

Testing Mediums' Accuracy Under Controlled Laboratory Conditions



BACKGROUND

Mediums are individuals who experience regular communication with the deceased (called **discarnates**) and report the resulting information to the discarnates' living friends or relatives (called **sitters**) during specific events (called **readings**). Qualified scientists have been studying British and American mediums since the 1880s.¹ Dr. Julie Beischel oversees mediumship research at the Windbridge Research Center. Dr. Beischel's graduate training includes pharmacology, toxicology, microbiology, immunology, physiology, biochemistry, protocol design, and statistics. Dr. Beischel has studied mediums under laboratory conditions since 2003 and most often has worked with a team of 20 Windbridge Certified Research Mediums (**WCRMs**; see page 3).

STUDYING MEDIUMS

Perhaps the most fundamental mediumship research question is: Can mediums actually convey accurate and specific information about discarnates? Since the early days of our mediumship research, we have emphasized that the two most important factors in a mediumship testing protocol are (a) **optimizing the environment** and (b) **maximizing controls**.² These factors ensure ecological validity (how close an experimental situation matches a real-life reading) as well as control for normal explanations for positive results such as sensory leakage (intentional or unintentional), experimenter cueing, rater bias, hot reading, cold reading (including information so general it could apply to almost anyone), and other fraudulent practices.³

ACCURACY TESTING METHODS

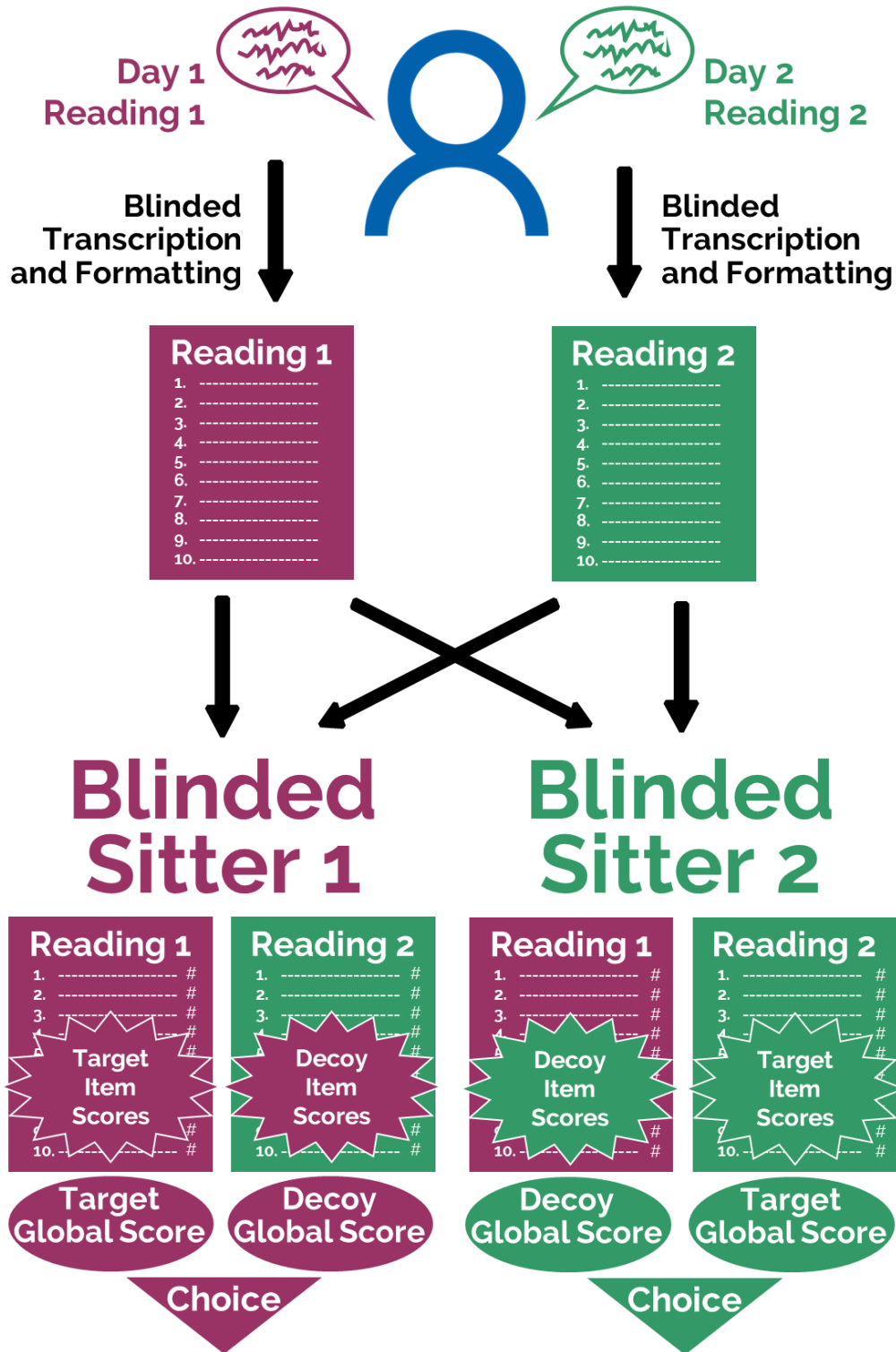
To include the ideal **environment** and **controls**, we use a specific protocol² (see figure on next page) which was vetted and **peer-reviewed at least five times** by multiple qualified peers: first, when it was described in a methodological journal article;² second, when a description of a planned experiment was selected to be funded by the funding organization's reviewers; third, when the final report about the study findings was reviewed by the funding organization; fourth, when a description of the study was vetted and accepted for presentation at a scientific conference;⁴ and fifth, when the protocol and findings were reviewed for publication in a journal.⁵

