

“Ordinary people with extraordinary lives”

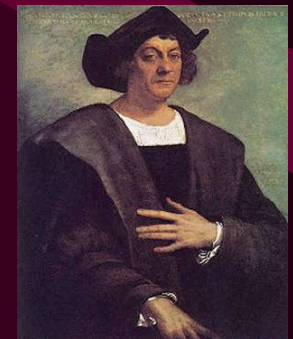
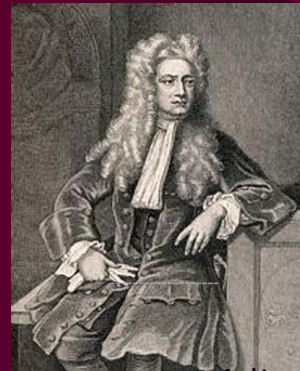
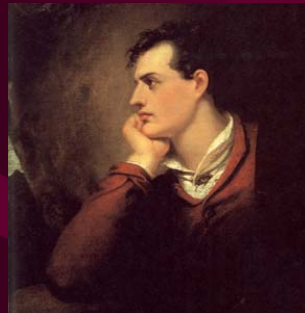
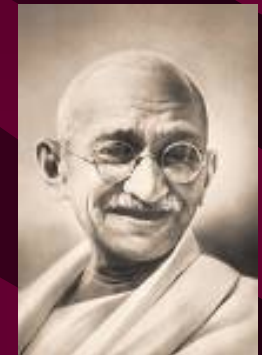
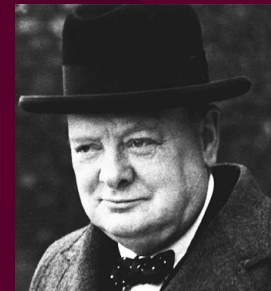
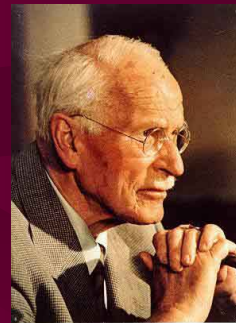
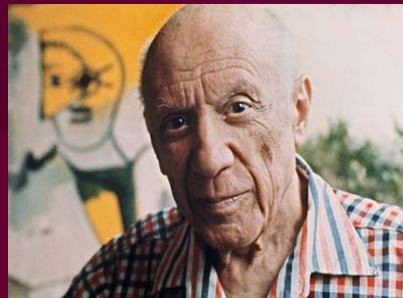
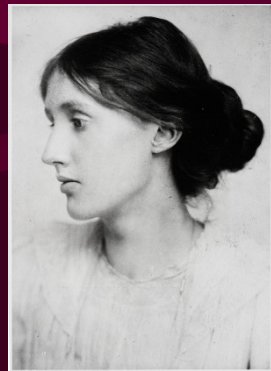
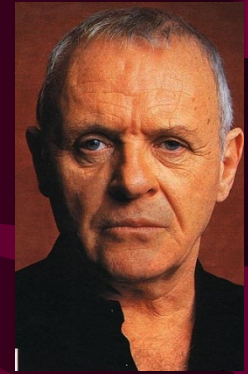
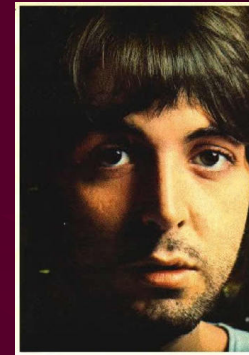
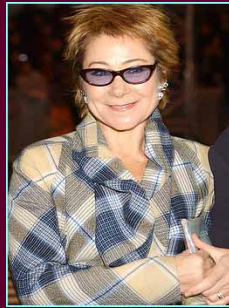
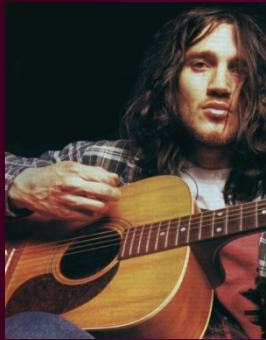
Epidemiological research on voice hearing



Eleanor Longden

World Hearing Voices Congress 2011

What do the following have in common?



One Out Of Four People
In This Country Is
Mentally Unbalanced.



Think Of Your
3 Closest Friends...
If They Seem
Okay, Then
*You're
The
One.*

Eleanor LONGDEN (continued)

4.

and deliberate self-harm.

