terms of imagery vividness and fantasy prone. Logistic regression suggested that fantasy proneness is a better predictor of hallucinatory reports than are LSHS (Hallucination) scores. This might imply that hallucinatory reports obtained during the White Christmas test reflect internal experiences, a non-specific preference for odd items rather than schizophrenia-like.

Keywords: Voice hearers, Schizotypy, Hallucinations, Paranormal beliefs, Religious/spiritual Engagement

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Researcher's Contacts:

Alejandro Parra

Salta 2015

C1137ACQ - Buenos Aires

Argentina

Phone: (+5411) 4305 67 24

Email: rapp_ale@fibertel.com.ar