

MUSICALLY INDUCED ASMR: An Amalgamated Experience

Juri Kobayashi

Master's Thesis

Department of Music

21 October 2015

University of Jyväskylä

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

Tiedekunta – Faculty Humanities	Laitos – Department Music Department
Tekijä – Author Juri Kobayashi	
Työn nimi – Title MUSICALLY INDUCED ASMR: an amalgamated experience	
Oppiaine – Subject Music, Mind & Technology	Työn laji – Level Master’s Thesis
Aika – Month and year October 2015	Sivumäärä – Number of pages Pages 80
Tiivistelmä – Abstract Musically induced ASMR is an Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response triggered by music. The term ASMR is best known on the internet by communities who report experiencing this phenomenon. It is most simply understood as an experience like musical chills, however can be triggered by nearly any form of stimuli. The current study employed grounded theory, a meticulous and established qualitative research method for developing theory that serves to explain salient characteristics of a particular phenomenon; to theorize the nature and significance of musically induced ASMR and ASMR in general. Based on the data collected, the study confirmed the existence of musically induced ASMR and demonstrates this concept’s analogous psychological, physiological, and emotional characteristics with musical chills through comparison with prior research. The study established the term musically induced ASMR to describe a phenomenon, for which previous studies have struggled to assign competent descriptive terminology such as, chills, thrills or frisson. As a core characteristic of the phenomenon, it was found that ASMR stimulates a sense of self-awareness, which initiates other psychological, physical and emotional responses.	
Asiasanat – Keywords ASMR, Music, Emotion, Chills, Tingles, Grounded Theory	
Säilytyspaikka – Depository	
Muita tietoja – Additional information	

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the faculty in the music psychology program for giving me the opportunity to participate in the international master's degree program of Music, Mind and Technology. The MMT class of 2012–14 was an especially fantastic group of students to get to know and to work with. The assistance and encouragement of my supervisor Suvi Saarikallio, to pursue this research, motivated the progress and completion of the study. Her guidance and direction was valuable in making sense of my attempt at analyzing and documenting the theory derived from the data. I would not have been able to attempt and complete this study without the consistent support of Jenni in my times of uncertainty and doubt, especially in our turn into parenthood. I thank my parents and family for your love and words of encouragement in all my fumbblings throughout life.

CONTENTS

- 1 Introduction 1**
- 1.1 Research Questions..... 3
- 2 Background 4**
- 2.1 Chills, Frisson and Piloerection..... 5
- 2.2 What is ASMR..... 6
- 2.3 ASMR Types 8
- 2.4 Musical Chills and ASMR..... 8
- 2.5 ASMR and Sex 9
- 2.6 Triggers..... 9
- 3 Method..... 11**
- 3.1 Grounded Theory..... 11
- 3.2 The Internet as Data Source..... 12
- 3.3 Sample Group 13
- 3.4 Thin Slicing 14
- 3.5 Creating The Initial Central Organizing Concepts 15
- 3.6 Coding 16
- 3.7 Axial Coding: Redefining the Codes 19
- 3.8 Redefining The Concepts 20
- 4 Results..... 24**
- 4.1 Lifetime Experience 24
- 4.1.1 Lifetime Experience 24
- 4.1.2 Focus..... 25
- 4.1.3 Self-discovery 25
- 4.2 Description..... 26
- 4.2.1 Intensity 26
- 4.2.2 State of Being 27
- 4.2.3 Intimacy 27
- 4.2.4 Pleasurable..... 28
- 4.3 Environmental Awareness..... 28
- 4.3.1 Observing..... 28
- 4.3.2 Open..... 29
- 4.3.3 Community 29
- 4.4 Self-Awareness..... 30
- 4.4.1 Assimilation..... 30
- 4.4.2 Heightened Awareness 30
- 4.4.3 Empathy 31
- 4.4.4 Engaged 31
- 4.5 Triggers..... 31
- 4.5.1 Attention 32
- 4.5.2 Affection..... 32
- 4.5.3 State of Mind 33
- 4.6 Discussion of Results..... 33
- 5 Conclusions 39**
- 6 References 45**
- 7 Appendixes 53**
- 7.1 Appendix 1: Open Codes..... 53
- 7.2 Appendix 2: Coding Extract 64

1 INTRODUCTION

In my first music psychology lecture individual musical experiences were being discussed. During the course of the lecture one brave fellow spoke out with his hand up and asked anyone else to do the same if they have experienced chills when listening to music. A couple more followed by a tentative few then gradually the room flooded with hands. The original point the fellow had made was not relevant to me at that time. What was most interesting to me was the reluctance people had to raise their hands and then the overwhelming majority of the people in that group who had eventually raised their hands.

