



CALIFORNIA STATE SCIENCE FAIR 2011 PROJECT SUMMARY

Name(s) Joanna L. Tabacek	Project Number 31355
Project Title Does the Nose Know?	
Abstract Objectives/Goals The objective was to test if the power of suggestion can influence a person's perception of reality. The goal was to see if people's perception of what they smelled could be influenced because it was suggested to them that it was a different spice than it really was. Methods/Materials There were three stages to the experiment; the first was just having each participant smell each scent so they were able to recognize the scent. This was used this as a baseline. Second, the blindfolded participants smelled each scent as it was correctly identified and they were asked if they agreed or disagreed. This was to test if they really were able to recognize the scent. This was used as a control stage in the experiment. Third was the real evaluation. Each participant smelled a scent, it would be incorrectly identified, and the participants were asked if they agreed or not with what the scents were identified as. This was to test if they could be influenced to think they smelled a certain scent because it was suggested to them. The materials used in the experiment were 4 jars to contain the spices; and a teaspoon each of Cinnamon, Cumin, Mace, Ginger, a notebook to record data, a pencil, a flat surface, a blindfold and participants. Results It was found that in this test most people were not influenced by the suggestion and could correctly identify almost every scent. More people correctly identified the scents during the evaluation stage than during the control stage. Conclusions/Discussion The results showed that people trust their noses more than they trust what they are being told by other people. This means that even though the placebo effect that doctors use with their patients works, it doesn't mean that the power of suggestion can influence peoples' perception of reality in every test. In the end, the hypothesis was proved wrong.	
Summary Statement Testing to see if participant's perception of smell can be influenced by suggestion.	
Help Received Mother and father helped with experimental design, buying materials, and editing project display. School district mentoring program providing general guidance for project.	