

Review of: "God's characteristics as reported by near-death experiencers"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Review of "God's Characteristics as Reported by Near-Death Experiencers" by Patrizio Tressoldi and Jeffrey Long

I found this to be an interesting and important article. It's fascinating to see how near-death experiencers described God's characteristics, and I learned a lot from reading about your project. It was especially interesting to see how often the love/light themes came up.

I do have some suggestions for improvement—mostly in the realm of requesting more elaboration in places.

ABSTRACT

The first line refers to Long & Perry's (2016) God study. It would help if you gave just a bit more detail on what that study was about, as there are many studies out there that focus on God.

You speak of "other mental conditions," and this might make NDEs sound like a form of mental condition or mental disorder. Could you reword?

INTRODUCTION

You mention "unselected or selected" participants. I wasn't clear what you meant here.

It would be useful to give the ranges on the Greyson and Martial scales so that readers could better understand the cutoff scores.

METHOD

It would be very valuable if you could summarize any available demographic data about participants: age, nationality, gender, religion...and anything else that might help readers get a better sense of the sample.

You mention excluding some information such as "I was gently guided into the light..." and wrote a paragraph on this. But I wasn't clear on the rationale for excluding these ideas.

It would be helpful for readers to see more clarification on the coding/extraction methods: Did the two of you, as the paper authors, extract these themes, or did you have research assistants serving as coders/raters? Were there any statistical tests of agreement between the raters? How were disagreements/differences resolved?

You mentioned that a few participants mentioned Hellish examples and/or a judgmental God. These would seem very important to describe (or at least to explain why they are not relevant here), especially since there has been some concern in the field that negative NDE accounts have been suppressed.

RESULTS

Were there any important distinctions in the data between descriptions of Jesus vs. God?

You might not have enough information to test differences between religious groups; but if these types of differences were found, it would be interesting to see them.

I was a little unclear on the procedure where you were talking about Light, Light-Love, Light-Love Oneness, etc. Could you please spell this out in more detail for the reader?

I was expecting to see statistical tests comparing the various groups—for example, the religious groups in Figure 2.

DISCUSSION

Clarify a bit more about how this study goes beyond the earlier Long & Perry one. Summarize the key findings from that study and how this one builds on it. (It would actually be great to have more of this material in the Introduction.)

STUDY LIMITATIONS

This section is unusually brief for an empirical article. Could you please go into a bit more detail?

CONCLUSIONS

You say “his characteristics” in reference to God. I’d suggest a gender-neutral approach, simply saying “God’s characteristics.”

I hope that these suggestions are helpful. I enjoyed the paper, and your findings are fascinating.

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