

## **Mind control experiences on the internet and the psychiatric diagnosis of delusions.**

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**Objectives:** To examine internet accounts of mind-control experiences with regard to psychiatric understanding of delusions.

**Design:** Web-sites were assessed for the presence of psychotic symptoms, and web-site links were subjected to a 'small world theory' or social network analysis to assess interconnectedness.

**Methods:** Personal reports of mind-control experiences (N=10) were compared with personal reports of cancer sufferers (N=10), depression (N=10) and stalking (N=10) to compare with other experiences of trauma, mental illness and persecution.

**Analysis:** Web-sites were rated using the 21-item Peters et al Delusions Inventory (PDI-21) and were assessed for compliance with DSM-IV diagnostic criteria for schizophrenia. Links between sites were coded and analysed with social network analysis software. Reports of mind-control experiences had significantly higher mean PDI-21 scores and nine fulfilled the diagnostic criteria for schizophrenia. Seven authors report themselves as having had previous contact with psychiatric services and having experiences lasting a mean of 17 years. They identify themselves with 'anti-mind-control' campaigns and an online community of people with similar experiences. Social network analysis shows this network to be highly interconnected and complex.

**Conclusion:** It is likely that many of the mind-control experiences described stem from psychosis. The interconnectedness of these web-sites suggests an online community based around these experiences. This directly challenges the diagnostic criteria for delusions, which exempts beliefs held by a person's 'culture or subculture'. The presence of social belief formation and the creation of a complex paramedical support network challenges the view of psychosis as globally disabling.