Mental state examination on admission: Mood – objective, reactive; subjective, “despairing”, “hopeless”, fearful about future and of unspecified threat of harm. Abnormal experiences – reports auditory hallucinations, including Schneiderian-type voices and command hallucinations. Some evidence of delusional ideation regarding the origin of these voices, which she claims are possibly

Schizophrenia (and voice hearing) in DSM-IV

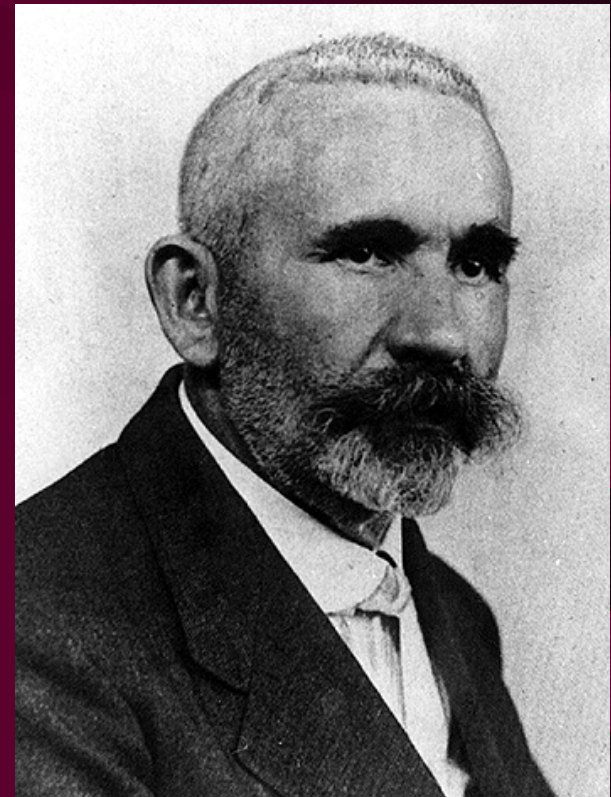
Diagnosis requires two of the following:

1. Hallucinations
2. Delusions
3. Thought Disorder
4. Catatonia
5. Negative Symptoms

*Or just one if voices are commenting and/or
conversing or delusions are 'bizarre'*

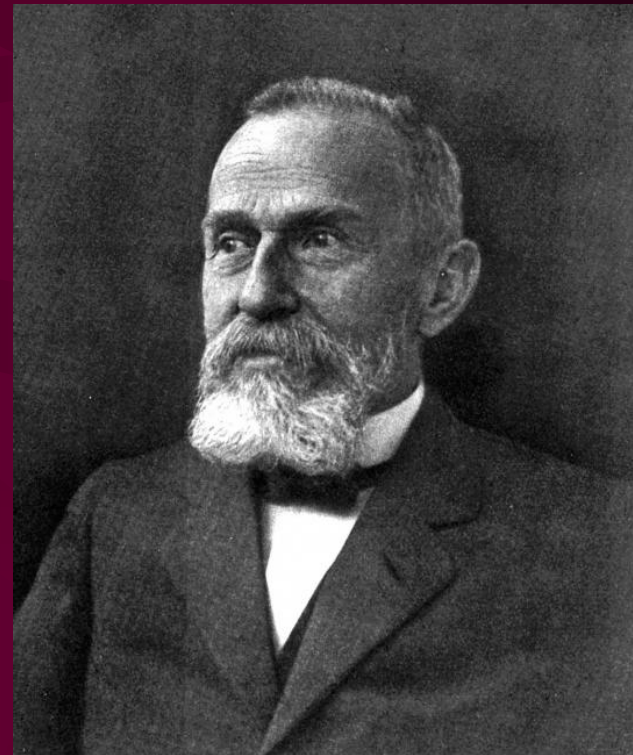
Emil Kraepelin (1856 – 1926)

- His research with *dementia praecox* was the precursor for schizophrenia.
- Voice hearing was not “a principle attribute” of dementia praecox.



Eugen Bleuler (1857 – 1939)

- Bleuler coined the term ‘schizophrenia’ in 1911.
- He minimised voice hearing even more than Kraepelin.
- Voice hearing was a by-product of “loosened associations,” not a major psychotic symptom.

