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In a series of books Roger Penrose, a professor of physics at Oxford, has floated the idea that consciousness is a quantum phenomenon. Observations of quantum phenomena collapse wave-packets and thereby perturb the phenomena being observed. Accordingly if consciousness really is a macroscopic quantum phenomenon it should be possible to demonstrate degradation of tasks requiring conscious attention by observation. This idea was taken up in an article in *J. Consc. Studies* **1** (1994) pp 127-139 by Nunn, Clarke and Blott, entitled *Collapse of a quantum field may affect brain function*. The measurement performed in this case was the recording of a scalp EEG. Their results appear to confirm Penrose's hunch, tho'—as the authors themselves say—other explanations are possible. There have been muttering about their controls too.

Their study obviously cries out for replication. All that would be needed for that is a standard EEG machine of the kind used for routine clinical recordings—and the services of an EEG technician. The head of department of Clinical Neurophysiology at Addenbrooke's has confirmed that the department is willing to provide the machine, and probably the technician too. (Although the question of technical support hasn't been explored yet, it won't be a problem).

The machine used by Nunn *et al.* was an analogue machine, and analogue machines are no longer in use at Addenbrooke's. Nowadays we use digital machines, which record their data to disk, rather than writing them out on paper. I don't know if this is expected to make a difference, or even if this question has ever been considered. It shouldn't be difficult to obtain an analogue machine should the student doing the project wish to rerun the study with both sorts of machine.

In general my impression is that this is a project where the work is required at the experimental design stage rather than at the execution which—it seems to me—should not be technically very demanding.

Students thinking of doing this project should consult me at one of the above addresses. They can be assured of my enthusiastic technical support in any way that is acceptable to the department. It may be that a literature search would help. Clarke has a web page at `http://www.scispirit.com` which may be worth perusing.