We refer to the protocol as 'fully-blinded,' 'more than double-blind,' or 'quintuple-blind' due to its **five levels of blinding** where specific information is concealed from the mediums (WCRMs), sitters, and three experimenters:

- (1) **the WCRM** is blinded to information about the sitter and the discarnate before, during, and after the reading and asked questions about the discarnate's appearance, personality, activities, and cause of death;
- (2) **the sitters** do not hear the readings as they occur; they score blinded transcripts of two readings, one for their discarnate (**target**) and one for another sitter's discarnate (**decoy**) without knowing which is which;
- (3) the experimenter who consents and trains the sitters (**Experimenter 1**) is blinded to which mediums read which sitters and which readings were intended for which sitters;
- (4) the experimenter who interacts with the mediums during the phone readings and formats the readings into item lists for scoring (**Experimenter 2**) is blinded to information about the sitters and the discarnates beyond the discarnates' first names;
- (5) the experimenter who interacts with the sitters during scoring (i.e., e-mails and receives by e-mail the blinded readings; **Experimenter 3**) is blinded to all information about the discarnates, to which medium performed which readings, and to which readings were intended for which sitters.

Blinded Medium

on phone with blinded experimenter



It is important to note that the purpose of mediumship readings is to share discarnates' messages with sitters. Thus, sitters are the only people with the knowledge and expertise required to appropriately score items from mediumship readings describing discarnates and/or including their messages.

RESULTS

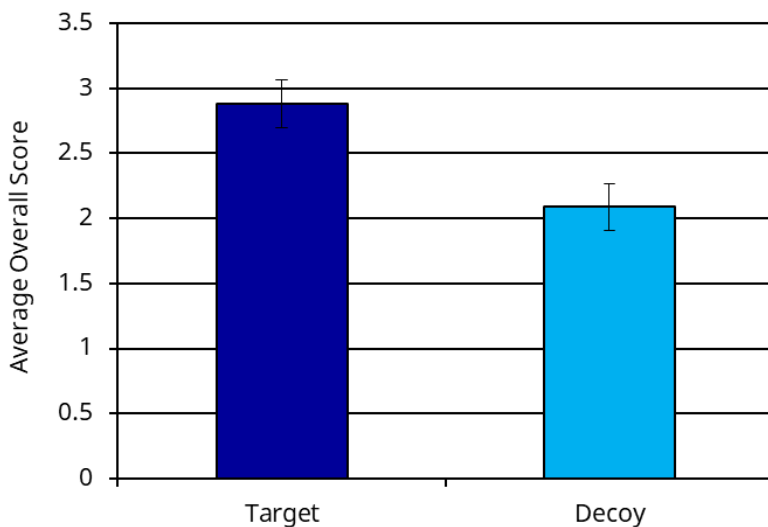
PREVIOUS RESEARCH

During her post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Arizona, Dr. Beischel performed and published a study examining the accuracy of eight mediums during 16 phone readings collected and scored under blinded conditions. In that study, blinded sitters gave their own (target) readings significantly higher overall scores (0-6) than they gave decoy readings (3.56 ± 0.44 vs. 1.94 ± 0.32 ; $p < .01$). When asked which of two readings was more applicable to them, the blinded sitters chose the target reading 81% of the time (13/16, $p = .01$).⁶ These data suggested that certain mediums can report accurate information about discarnates under blinded conditions.