It was a special situation and not representative of the general population as the majority of the students were music students. This however does not mean that musicians are any more informed about the experience than non-musicians (Saarikallio, Nieminen & Brattico, 2012). This became evident whenever I spoke to anyone about my thesis topic; People were interested in the topic because it compelled them to consider their own experiences and realise their lack of understanding of what it is they had experienced. It was also interesting that people were generally reluctant to admit they have this experience. As the research progressed and my understanding of the phenomenon grew, it still surprised me to notice in casual conversation the prevalence of this experience and a general lack of awareness of it. In bringing attention to the experience through conversation people realized that there was more to their experiences than what they were previously aware of. In general people often concluded that it is some kind of emotion without being able to be more specific. Although emotions can be a big part of the experience it is often not the case.

Emotions and their messages are something we are familiar with. The basic emotions of happiness, surprise, fear, sadness, anger, disgust and contempt (Ekman, 1992), are readily understood by the majority of the population. These concepts of emotion are taught to us by our elders and through social interactions as we grow and mature into adults. Emotionally healthy people are able to recognize their emotions and feelings and act accordingly (e.g. Mayer & Salovey, 1997). People often seek emotions and feelings that are pleasurable and avoid situations that are unpleasant (Larsen, 2000). Musical chills are predominantly

pleasurable (Goldstein, 1980; Panksepp, 1995; Blood & Zatorre, 2001), however are relatively poorly understood. A better awareness and understanding of musical chills can bring insight into how people react to the experience and emotion. A better understanding of this phenomenon, which can be disseminated to create a tangible awareness of this relatively elusive and misunderstood experience for an overwhelming oblivious majority of the population who experience chills while engaging in music or other activities.

A large portion of research on peak musical experiences is focused on emotion and peak experiences. Strong emotional experiences (SEM) in music or peak musical experiences are recognized as significant psychological and physiological responses to the experience of music engagement (Gabrielsson, 2001). Peak experiences, which may or may not elicit chills, are significant to the researcher because they can be used as a tool to gauge the effects music has on the experiencer. Peaks are often intense, pleasurable experiences that leave a lasting impression on the person. For this reason the interest and need to research musical chills to provide an understanding on how music can have such a potent effect on creating a relationship with one's environment is a valuable avenue to pursue. Music is prevalent in human existence, it fills our time and space with meaning and enjoyment and even though aeons of time have been spent on trying to understand every niche of influence it has on life the ulterior motive behind its existence still eludes our understanding. Our understanding of music can be enlightened by bringing the strong experiences induced by music such as musical chills to the foreground and into the light.

The thesis developed from a curiosity and an inadequate understanding of musical chills. The initial research question, "What are musical chills?" is a very broad question and created a ground from which the research emerged. At this time the methodology had not yet been defined. A literature review was undertaken to prepare a research proposal and to ensure that the research would contribute new information (Payne, 2007). The literature review illuminated the previous and current theories surrounding this topic.

This study will present a new perspective into research on musical chills with the emergence of a relatively new concept called ASMR. The first task of this research is to illuminate the phenomenon of ASMR and compare it with musical chills. Data collected on ASMR will be analysed and comparisons will be made with current knowledge of musical chills. This will

be done by analysing ASMR data collected from the internet with a grounded theory approach. During the course of the thesis issues surrounding ASMR and musical chills will be explained and clarified. Once the grounded theory has emerged from the data it will be linked to previous research in the findings section.

1.1 Research Questions

The purpose of the study is to present a comprehensive description of musically induced ASMR. The three research questions of the study are:

Are musical chills ASMR?

How and why do people experience musically induced ASMR?

What is the purpose of musically induced ASMR?

2 BACKGROUND

Music has been a point of interest for researchers for many years. It is well known that music can have a strong effect on emotion, which makes it such an interesting topic. Anyone who has experienced music has a direct relation to its effects, and its universal prevalence throughout the world assures its influence on human culture. A salient characteristic of particular interest is the peak experience, which is often connected to emotion. Maslow (1964) states the importance of peak experiences with life motivation towards self-actualization; He further describes the importance of art, music, dancing and rhythm education with regard to peak experiences (1971). Peak experiences such as musical chills are strong motivators due to their capacity to induce pleasure. The influence of peaks on pleasure can be observed by diminished peak activity with the administration of the opiate inhibitor naloxone (Goldstein, 1980). Correlations with music, peak experiences, pleasure and emotion are supported by research on sympathetic nervous system activity (Salimpoor, Benovoy, Longo, Cooperstock & Zatorre, 2009; Benedek & Kaernbach, 2011), brain activity, (Blood & Zatorre, 2001; Menon & Levitin, 2005; Salimpoor, et al., 2011), subjective experience (Panksepp, 2005), (Sloboda, 1991; Panzarella, 1980; Gabrielsson & Lindström Wik, 2003) and piloerection and chills (Craig, 2005).

