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Dowsing: Anchoring in Time

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Abstract

Purpose:

To determine if 10 long term map dowsers could perceive water more accurately than 10 age and sex matched controls

Methods/Materials:

Ten map dowsers who had more than 20 years individual experience from a local dowsing club and ten age and sex matched controls from the local area general population were recruited. Participants were consented and baseline questionnaires were administered. Computer generated placement of water buckets was run for each of the subjects' trials. The one bucket containing water was placed with nine other matching buckets under a tarp which had numbers on the top representing the placement of each bucket and was moved each trial. Each subject did two practice and ten real trials. Participants were asked to mark the bucket placement on a score sheet. Experimenter was positioned 15 feet from the buckets to reduce field interactions. Dowsers were able to use any type of dowsing equipment that they wished. Control subjects were provided with a choice of wooden or stone pendulum, wooden stick, or copper rods. Controls were given no training on the dowsing tools. Based on anecdotal reports of difficulty, selected buckets were made of a ¼ inch acrylic and plastic mix, considered the most difficult material through which to perceive a substance.

Results:

Original analysis showed 100% failure in the dowsing group and 30% success in the control. As this was a statistical surprise, the data were reviewed. Based on information from Betz (1995), the next subjects' placement was reviewed. It was determined that participants had accurately predicted the placement which was run for the next person and not for themselves. Further, they had completed their testing prior to the randomization being run. The final subjects' randomization was run after this reanalysis process was suggested by the data and it too matched the results. The results suggest that in order for subject 1 to perceive subject 2 bucket placement, some change in the awareness of time or level of precognition may have been engaged.

Table 1: Control vs. Active analysis of next subject's bucket placements.

	Control	**Active**
MEAN	1.8	5.9
STDEV	0.63246	3.478505
MEDIAN	2	6
p<	0.3173	0.0004

Conclusion:

Results **of** $p<0.0004$ for the active group vs. $p<0.3173$ for the control group when analysis was done on the next subjects' trial suggest that a larger pilot study should be done. A possible precognitive process may be involved. A three-arm trial that included standard dowsers, map dowsers, and control subjects would help to clarify if the movement forward in time or precognition is specific to map dowsers. In addition, sub-groupings could be done with less experienced dowsers to discover if this is a skill developed over time.

Key Words: Dowsing, Map Dowsing, Precognition, RCT

Introduction

This study tested 10 long term map dowsers and 10 matched controls to evaluate the process of dowsing. Dowsing has previously been called "a problem-solving technique which apparently utilizes a motor automatism in conjunction with a mechanical instrument to obtain information otherwise unknown to the dowser" (Hansen, 1982). Historically this technique has most commonly been used to detect water for the placement of wells (Hansen, 1982). The mechanical instrument utilized can vary greatly, at points "including scissors, pliers, crowbars, and even German sausages," though "the three most common instruments are the forked stick or V-rod, the pendulum, and the L-rod, usually made of a piece of wire or rod bent in the shape of the letter 'L'" (Hansen, 1982).

Background

The quality of research on dowsing has varied greatly, as have the results. At this point there are a few theories for possible methodology. One of these theories is that the dowser is able to detect changes in magnetic fields (Chadwick & Jensen 1971). This theory does have some more recent support from new data suggesting that humans may be capable of magnetosensitivity due to changes in light, an ability humans were previously thought to lack (Foley et al., 2011). The presence of groundwater does have a distinct impact on a local magnetic

field, though this impact has been shown to create a gradient, not an abrupt change (Chadwick & Jensen, 1971). The theory of perception of magnetic change has additional support due to the success of research on methods to block dowsing from using a gravitational force sense (Harvalik & De Boer, 1974). Another theory is that dowsers are detecting increases in the local gravitational forces produced by movement of underground water (More, 2013). The current prevailing theory among skeptics is that movements of the mechanical instrument are caused by ideomotor actions based on non-conscious knowledge (Gauchou, et al., 2012). This would suggest that individuals are detecting environmental indicators of water and responding at a non-conscious level, with the mechanical instrument creating an increase in the visibility of the response which brings that to a conscious level. Regardless of the method, Betz (1995) found interesting challenges relating to environmental factors, which may explain some of the results in research on the topic. Specifically, he found that dowsers could perform consistently in the field but were significantly less consistent in a laboratory setting (Betz, H., 1995).

