

## **Research survey examines the Out-of-Body Experience phenomenon**

Preliminary results from global online survey attest to the universality of the out-of-body experience and to the commonality of its characteristics.

Researchers throughout history have long strived to prove the existence of the out-of-body experience (OBE) by empirical means. A number of experiments have yielded significant results. However, due to the subjective nature of most OBEs, satisfying the demands of the conventional scientific community for positivist evidence poses an ongoing challenge.

Personal experimentation is therefore the most logical method for validation of this phenomenon and researchers of the OBE and the near-death experience (NDE) are largely reliant on the accumulation of data relating to personal accounts in seeking to identify the elements common to these experiences. One of the first recorded surveys into the OBE was conducted in the UK in 1890 by the British Society of Psychical Research. Relatively low in terms of sophistication, 17,000 participants (an impressive number however, even by today's standards) were asked the following question. "Have you ever, when believing yourself to be completely awake, had a vivid impression of seeing or being touched by a living or inanimate object, or of hearing a voice; which impression, so far as you can discover, was not due to any physical cause?" 10% of the responses to this question were affirmative.

Today, following a further century of research on a whole range of parapsychic phenomena, there exists a small number of specialist educational and scientific research institutes solely dedicated to the investigation of the consciousness (popularly known as the soul or the spirit) and its manifestation beyond the human body. Among these is the International Academy of Consciousness (formerly known in the UK as International Institute of Projectiology and Conscientiology) who in 1999 launched a global online survey research into the OBE. An ongoing project, this survey contributes to the verification of the universality of the OBE and to the common characteristics of claimed extracorporeal experiences that occur during sleep or the waking state, through the analysis of 98 different aspects related to the phenomenon. To date, over 7,000 Internet users have responded to the OBE Survey.

A preliminary analysis of data drawn from the first 1,185 respondents to the survey provided researchers with information that suggested that many of their hypotheses were sound. It also helped to explain a variety of phenomena frequently associated with the experience.

Respondents to the survey originated from 62 countries, representing a wide range of nationalities, cultural backgrounds and ethnic groups.

A total of 85% of the 1,185 respondents reported having had an OBE.

Of the 1,007 individuals who said they'd had an OBE, 37% claimed to have had between two and ten OBEs. Unexpectedly, 5.5% claimed more than 100 such experiences.

45% of those who reported an OBE said they successfully induced at least one OBE by using a specific technique. This important result deserves careful consideration to determine if an association exists between this ability and some other personal characteristic or aptitude. It is hoped that such findings will lead to the improvement of techniques that allow individuals to produce out-

of-body experiences. Further investigations being conducted by the researchers continue to uncover additional factors related to the production of lucid OBEs.

In addition, 62% of participants claiming to have had an OBE also reported having enjoyed non-physical flight; 40% reported experiencing the phenomenon of self-bilocation (i.e. seeing one's own physical body whilst outside the body); and 38% claimed having experienced self-permeability (passing through physical objects such as walls).

The most commonly reported sensations experienced in connection with the OBE were falling, floating, repercussions e.g. myoclonia (the jerking of limbs, jerking awake), catalepsy (sleep paralysis), sinking, torpidity (numbness), intracranial sounds, tingling, clairvoyance, oscillation and serenity.

A substantial number of individuals have participated in the OBE Survey to date; the data that they have provided and their willingness to do so shows not only that many people are having lucid experiences outside their bodies but also, that many are willing to share this information in their search for a rational explanation.

The IAC researchers Wagner Alegretti and Nanci Trivellato acknowledge that the survey participants are not representative of the general population as they are all Internet users and as most had some pre-existing interest in the OBE or consciousness studies. Nevertheless, the survey results show that many different characteristics of the phenomena associated with the OBE are shared by people around the world, irrespective of their age, gender, nationality, ethnicity, cultural background, religion, level of education or socio-economic status. This is a significant outcome that validates both the design and the objectives of the OBE Survey, further confirming the value of pursuing such investigations.

The OBE Survey is ongoing and all readers are invited to participate. The survey can be accessed online at: <http://www.iacworld.org/Research>

For further details please contact;

**International Academy of Consciousness (IAC)**

45 Great Cumberland Place London W1H 7LH

Tel/fax: 020 7723 0544

Web: [www.iacworld.org](http://www.iacworld.org)

Email: [London@iacworld.org](mailto:London@iacworld.org)