

INVESTIGATING REMOTE ELECTROGASTROGRAM MODULATION VIA EMOTIONAL AND EATING STIMULI: A SHAM-CONTROLLED PILOT STUDY

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Background/rationale: Gut feelings are often described as intuitive insights with visceral origins, closely tied to emotions and, in some accounts, linked to extrasensory perception. Prior research reported changes in gut activity corresponding to a distant partner's exposure to emotional stimuli, suggesting a potential pathway for nonlocal emotional resonance.

Research questions: This study aimed to (1) replicate previous findings of distant gut–emotion correlations, (2) test whether electrogastrogram (EGG) activity in one partner (Receiver) changes during their bonded partner's (Sender's) emotional or food-related experiences, (3) compare EGG activity between real and sham conditions, and (4) explore whether participant characteristics such as interoceptive style, emotional closeness, self-reported psi ability, and gut health are associated with the observed effects.

Methods: Emotionally bonded adult pairs participated in a mixed-methods, double-blind, sham-controlled experiment that incorporated both quantitative physiological measurements and qualitative experiential reporting. Pairs were randomly assigned to either a real or a sham group. In each real session, the Sender viewed a live video feed of their partner (the Receiver) while being exposed to emotional stimuli, food cues, and actual food consumption, and was instructed to transmit these experiences intentionally. During sham sessions, the Sender viewed neutral content and completed unrelated tasks. EGG activity was continuously recorded from Receivers across baseline, stimulus, and post-stimulus periods.

Analysis: The study design was pre-registered with the Koestler Parapsychology Unit (#1095). All analyses are final and are based on $N = 30$ emotionally bonded adult dyads (60 participants) randomized to real or sham conditions as described above.

Results: A linear mixed effects model showed a Condition \times Epoch interaction for EGG frequency ($p = 0.048$), whereas the preregistered amplitude interaction was not supported ($p = 0.630$). Post hoc tests indicated Receiver gastric frequency slowing in the real condition during the upset epoch (FDR $p = 0.040$, $d = -0.965$) and across the full eating epoch (FDR $p = 0.0374$, $d = -1.080$). Amplitude exhibited an Epoch main effect consistent with habituation ($p = 0.0125$). A key limitation is that EGG alone cannot distinguish between sympathetic and parasympathetic mechanisms underlying bradygastria.

Discussion: The findings tentatively support the hypothesis that gut physiology, particularly parasympathetic modulation of the gastric rhythm, may serve as a sensitive marker of distant interpersonal influence in emotionally bonded pairs. While exploratory and limited in scale, the results reinforce the potential role of the enteric nervous system in nonlocal emotional communication and justify further investigation with larger samples and refined controls.

Keywords: Gut-brain axis, Electrogastrography, Parasympathetic activity, Nonlocal communication, Telepathy

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