



Study Links Infrasound to Reported Hauntings

Description

A recent study, inspired by a conversation between neuroscientist Kale Scatterty and lead researcher Schmaltz, investigated how infrasound—sound below the range of human hearing—affects stress responses in humans. This research follows Scatterty's 2023 paper, which found that zebrafish exhibit anxiety and avoidance behaviours in response to infrasound. The aim was to determine whether humans experience similar physiological stress responses, specifically an increase in cortisol levels, which is a hormone associated with stress.

In a controlled lab experiment, thirty-six participants were isolated in a room and exposed to either calming music, typical of a yoga class, or unsettling ambient sounds. Half of the participants also received exposure to infrasound produced by concealed subwoofers. Expectations suggested that infrasound would amplify feelings of relaxation with calming music and intensify discomfort with unsettling sounds.

Contrary to these predictions, the results indicated that participants universally felt more irritated and unsettled during infrasound exposure, regardless of the type of music. Further, cortisol levels rose significantly among those exposed to infrasound. Notably, participants were unable to reliably detect the presence of infrasound, highlighting a potential unconscious physiological response to this kind of sound.

Though these findings are significant, Schmaltz cautioned against attributing hauntings solely to infrasound. He emphasised that while it may contribute to certain eerie experiences, several other factors exist, including suggestibility, which has been previously explored in the context of ghostly perceptions. As such, infrasound may be one element among many that influence human responses to supposed hauntings.

The research opens avenues for further investigation into how infrasound interacts with human perception and emotion in various contexts.

Vocabulary List:

1. **infrasound** //ˈɪnfrəˌsaʊnd// (noun): sound below the range of human hearing
2. **cortisol** //ˈkɔːtɪsɔːl// (noun): a hormone your body makes when stressed
3. **physiological** //ˌfɪziəˈlɒdʒɪkəl// (adjective): related to the body and how it works
4. **suggestibility** //səˌdʒɛstɪˈbɪlɪti// (noun): how easily people accept ideas from others
5. **intensify** //ɪnˈtɛnsəˌfaɪ// (verb): to make something stronger or more extreme
6. **avoidance** //əˈvɔɪdəns// (noun): trying to stay away from something unpleasant



Comprehension Questions

Multiple Choice

1. What did the recent study aim to investigate?
 - Option: The effects of music on human stress
 - Option: How infrasound affects stress responses in humans
 - Option: The behavior of zebrafish
 - Option: The relationship between cortisol levels and sound
2. Who inspired the recent study on infrasound?
 - Option: Kale Scatterty
 - Option: Schmaltz
 - Option: Thirty-six participants
 - Option: Cortisol levels
3. How many participants were involved in the controlled lab experiment?
 - Option: 24
 - Option: 30
 - Option: 36
 - Option: 40
4. What type of sounds were participants exposed to during the study?
 - Option: Calming music and unsettling ambient sounds
 - Option: Only calming sounds
 - Option: Calming music and deafening noises
 - Option: Unsettling ambient sounds only
5. What was a key finding regarding cortisol levels among participants exposed to infrasound?
 - Option: Cortisol levels decreased
 - Option: Cortisol levels remained the same
 - Option: Cortisol levels rose significantly
 - Option: Cortisol levels were unaffected by sound
6. What potential unconscious response was highlighted in the study?
 - Option: Detecting sound changes



- Option: Emotional instability
- Option: Reliably detecting infrasound
- Option: Amplified relaxation

True-False

- 7. The study found that infrasound exposure reduced irritation among participants.
- 8. Zebrafish were found to exhibit anxiety in response to infrasound in a previous study.
- 9. Participants could reliably detect the presence of infrasound during the experiment.
- 10. Schmaltz believes infrasound can solely account for ghostly experiences.
- 11. The research suggests multiple factors influence human responses to hauntings.
- 12. The primary focus of the study was on the effect of music on stress alone.

Gap-Fill

- 13. The study investigated how infrasound affects stress responses in humans, specifically focusing on an increase in cortisol levels, which is a hormone associated with _____.
- 14. Thirty-six participants were isolated in a room and exposed to calming music or _____ sounds.
- 15. Expectations suggested that infrasound would amplify feelings of relaxation with calming music and _____ discomfort with unsettling sounds.
- 16. Participants universally felt more irritated and unsettled during _____ exposure.
- 17. Schmaltz cautioned against attributing hauntings solely to infrasound, emphasising that several other factors, including _____, may also influence ghostly perceptions.



18. The research opens avenues for further investigation into how infrasound interacts with human _____ and emotion in various contexts.

Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. How infrasound affects stress responses in humans 2. Kale Scatterty 3. 36 4. Calming music and unsettling ambient sounds 5. Cortisol levels rose significantly 6. Reliably detecting infrasound

True-False: 7. False 8. True 9. False 10. False 11. True 12. False

Gap-Fill: 13. stress 14. unsettling 15. intensify 16. infrasound 17. suggestibility 18. perception

CATEGORY

1. Health - LEVEL6

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