

# Review of: "What is it like to be Out-of-Body? Phenomenal accounts of experiencers"

Yoshiko Yabe<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> NTT Communication Science Laboratories

**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.

In this study, the authors collected verbal reports of out-of-body experiences (OBE) from 10 pieces of literature to investigate what the experiencers perceived during the OBE. The authors focused on the verbal reports of 13 participants who experienced the OBE repetitively.

I agree that qualitative studies on how the OB experiencers felt during the OBEs are as important as quantitative studies showing the neural activities during OB. However, I received the impression that this article has not been written concisely as a scientific paper. The authors did not provide detailed information on several important things, including this study's goal and the reasoning behind the methods. I felt it a little disappointing that some paragraphs, even the paragraph explaining the aim of the study, contain only a few sentences.

## #1

The sentence "Surveys in the general population show that such a type of experience is not rare, ranging in frequency from 9% to 14%" is not clear. Is it the percentage of people who experience OBEs in their whole lives? In addition, this sentence should be included in one of the other paragraphs.

## #2

I am not sure if the question "Is this type of experience a proof that the mind and consciousness can function separately from their biological substrate, the brain, or is a curious trick of the brain itself?" is very 'fundamental' because the first alternative that the mind and consciousness can function separately from the brain cannot be a scientific question that can be solved by scientific methods. That alternative cannot be a question but a belief.

## #3

About the sentence "The aim of this study is to know more about the perceptual and mental phenomenological experience when OB, it is necessary to obtain first-person OBEs' accounts from those with multiple incidences of such experiences who have made available their phenomenological accounts", I did not get what aspect of the OBEs the authors eager to know more by this study. The authors should explain the reason why they excluded the data from the participant who experienced OB only once.

## #4

The authors could use other keywords to find more papers. I suppose many of the papers found using the keyword “first-person” may be about the “first-person perspective” during the OBE.

#### #5

The Procedure section which consists of only three sentences does not provide details of the method. For example, how those topics (consciousness state, self-boundaries, etc.) were chosen is not described at all. How the collected accounts were grouped into those topics and how some of the accounts (if any) were excluded should also be described. Describing the criteria for how the authors collected/excluded the accounts is important because, without such information, readers would suspect that the authors collected data arbitrarily just to strengthen their conclusions or opinions.

#### #6

It is not common to show the data without explaining what data the authors write in the Results section. The authors should add at least a few sentences at the beginning of the Results section so that the readers can be aware that they will find the accounts picked up from previous papers for each topic with the letters in the brackets indicating the participant found in Table 1.

#### #7

In what context of the interviews each account was spoken and when the interviews were conducted after the OBE are not clear in the Results section. Those pieces of information are especially important because the accounts would have been affected by the recall bias. It would be informative if the authors described the questions and requests to which the participants responded and when the participants described their experiences.

#### #8

Results synthesis does not include the topic “Consciousness status”.

#### #9

It would be great if the authors discussed the linkage between the results of this study and the neural correlates of OBE suggested by previous studies. For example, the consistencies or inconsistencies between the neural activities in the ordinary settings and those in the OBE could be discussed in the context that the two types of realities are interconnected.