

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Comment on Delgado-Romero and Howard

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Dear Editor:

The article on “flawed literature” by Delgado-Romero and Howard (2005) in Vol. 33(4) claims that research on telepathy is flawed, based on one experiment with a design they devised, and conducted and analyzed by them. They were still left with some positive results, which they suggested were perhaps “crud.” Explaining away results by suggesting they are crud is not very scientific. Nor is it good practice to devise a second experiment with a different (and untested) design, because the research team is “very uncomfortable” with the consistent conclusion of their own six studies that “some humans possess psychic powers,” a finding that is consistent with meta-analysis of the research on this subject and the large body of studies in peer-reviewed literature. It is certainly stretching to imply, on the basis of that one experiment, that the entire research literature in parapsychology is flawed. Perhaps it could be said that at last, after much hard work, they succeeded in devising a study that did not show evident telepathy.

The Ganzfeld experimental format, used by the authors, is only one of many experimental designs for ESP, and does not in fact test for telepathy, because it does not exclude other forms of ESP. The term “psychic powers” has too many semantic assumptions, and it is rarely used in scientific discussion of these phenomena.

The article does not show familiarity with the body of research in the parapsychological field, which is highly sophisticated in method and statistical analysis. A comment by Carl Rogers (1964), made more than 50 years ago, is still relevant:

The evidence for extra-sensory perception is better than, or certainly as good as, the evidence for many of the principles which psychologists believe. Yet, with very few exceptions, psychologists reject this evidence with vehemence. It is not easy to impugn the methods which have been used in studying ESP, for they are the same as those used in any field of psychology. But the psychologist falls back on his subjective knowing. The evidence does not fit with the pattern of knowledge as he expects to find it, does not fit with his experiencing of the world. Therefore he rejects it. (p. 114)

Rogers concludes, "The point is that neither the new research finding *nor* the subjective wisdom of scientists viewing that finding is infallible" (p. 115).

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REFERENCES

- Delgado-Romero, E. A., & Howard, G. S. (2005). Finding and correcting flawed research literatures. *The Humanistic Psychologist, 33*, 293–303.
- Rogers, C. R. (1964). In T. W. Wann (Ed.), *Behaviorism and phenomenology: Contrasting bases for modern psychology* (pp. 109–140). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

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