WINDBRIDGE RESEARCH

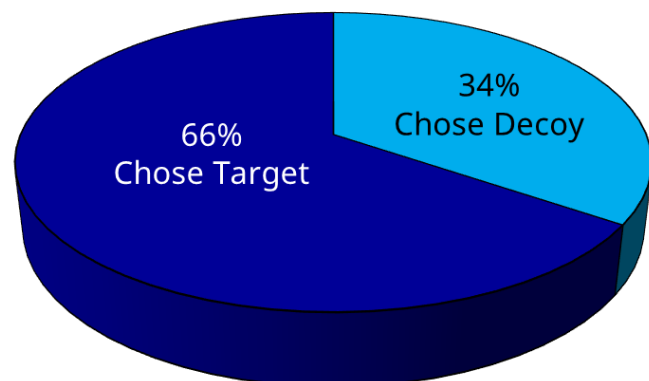
Windbridge researchers study self-identified mediums as well as mediums whose abilities have been demonstrated under controlled laboratory conditions. Upon successful completion of eight peer-reviewed screening, testing, and training steps,⁷ vetted mediums are termed Windbridge Certified Research Mediums (WCRMs). In a Windbridge study⁵ replicating and extending the findings detailed above, 20 WCRMs performed 58 readings.

The blinded sitters in that study gave their own (target) readings significantly higher **overall scores** (on a 0-6 scale) than they gave decoy readings (2.88 ± 0.18 vs. 2.09 ± 0.18 ; $p = .001$). When asked to **choose which of two readings** was more applicable to them, the blinded sitters chose the target reading 66% of the time (38/58, $p = .01$).⁶ (See the figures below.)



Average overall scores given by blinded sitters to readings intended for them (target) and intended for someone else (decoy) (n=58, p=.001)

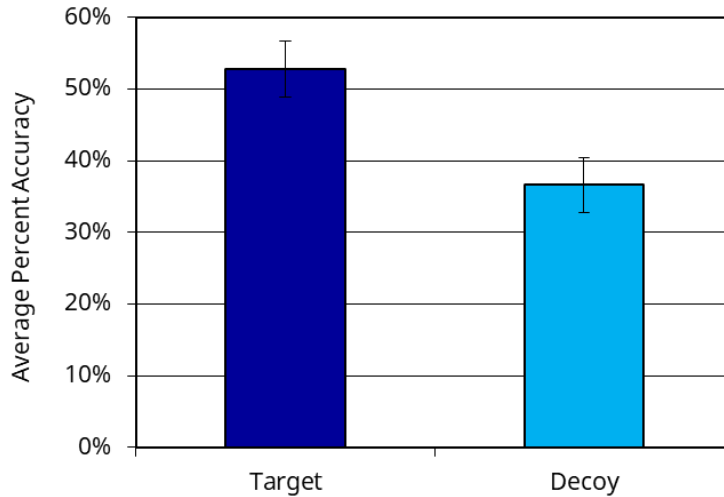
Portions of blinded sitters who chose readings intended for them (target) vs. intended for someone else (decoy) as more applicable (n=58, p=.01)



RESULTS cont.

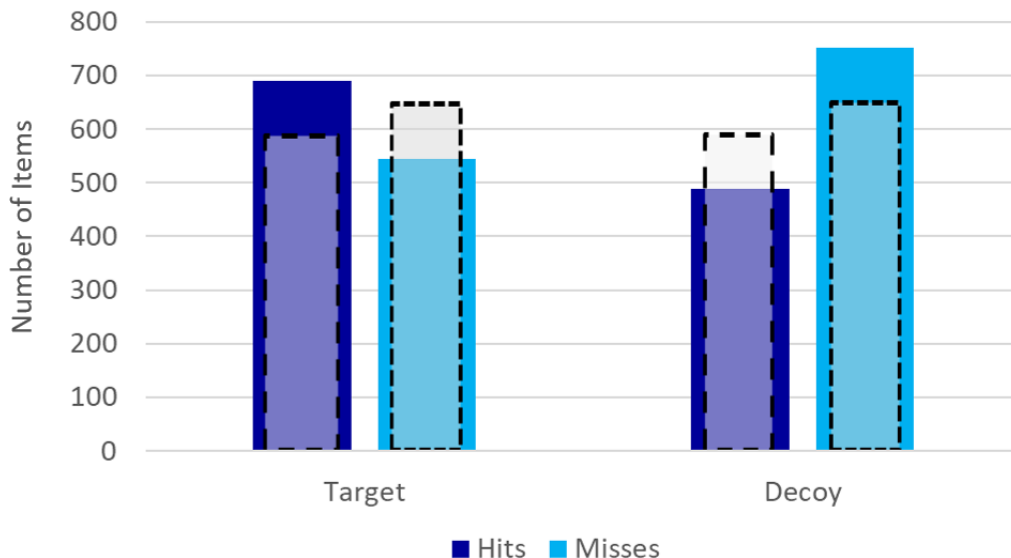
WINDBRIDGE RESEARCH cont.

