

Editor's Foreword

Each of the three entries in this issue of the *Journal* is characterized by both confirmation and revelation. The author(s) in some way confirm something that has already been established through research on near-death experiences (NDEs) and reveal something previously unknown—in some cases unexpected, surprising, even contradictory to what had previously been assumed.

In the first article, Nicole Lindsay, PhD, and Natasha Tassell-Matamua, PhD, both at Massey University in New Zealand, address the quality of sleep among survivors of a close brush with death, both with and without an NDE. They confirm what previous researchers have observed: that sleep quality deteriorates following an NDE. Their data reveal, however, that the previous assumption—that the deterioration was due to the NDE—appears to have been incorrect. Rather, they found that sleep quality deteriorated about equally among survivors both with and without an NDE. Their research tells a cautionary tale about avoiding jumping to conclusions based only on data from NDErs.

In the second article, Ryan Foster, PhD, at Tarleton State University-Fort Worth, and two of his former graduate students at Marymount University, Lauren Maxwell, MS, and William E. Butler, MS, address the topic of the effects of learning about NDEs on people who have not had one. Using two intensive case studies, they confirm previous researchers' findings that non-NDErs can benefit greatly from merely learning about NDEs. Their data reveal that in addition to benefits to populations previously studied in this regard, including undergraduate students and the bereaved, the benefits may extend to people who have been diagnosed with cancer. Their qualitative study opens the door to future quantitative research to confirm or disconfirm their observations with a large sample of cancer patients.

The final entry in this issue is technically a book review but actually is something of a tome in which Gregory Shushan, PhD, of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, carefully analyzes the tome *What Is It Like to Be Dead? Near-Death Experiences, Christianity, and the Occult* by Jens Schlieter. In Shushan's analysis, he confirms the value of historical analysis of NDEs, a process in which Schlieter

joined several researchers before him. Shushan also reveals numerous concerns about Schlieter's perspective and approach. For example, Shushan provides a rationale whereby readers should not take at face value Schlieter's contention that NDEs should not be taken at face value as people's honest relating of their genuine experiences. I would venture to say that anyone intending to read Schlieter's book would do well first to read Shushan's review so they can be prepared to contextualize Schlieter's assertions. Anyone interested in further exploration of this topic can listen to a podcast of Schlieter discussing his book (<https://www.religiousstudiesproject.com/podcast/near-death-experiences/>) and read Shushan's commentary about the podcast (<https://www.religiousstudiesproject.com/2020/06/19/on-the-details-of-the-study-of-ndes/>).

Readers hopefully will find their understanding of NDEs enhanced by the confirmations of previous research and revelations of new data to be found in the contents of this issue.

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