

Keeping Up Is Hard to Do

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In a past editorial (Cardeña, 2017) I made the case that those engaged in psi research, as in all other scientific endeavors, must have a good knowledge of their field's previous research and theoretical work. In this Editorial I turn to the present and future. It has become somewhat of an in-group meme that psi research has been at the forefront of methodological innovations. There is considerable truth to that statement. To give but a few examples (see also Cardeña, in press): a) in his encyclopedia entry on telepathy, James (1899) illustrated how aware were the foremost psychical researchers of his time of potential nonconscious artifacts in research, b) the French Nobel prizewinner Charles Richet was the probable originator of randomization in research design, in his experiments on psi (Hacking, 1988), c) Pratt and others collaborated with statisticians to put their endeavors on a secure footing and produced the first comprehensive meta-analysis (Pratt, Rhine, Smith, Stuart, & Greenwood, 1940; see also Gupta & Agrawal, 2012); d) the recent outcry in psychology and other disciplines about QRPs (questionable research practices), including selective reporting, had already been discussed decades ago in psi-related publication policies and data analyses (e.g., Johnson, 1976; Office of Technological Assessment, 1989, p. 337), and e) parapsychology as a field is much better at using "masking" procedures than mainstream psychology and other fields (Watt & Nagtegaal, 2004). And as a more modest contribution, I will draw attention to the recent requirements by the *Journal of Parapsychology* to require demographic and attitudinal information from researchers interacting with participants. Although we have had evidence in psychological research for decades that the researchers' gender, attitudes, and other characteristics can affect the performance of participants (e.g., Rosenthal & Rubin, 1978; Schlitz, Wiseman, Watt, & Radin, 2006; Silverman, 1974), I am not aware of any other scientific journal requiring this essential information.

Past achievements in science, however, do not suffice in an ever-moving landscape, with increasing number of practitioners, changing standards, and advances in statistical, reporting, and technological procedures. When looking at the best standards, however, some parapsychology work has lagged. To give an immediate example, this issue of the *Journal of Parapsychology* inaugurates the use of *digital object identifiers* (DOIs), a way to help cross-reference publications that has become standard in scientific journals (see Ryan, this issue) but has been missing in most parapsychology journals. As a recent editor, I have also received submissions that have used dated statistical procedures and/or shown little awareness of advances in related fields. That is not, of course, the case of some submissions (e.g., Irwin, Marks, & Geiser, this issue; Schofield, Baker, Staples, & Sheffield, this issue), but reminds me of one of the most serious problems in the field, namely its insularity from what occurs in other areas of science. The wonderful Bial Foundation biannual symposia (full disclosure, I am an unpaid scientific advisor of

its Board), which gather many of the foremost researchers in parapsychology and various other disciplines, help the former to become aware of advances in other areas, but the field needs much more than that. I urge individual researchers as well as organizations (e.g., the PA, the SSE, the SPR, as well as Bial) to come up with enticements for psi researchers and open scientists in other areas to collaborate. For example, a good percentage of Bial Foundation biannual grants could be reserved for projects that integrate psi and mainstream components. This will help not only to break down the field's insularity but also to keep psi researchers up to date in the advances of more mainstream areas. Another aspect that we need to embrace is the ongoing push for study registries and open data (see Ryan, this issue). As one of the contributions in this issue shows (Vernon, this issue), researchers should not be worried that pre-registering a study will somehow make significant results disappear. And registering data will facilitate enormously meta-analyses and, incidentally, force all researchers to keep good records of their data. This is increasingly becoming a requirement for mainstream publications.

One final thought about keeping up... Parapsychology urgently needs to entice promising and interested young researchers to use new techniques to probe into its fascinating set of problems. When I was a doctoral student I had the privilege of attending the FRNM's (now Rhine Research Center) Summer Institute, mostly designed for serious students, which exposed me to some of the best work and workers in the field, and which is partly responsible for my being the editor of this Journal. Those Summer Institutes are long gone, but I urge organizations and universities to develop professional-level intensive workshops or institutes, so that some of the incoming geneticists, neuroscientists, physicists, psychologists, and other scientists, will also get bitten by the psi bug early in their careers. These organizations could also help publicize and organize research internships in psi research labs. Bright graduate students in different fields energize the field and help keep it updated of the ongoing transformations in science (e.g., see the excellent meta-analytic chapter by two students out of three authors, Baptista, Derakhshani, & Tressoldi, 2015, in a book also co-edited by a then graduate student). Otherwise, parapsychologists may end up as the salmons that while self-congratulating themselves for their previous jumps fail to see and prevent the jaws of the expecting bear in the next one.

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