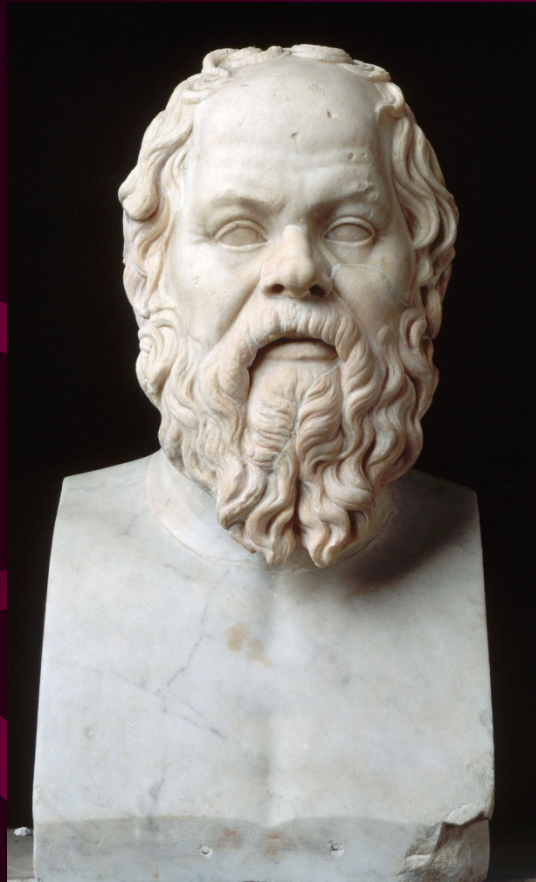


Kurt Schneider (1887 – 1967)

- His “first-rank symptoms” are still used for diagnosing schizophrenia (e.g., “Schneiderian-type” voices.)
- However, agreed with Kraepelin and Bleuler that voices were not “crucially important features” of schizophrenia.



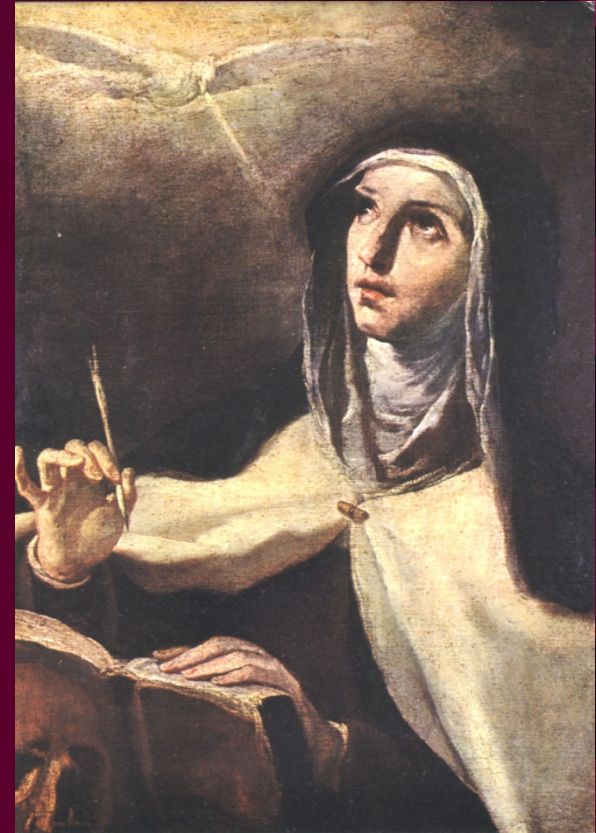
Voice Hearing in Human History



Socrates
(469BC – 399BC)



Joan of Arc
(1412 – 1431)



Teresa of Ávila
(1515 – 1582)

Julian Jaynes

“The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind”

- Voice hearing and the evolution of human consciousness?
- Self-awareness and introspection.



