

Table 1

*APP Study #1 Results Summary*

A block of 100 reports posted to one popular paranormal outlet between 11/29/20 and 12/02/20, was surveyed by the Aster-P Project in February 2021, and yielded the following results:

<b>Study Stats</b>		<b>Location of Event</b>		<b>Fear or Upset</b>	
Total Posts	106	Indoor	79	Fear	13 60
Deleted by OP (DQ)	2	Outdoor	9	Upset	47
Not Reports (N/A)	4	Both	5	Curious	27
Round one reports	100	Vehicle	5	Glad	4
Time to fill (hrs)	73.5	Did not specify	2	Unfazed	9
People Affected	172		100		60
<b>Measurable Reports</b>		<b>Purpose of Report</b>		<b>Interacted or Observed</b>	
Repeatable	40	Help	8 57	Interactive	40
Observable	54	Advice	24	Observation	34
Measurable Reports	26	What is this?	25	Not sure	26
<b>Remarkable Reports</b>		Tell their story	43		100
Measurable	26		100		
Remarkable	25	<b>Frequency of Events</b>		<b>Debunking Efforts</b>	
Both	11	1x	41	Cursory effort	18
Remarkable Reports	25	2x +	59	Thoughtful effort	6
<b>Top Descriptors</b>			100	Successful	1
Audio	38	<b>Past / Recent / On-going</b>		<b>Time of Event</b>	
Visual	33	Ongoing	40	Day	16
Movement	21	Recent	30	Night	42
Body	15	Past	29	Both	13
Dream	15	Did not specify	1	Did not specify	29
Sleep paralysis	12		100		100
Animal, pets	12	<b>All Guesses</b>		<b>Outcome of Event</b>	
Electrical	12	Paranormal	49	Paranormal resolve	4
Shadow	11	Skeptical	47	Skeptical resolve	2
Ghost	10	Agnostic	69	Only happened once	31
Moved object	8	No guess	8	Ongoing – no resolve	40
Dream, AFTL	6	(multiple choices)	173	Moved	5
Follow	6	<b>Outcome of Event</b>		Resolved on its own	2
Doppelganger	5			Did not specify	16
Shadow person	5				100
ESP	5				
Door	5				
(multiple choices)	219				

## SIGNIFICANCE

As of late 2020, it appears likely that tens of thousands of people annually report being affected by *distressing* events labeled “paranormal.” Clearly, from an academic perspective the paranormal does not exist.

This introductory sample of public paranormal reports found remarkable percentages for: distress, ongoing events, mentions of the *word* skepticism, *lack of knowledge* of skeptical methods, and being distressed at *not knowing* what is happening. Therefore these results also served as a catalyst for a draft plan centered around educational outreach and structured skeptical/methodological discussion forums. (Educational self-help, hone this/related research, in-field measurement, *Micro-Environment Testing Apparatus* engineering).

Going forward, chances are minuscule for uncovering any phenomena that is new to science. However the prospect of assuaging thousands of peoples’ distress (yearly) is reason to proceed.

This is an open call for feedback on methodology guidelines, for this series and project-wide.

Keywords: Paranormal, Skeptic, Applied

## ABSTRACT

Our first look at paranormal claims finds distressed people, likely upwards of ten-thousand yearly.

In *People Appear Distressed by “Paranormal” Events*, the first 100 of 1,003 paranormal reports were analyzed for 30 data points across 11 categories. Sources originated from one popular discussion forum during 34 days in late 2020.

The first 100 reports arrived in 2.94 days. When seasonal factors were considered, an estimate of over 10,000 posts per year could be expected on that *one* forum alone.

Of these reports, 60% indicated distress and 57% requested assistance. For every report, 1.72 people were affected. Primary concerns were unexplained events in peoples’ homes and unsettling sleep disturbances. Reports express skepticism at the same rate (27%) as paranormal belief (28%) but agnostic beliefs took the majority at 40%.

Measurable events were described in 26 of 100 reports: having ongoing and observable traits.

Analysis of the first 100 is released to encourage constructive feedback. Next steps include honing the *Paranormal Distress* research methodology for the remaining queue, and constructing an educational outreach resource to help distressed people find answers for *measurable* issues.

## CONCLUSION

In under 34 days late last year, 1,003 paranormal reports were filed to one outlet. Adjusted, that rate would assume over 10,000 per year, to *just one* internet discussion forum. It is unclear how many of these reports were made in good faith. However this study presumes that science will stipulate to fairly widespread public belief in paranormal topics. We proceeded with that caveat.

In the first 100 reports there were no mentions of UFOs, Bigfoot, or various skeptical prizes for paranormal evidence. Primarily referenced were disturbing unexplained events in peoples' homes.

- Over half (60%) expressed distress.
- Over half (57%) requested assistance with the matter.
- For every report an average of 1.72 people were affected.
- Almost two-thirds (67%) expressed skepticism and agnostic beliefs.
- Closer to half but not quite, 40% described ongoing events.
- Over a quarter (26%) of the reports described measurable (observable/repeatable) events.
- Three-quarters of Americans believe in at least one paranormal topic.

This data being mired in caveats is a primary concern when planning next steps. Ninety-percent of the queue has yet to be analyzed. Some feedback has been generated already. Immediate steps include more feedback, to hone the methodology of this *Recent Paranormal Claims* series.

The plethora of skeptical material on psychological explanations, indeed the skeptical movement itself, speaks to the *scientifically accepted fact* that a large portion of the public truly believes the paranormal stories they swap. From the aggregate of reports studied here, many people appear genuinely distressed by “paranormal” events. Are people not getting the message or is the message ineffective? This will be explored further, in this series and in open discussion.

Air quality is close to the top of skeptical explanations, yet none of the first 100 paranormal reports mentioned this as an explanation. Also, over a quarter of reports offer *measurable* events. Currently, considering claimants' openness to a skeptical approach, a next-stage might look like the draft plan proposed in Appendix 6. An intermediary between these two camps that have become echo chambers, to include educational public outreach and an organized bank of methodology forums, seems a prudent course of action.

Dismissive mockery is not helpful to the likely tens of thousands of people each year who are bothered by things that science says do not exist. At the same time, the onus is on the believers to provide extraordinary evidence for their extraordinary claims.

Next steps include soliciting feedback to hone the methodology of every facet of the draft plan. This includes (the remaining queue of 1,003 reports), the *review-ready* directed survey, and the public-facing website which contains (beginning) debunking tips and organized methodology forums. Further steps include steadily implementing enlightened feedback, for the end goal of lessening the public's paranormal distress via science. Throughout these processes, the endeavor need not condescend.



**The Aster-P Project**

Bringing Science to the Paranormal

## **People Appear Distressed by “Paranormal” Events**

The Aster-P Project

[www.asterpp.org](http://www.asterpp.org)

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The Aster-P Project is an objective, non-partisan, grass roots organization working to apply practical science to real-world paranormal topics. The new collaborative is made up of interested skeptics and paranormal proponents *who yield to science*. APP expects to earn future affiliations through positive community interaction, adherence to the scientific method, and perpetually improving its methodology in both areas. No affiliations present as of this release.

Feedback and collaboration are welcome.

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