It is important to note that there are multiple types of dowsers. The types most commonly researched are Forked stick or Rod dowsing. Another commonly utilized type of dowsing is Map dowsing, wherein the dowser commonly uses a pendulum to find the location they are looking for on a map (Wagner, 2019). The dowsers utilized in this study were map dowsers, which means that the results may not extrapolate to other types of dowsing.

Purpose

To determine if 10 long term map dowsers could perceive water more accurately than 10 age and sex matched controls.

Materials and Method

Study approval was obtained (NFFEH 03-01-11-03) and participants were then recruited from local area dowsing clubs. Ten dowsers who had more than 20 years of individual experience from a local dowsing club and 10 age and sex matched controls from the local area general population were recruited. Participants were consented, then did baseline questionnaires. Once completed, a computer-generated placement was run. Participants remained in the building while the water bucket was placed with nine other matching buckets under a tarp which had numbers on the top representing the placement of each bucket outside. One bucket always had water and it was moved each trial. Subjects returned to the building between trials where they could not observe bucket placement. Each subject did two practice and ten real trials. The experimenter or an assistant observed each trial but was positioned 15 feet from the buckets to reduce field interactions. Dowsers were able to use any type of dowsing equipment that they wished. Control subjects were provided with a choice of wooden or stone pendulum, wooden stick, or copper rods. They were given no training on the dowsing tools. Buckets were made of a ¼ inch acrylic and plastic mix, considered to be among the most difficult materials through which to perceive a substance.

Statistical Analysis

Mean, median, mode, and standard deviation, were done as well as one and a two tailed P test both with and without outliers. A p value of less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant. These tests were run on both the active group and the control group separately, and the results were then compared.

Results

Data analysis was done at study completion and the result was 100% failure of the dowsers and 30% success in the controls. These data were a surprise statistically. Based on further review of the literature a re-review of the data was done. At that time, both active and control groups were checked to see how many of the buckets for their own placement were perceived correctly and how many of the next subjects' placements were perceived correctly. In order for subject 1 to perceive subject 2 bucket placement, they would have to roll forward in time or be pre-cognitive, as subject 2 placement had not yet been generated by the computer. Neither the PI's nor the assistant knew the possible placements. The total number of the subjects' correct perception of bucket placement was then combined and statistics were run. Results are indicative of some form of precognition or rolling forward in time by the map dowsers.

Table 1: Control vs. Active analysis of next subject's bucket placements.

	Control	Active
MEAN	1.8	5.9
STDEV	0.63246	3.478505
MEDIAN	2	6
p<	0.3173	0.0004

Discussion

Initial data showed 100% failure of the dowsers and 30% success of the controls. A reanalysis of the data based on additional literature review was done and the finding of $p \leq 0.0004$ in the active group was equally a surprise. Our results support the findings of H. Betz (1995). It is possible that the dowsers in his study were demonstrating precognition, which would have a high degree of consistency and accuracy in the field, where the factors were not changing rapidly, and a much lower rate of accuracy in a laboratory, where the test was to regularly change these factors. If the data were still available, it might be interesting to see if an analysis could be done to see if the dowsers in the laboratory setting in Betz's 1995 research were also detecting where the water would be for the next placement. This would also rule out the theory that the results are entirely determined by a non-conscious assessment of environmental factors.

The dowsers utilized in this study were Map dowsers, which means that the results may not extrapolate to other types of dowsing. They do not, as with forked stick or rod dowsing, go on location. This means that they are less likely to be able to use the environmental factors of the location. Given the lack of any apparent experimenter effect since the randomization had not yet been run, we theorized that precognition might be involved in the process for map dowsers. Since this was a small trial, additional trials need to be done with larger sample sizes. Additionally, trials with other types of dowsers could be done to see if these data were reproduced with other forms of dowsing or are specific to map dowsing.

Conclusion

Results of $p<0.0004$ for the active group vs. $p<0.3173$ for the control group suggest that a larger study should be done. A three-arm trial which included map dowsers, dowsers who do not

do Map dowsing, and control subjects would help to clarify if possible precognition is specific to Map dowsers. In addition, sub-groupings could be done with less experienced dowsers to discover if this is a skill developed over time.

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