

## How We Understand Hallucinations (HUSH)

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### Introduction

Evidence suggests that the subjective experience of AVHs cannot be explained by any of the existing cognitive models,[1] highlighting the obvious need to properly investigate the actual, lived experience of AVHs, and derive models/theories that fit the complexity of this.

### Objectives

Via phenomenological interviews and ethnographic diary methods, we aim to gain a deeper insight into the experience of AVHs.

### Aims

To explore the phenomenological quality of AVHs, *as they happen*/reveal themselves to consciousness,[2] [3] without relying on existing suppositions.

### Methods

Participants with First Episode Psychosis were recruited from the Birmingham Early Intervention Service (EIS), BSMHFT. In-depth 'walking interviews' were carried out with each participant, together with standardised assessment measures of voices. Prior to interviews, participants were asked to complete a diary and take photographs, further capturing aspects of their AVH experiences.

### Results

20 participants have completed interviews to date. Emerging themes cover the *form* and *quality* of voices (i.e. as being separate to self, imposing, compelling etc.), and participants' *understanding* and *management* of these experiences.

### Conclusions

Authentic descriptions gleaned from participants have the potential to increase our understanding of the relationship between the phenomenology and neurobiology of AVHs and, in turn, the experience as a whole.

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[1] Jones SR. Do we need multiple models of auditory verbal hallucinations? Examining the phenomenological fit of cognitive and neurological models. *Schizophrenia Bulletin*. 2010; 36(3):566-575.

[2] Gallagher S. *Phenomenology*: Palgrave Macmillan; 2012.

[3] Gallagher S. Phenomenology and experimental design toward a phenomenologically enlightened experimental science. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*. 2003; 10:85-99.