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**EFFECTS OF 50 HZ INTERMITTENT MAGNETIC FIELD
EXPOSURE ON HUMAN PERFORMANCE AND
CARDIOVASCULAR RESPONSE**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Science in Psychology
at Massey University

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1995

ABSTRACT

One hundred subjects (aged 18-48 years) were exposed and sham exposed to a 100 μ T intermittent magnetic field, modulated sinusoidally at 50 Hz. To examine the effect of field exposure on performance, a two alternative forced-choice duration discrimination task with 3 levels of difficulty was used. Cardiovascular response was also assessed using measures of blood pressure and pulse rate. A number of factors were incorporated into the experiment with the aim of increasing sensitivity above that of past research. In particular, the experiment's statistical power was increased using several techniques (e.g., large sample size and a repeated measures design). Also, intermittent exposure was used instead of continuous, and the conditions of exposure were optimised using field parameters specified by parametric resonance theory. To measure performance during exposure, the subjects' task on each of 150 trials was to decide which of two sequentially presented light flashes had the longer duration. The base duration was 50 ms and the alternative durations were 65, 100, or 125 ms. Both reaction time and percentage of correct responses were recorded for each subject. Total exposure time lasted approximately 9 minutes. Blood pressure and pulse were measured for a minimum of 5 minutes, both before and after exposure and sham exposure. The results showed that compared to sham exposure, real exposure decreased reaction time on the hardest level of the performance task. No reliable field-related effects were observed with percentage of correct decisions or the measures of cardiovascular response. The difficulty of making comparisons with similar studies was discussed along with the need for future magnetic field research to be designed with maximum experimental sensitivity in mind given that small effects are likely.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis supervisor, Dr. John Podd, for never refusing his time, providing a great deal of helpful discussion, and proofreading earlier drafts of this thesis.

I would also like to thank Dr. John Spicer for his help with several statistical issues. Also, thanks to Harvey Jones for his technical assistance relating to the exposure apparatus and computer programming. Thanks go to Bruce Rapley for building the magnetic field coils and for his technical assistance. Similarly, thanks go to Geoff Barnes for his help in specifying the exposure parameters. I also appreciate the efforts of various members of the Psychology Department's Workshop who built part of the exposure apparatus and related equipment.

Special thanks go to Antonia Lyons for not only helping technically with the measurement of BP, but also for voluntarily helping with proofreading and partaking in many helpful discussions. Appreciation also goes to Angelique Praat for proofreading an earlier draft.

This research was carried out with the support of the Massey University Graduate Research Fund (A94/G/36), and the Department of Psychology.

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