Voice Hearing and Spirituality

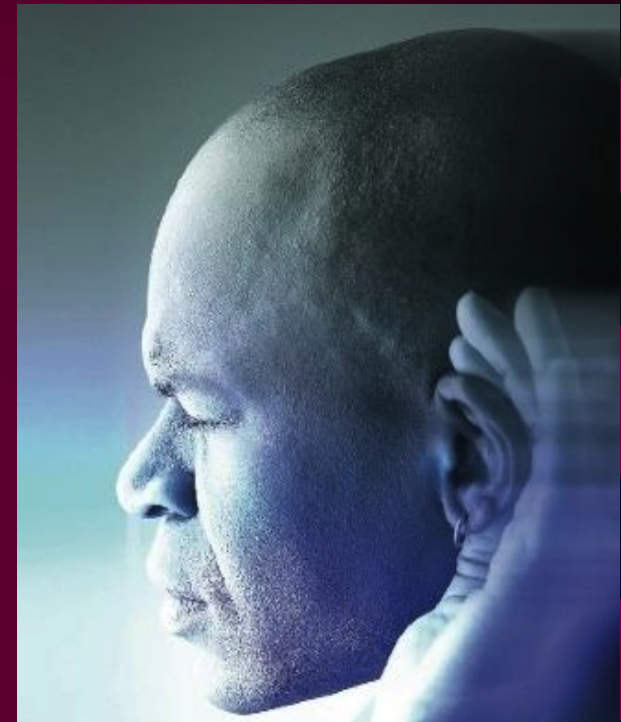
- Ancient civilisations
- Islam
- The Judaeo-Christian tradition
- Spiritualism
- Shamanism



See Watkins, J. (2008). *Hearing voices: A common human experience*. South Yarra, AUS: Michelle Anderson Publishing

Scenarios Where Voices Might be Heard

- Before falling asleep or waking up
- Bereavement
- Hypnosis
- Meditation
- Imaginary childhood companions
- Solitary confinement
- Using certain drugs (e.g., cocaine, amphetamines)
- Sleep deprivation
- After general anaesthetic
- Having a fever or high temperature
- Spiritual experience



Samples From the General Population

| Investigators | Sample & Location | Psychosis Screening | Dimensions of Voice Hearing | Prevalence |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|---|-----------------|
| Sidgewick et al. (1894) | 17,000 (UK, Russia, Brazil) | Yes | "Hearing a voice which is not due to any external physical cause" | 3% |
| Eaton et al. (1991) | 810 (USA) | Yes | "True" psychiatrist-rated hallucinations | 5% |
| Verdoux et al. (1998) | 462 (France) | Yes | Audible human speech from a single voice; one or more voices conversing; voices commanding | 5 – 16% |
| Tien (1991) | 18,000 (USA) | Yes | "A vivid impression of hearing a voice which is not due to any external physical cause" | 2 – 3% |
| van Os et al. (2000) | 7,076 (Netherlands) | Yes | "True" psychiatrist-rated hallucinations | 8% |
| Johns et al. (2002) | 8,000 (UK) | Yes | "Voices saying quite a few words or sentences when there was no one around that might account for it" | 0.6 – 3% |
| Preti et al. (2007) | 250 (Italy) | Yes | "I have been troubled by hearing voices in my head" | 3 – 6% |

