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Neurophysiological Investigation of the Channeling Phenomenon

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Abstract

Background. Channeling is an altered state of consciousness in which individuals subjectively experience information as originating from a source beyond their ordinary sense of self. Although this phenomenon has been described in spiritual, transpersonal, and psychological contexts for decades, its neurophysiological mechanisms remain poorly understood. To date, objective electrophysiological investigations of channeling are extremely limited, and the functional organization of the brain during this state has not been systematically characterized. **Objective.** To investigate the neurophysiological characteristics of the brain during a subjectively identified channeling state using quantitative electroencephalography (QEEG), spectral analysis, and functional connectivity analysis.

Methods. A repeated-measures case study was conducted in which QEEG recordings were obtained during two conditions: a baseline resting state with eyes closed and a state subjectively identified by the participant as channeling. Spectral power was analyzed across the principal EEG frequency bands (delta, theta, alpha1, alpha2, beta1–3, and gamma). Independent component analysis (ICA) was performed to identify the principal sources of cortical activity, while functional connectivity analysis was used to evaluate changes in large-scale interregional communication between cortical areas.

Results. Transition into the channeling state was accompanied by a marked reorganization of functional brain activity. Spectral analysis demonstrated preserved dominant alpha activity together with increased theta oscillations, while functional connectivity analysis revealed widespread reconfiguration of large-scale cortical networks across multiple frequency bands. The most pronounced changes occurred within the alpha and beta ranges, characterized by enhanced long-range interactions between frontal, parietal, temporal, and occipital cortical regions. ICA analysis indicated the involvement of cortical regions associated with internally directed attention and large-scale integrative brain networks. The observed electrophysiological pattern was consistent with a stable wakeful state accompanied by increased neural integration and internally oriented information processing rather than generalized cortical activation or reduced consciousness.



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Conclusion. The present study demonstrates that the subjectively experienced channeling state is associated with a distinct pattern of functional brain organization characterized by large-scale network reconfiguration and enhanced interregional integration. These findings suggest that channeling represents a measurable altered state of consciousness with identifiable neurophysiological correlates. While the electrophysiological data describe the neural dynamics accompanying the experience, they do not allow conclusions regarding the origin or source of the perceived information.

Keywords: channeling; altered states of consciousness; quantitative electroencephalography (QEEG); functional connectivity; neural networks; alpha oscillations; theta oscillations; neurophysiology; consciousness