For 31 of the 58 Windbridge readings, the blinded sitters also scored **each item** in the portions of each of the two readings (target and decoy) in which the mediums answered specific questions about the deceased. Target readings were scored significantly higher than decoy readings (52.8% ± 3.9% vs. 36.6% ± 3.8% accurate, p=.002).



A conservative 2x2 Chi² Test comparing the actual vs. expected values for all 2,474 items reported by the 20 mediums demonstrated significant results (p<.0001). In the figure below, the solid columns represent the actual (collected) data. The dashed columns represent expected values; that is, what would be expected if there was no association between the number of items scored as hits or misses and whether a reading was scored by the sitter it was intended for (target) or scored by another sitter (decoy). Readings scored by the sitters they were intended for (targets) received more hits and less misses than would be mathematically expected. Readings scored by sitters not connected to them (decoys) received less hits and more misses than would be expected.

Overall, this replication and extension study completed in a second lab and under blinded conditions provides further evidence that certain mediums can report accurate and specific information about discarnates.



RESULTS cont.

META-ANALYSIS

A meta-analysis of 14 studies of mediums' accuracy published between 2001 and 2015 was published in 2021.⁸ The method of meta-analysis (MA) incorporates an effective array of tools for combining data across studies and addressing controversial research findings. This particular MA also included publication bias tests to examine biases resulting from questionable research practices. The authors confirmed the reliability of the results from the studies analyzed and concluded that “some mediums are able to acquire information about deceased persons through some unknown or anomalous means” (p. 4).

INDEPENDENT REPLICATION

A mediumship accuracy study performed by researchers in Italy⁹ adapted the protocol first described by Beischel² and included 38 readings provided by nine mediums. The blinded sitters gave their own (target) readings significantly higher overall scores (on a scale of 0-6) than they gave decoy readings (3.36 ± 1.47 vs. 1.77 ± 1.3 ; $p=.001$). When asked to choose which of two readings was more applicable to them, the blinded sitters chose the target reading 66% of the time (25/38, $p=.04$). This independent replication study completed under blinded conditions provides further evidence that certain mediums can report accurate and specific information about discarnates.

CONCLUSIONS

A recent peer-reviewed essay¹⁰ examined eight studies published since 2005 testing mediums' accuracy and identified six common methods that produced the best results: (1) pre-screened mediums, (2) sitters motivated to hear from their loved ones, (3) providing mediums with an initial nugget of information about the deceased, (4) collecting free-form content from the mediums as well as responses to specific questions, (5) collecting item and whole reading scores from sitters, and (6) limiting the number of readings and items for scoring. The Windbridge protocol (page 2) has incorporated all six of these ‘ideal’ methods since 2007.

The three studies^{5,6,9} described above were performed across three labs and two countries and included 112 readings by nearly 40 mediums collected under controlled conditions. The 75 sitters chose target readings over decoy readings 68% of the time when only 50% could be expected to do so by chance ($p=.0001$). That is, the sitters were able to recognize their discarnates in the information reported by the mediums. These data—in addition to the accuracy scoring findings—provide evidence that certain mediums can report accurate and specific information about discarnates under conditions that exclude ordinary, sensory explanations.

These data demonstrate a phenomenon we call **anomalous information reception** (AIR), that is, the reporting by mediums of accurate and specific information about discarnates without prior knowledge of the discarnates or sitters, in the absence of any sensory feedback, and without using deceptive or fraudulent means. We intentionally use the term ‘reception’ to reflect the mediums' experiences: they report usually *receiving* rather than *retrieving* the information they report.

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