Student and/or Adolescent Samples

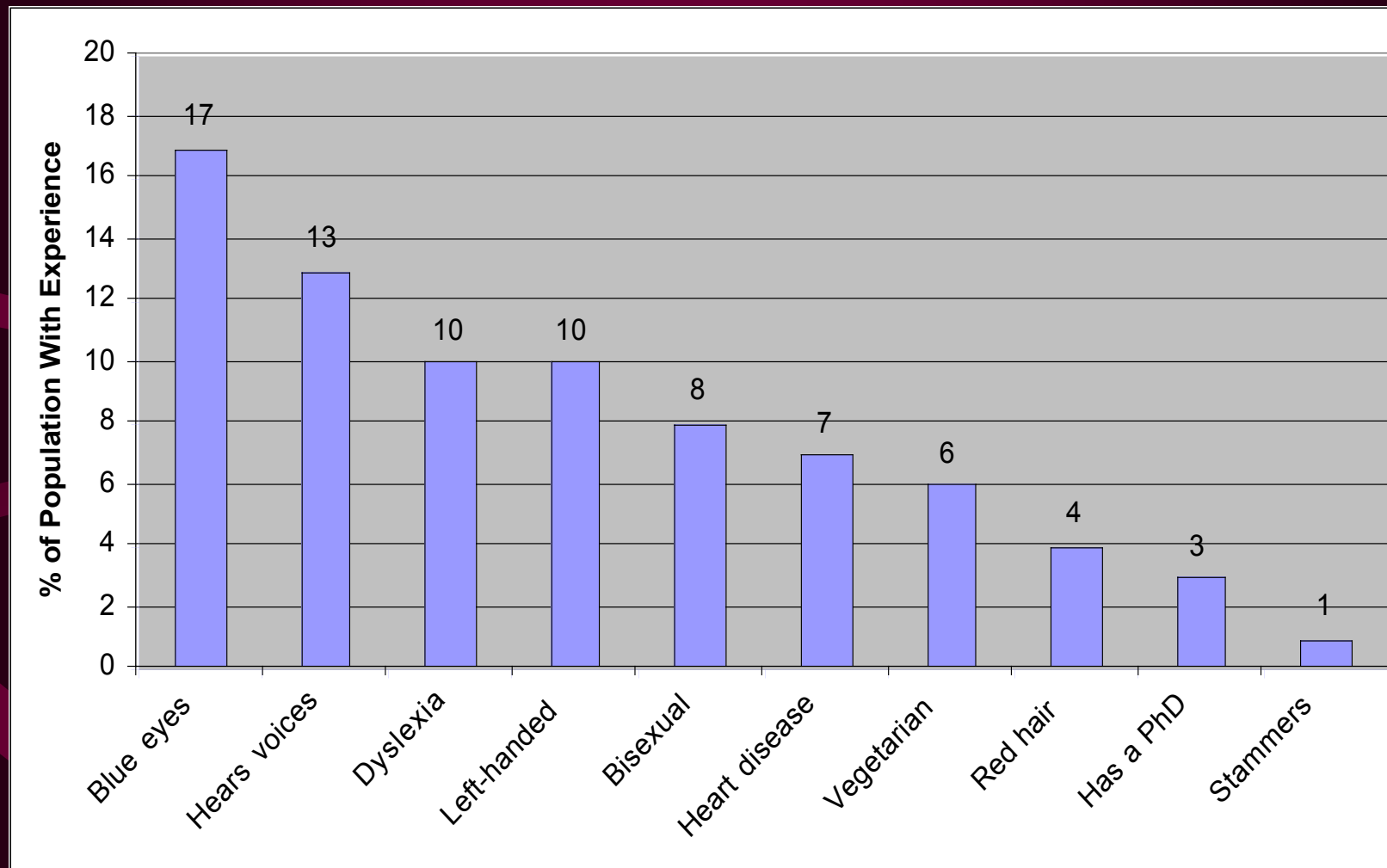
| Investigators | Sample & Location | Psychosis Screening | Dimensions of Voice Hearing | Prevalence |
|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---|--------------------|
| Posey & Losch (1984) | 375 (USA) | Yes | Hearing: whole phrases; voices speaking one's thoughts aloud; an absent friend or the voice of a dead relative; God's voice; a comforting or advising voice; conducting conversations with voices | 5 – 39% |
| Barrett & Etheridge (1992) | 586 (USA) | Yes | Hearing the following: whole phrases; voices speaking one's thoughts aloud; an absent friend or the voice of a dead relative; a conversation whilst driving | 6 – 37% |
| Dhossche et al. (2002) | 914 (Holland) | Yes | "I hear sounds or voices that other people think aren't there" | 5% |
| Glicksohn & Barrett (2003) | 656 (Israel) | No | Hearing the following: whole phrases; voices speaking one's thoughts aloud; an absent friend or the voice of a dead relative; the voice of God; a conversation whilst driving | 9 – 28% |
| Pearson et al. (2008) | 500 (UK) | No | Hearing the following: whole phrases; voices speaking one's thoughts aloud; an absent friend or the voice of a dead relative; the voice of God; a conversation whilst driving | 2 – 41% |
| Horwood et al. (2008) | 6356 (UK) | No | Auditory hallucinations in a conscious state, including Schniederian-type hallucinations | 3.6 – 11.6% |

“The prevalence of voice-hearers in the general population: A literature review”

Beavan et al. (2011)

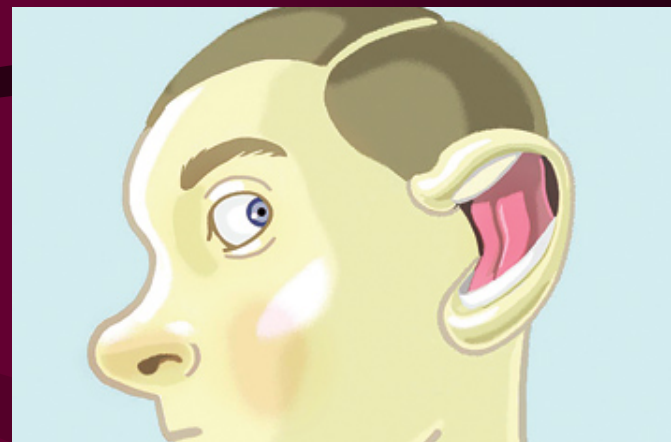
“These findings support the current movement away from pathological models of unusual experiences and towards understanding voice hearing as occurring on a continuum in the general population, and having meaning in relation to the voice-hearer’s life experiences.” (p.281)

Hearing Voices and Human Variation



** Data limited to Western, industrialised nations*

So...do Different “Types” of Voice Hearing Exist?



- No! There are no valid associations between voice characteristics and diagnostic categories.
- For example, see: Adams & Sanders, 2011; Barrett & Caylor, 1998; Honig et al., 1998; Jessop et al., 2008; Kingdon et al., 2010; Longden et al., in press; Moskowitz & Corstens, 2007; Scott et al., 2007.

Distressed and Non-Distressed Voice Hearers

Traumatic life events are a common feature for both patient and non-patient voice hearers.

- However, non-patient voice hearers:
 - Are more likely to engage with their voices (even if the content is negative).
 - More likely to accept voice presence.
 - More likely to have developed coherent, meaningful explanations for their voices.
 - More likely to have resolved and worked through the reasons for voice presence (e.g., childhood abuse).
 - e.g., Andrew et al., 2008; Honig et al., 1998; Longden et al., in press; Romme & Escher, 1993, 2000, 2010; Romme et al., 2009.



The Problem is the Solution...



Voices symbolize both the crisis - and efforts to overcome it.

- Deconstructing “symptoms” into real experiences and conflicts.
- Relating voices to individual solvable problems.

“[Hearing voices is] an experience that, when considered in good faith, is as profound and complex as human consciousness itself.”

Smith (2007)





"ACTUALLY, I BECAME A PSYCHIATRIST BECAUSE
THE VOICES TOLD ME TO."

Further Reading

- Adams, B., & Sanders, T. (2011). Experiences of psychosis in borderline personality disorder: A qualitative analysis. *Journal of Mental Health*, 20(4), 381-391.
- Andrew, E. et al. (2008). The relationship between trauma and beliefs about hearing voices: A study of psychiatric and non-psychiatric voice hearers. *Psychological Medicine*, 38(10), 1409-1417.
- Barrett, T. R., & Caylor, M. R. (1998). Verbal hallucinations in normals, V: Perceived reality characteristics. *Personality and Individual Differences* 25(2), 209-221.
- Beavan, V. et al. (2011). The prevalence of voice-hearers in the general population: A literature review. *Journal of Mental Health*, 20(3), 281-292.
- Honig, A. et al. (1998). Auditory hallucinations: A comparison between patients and nonpatients. *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 186(10), 646-651.
- Jessop, M. et al. (2008). Hallucinations in adolescent inpatients with post-traumatic stress disorder and schizophrenia: Similarities and differences. *Australasian Psychiatry*, 16(4), 268-272.
- Kingdon, D. et al. (2010). Schizophrenia and borderline personality disorder: Similarities and differences in the experience of auditory hallucinations, paranoia, and childhood trauma. *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 198(6), 399-403.
- Longden, E. et al. (in press). Dissociation, trauma, and the role of lived experience: Towards a new conceptualization of voice hearing. *Psychological Bulletin*.
- Moskowitz, A., & Corstens, D. (2007). Auditory hallucinations: Psychotic symptom or dissociative experience? *The Journal of Psychological Trauma*, 6(2/3), 35-63.
- Romme, M. et al. (Eds.), (2009). *Living with voices: Fifty stories of recovery*. Ross-on-Wye, UK: PCCS Books.
- Romme, M., & Escher, S. (1993). *Accepting voices*. London: Mind Publications.
- Romme, M., & Escher, S. (2000). *Making sense of voices*. London: Mind Publications.
- Romme, M., & Escher, S. (2010). Personal history and hearing voices. In F. Larøi & A. Aleman (Eds.), *Hallucinations: A guide to treatment and management* (pp. 233-257). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Scott, J. et al. (2007). Hallucinations in adolescents with post-traumatic stress disorder and psychotic disorder. *Australasian Psychiatry*, 15(1), 44-48.
- Smith, D. (2007). *Muses, madmen and prophets: Rethinking the history, science and meaning of auditory hallucination*. New York: The Penguin Press.