A large portion of the research surrounding musical chills is interconnected to music and emotion in which musically induced emotional peaks influence the occurrence of musical chills (Sloboda, 1991; Panksepp, 1995; Grew et al., 2009; Blood & Zatorre, 2001; Craig, 2005; Benedek & Kaernbach, 2011). It is difficult to define clear relationships between emotional states and physiological responses due to the absence of emotion during physiological responses (Sloboda & Juslin, 2001). Although emotion plays a large part in the experience of musical chills the focus of this thesis will be placed on musical chills and not emotions, with the aim of expanding the understanding of the phenomenon of musical chills to include any accompanying factors, including, but not particularly focusing on, emotions.

2.1 Chills, Frisson and Piloerection

Piloerection is when the hairs on the skin stand up. This is a physical reaction, which is external, and observable (Hodges, 2009), and is most commonly known to happen in times of cold and fear. It is also associated with other emotions and situations such as surprise and emotional peaks. It has many names but the most scientific term for this phenomenon other than piloerection is frisson. Frisson however has a psychophysiological aspect due to its connection with musical and emotional peaks; it would require a monitoring system to observe the internal body processes (Hodges, 2009). Piloerection could also be seen as a physiological reaction due to its miniscule physical response, which is almost microscopic. It is due to the multifaceted phenomenon of chills that leads to confusion when trying to explain the experience where piloerection is present. It is possible that the sensation of piloerection is present without piloerection being activated (Craig, 2005). Piloerection can distract from the underlying experience and be misunderstood for cold, fear, surprise or when it happens during an unusual experience such as ASMR. The most extravagant experience commonly associated with piloerection has many names but is often referred to as “chills” when induced by music also known as frisson.

One of the difficulties of this research is to find a suitable definition that would adequately describe the phenomena of shivers or chills experienced while listening to music. The terminology typically used is non-specific and lends itself to a wide variety of interpretation as with the case of frisson: “a brief moment of emotional excitement” (Merriam-Webster, 2014); “a shudder or shiver; thrill” (The Free Dictionary.com 2014). Frisson is described by Huron (2006, p. 414) as: “The sensation of chills, thrills, or shivers running up and down one’s spine. Also associated with goose flesh and piloerection (one’s hair standing on end). Commonly evoked by cold temperatures and acute fear”.

Piloerection has been observed to be present during musical or emotional peaks but it has also been observed that it has been absent during these peaks. It is therefore a reliable indicator to signify these peaks when present but does not signify an absence of a peak in its absence. It is uncertain if tingles, goosebumps, chills and frisson, all refer to an individual phenomenon or if these terms describe different phenomena. This can be seen here, “this tingling in my scalp, the goosebumps and then chills going down my spine,” described by one data contributor.

Everything that is described in this excerpt is a part of ASMR. Piloerection is just the visible physical reaction, there is much more happening underneath the skin that is not readily observable or understood. Piloerection indicates the erection of body hair, where as, chills or thrills most often refers to a subjective experience (Benedek & Kaernbach, 2011).

It is necessary to define how these terms will be used in this thesis to avoid confusion. Without a thorough scientific analysis of how these terms have been used interchangeably the reasoning for the assignment of these terms will be drawn from an intrinsic observation from the data. Piloerection and frisson is not used in the data so these terms will be used to bridge the gap between scientific terminology and common terminology.

In this study ‘musical chills’ will be used to refer to frisson because ‘chills’ represent the language used in the data and should not be confused with chills induced by cold and fear. The following associations are listed as such: goosebumps is piloerection; chills and tingles are the sensations of travelling piloerection, which is essentially frisson. Each of these terms can describe a part of ASMR but does not mean that it is ASMR.

2.2 What is ASMR

ASMR, otherwise known as: Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response, is a term coined by Jenn Allen, the founder of the website <http://www.asmr-research.org>. It refers to the often-intense sensation of tingles, which can be triggered by various stimuli. She describes the reasoning behind ASMR in an interview posted in the *Vise*, “*Autonomous* refers to the individualistic nature of the triggers, and the capacity in many to facilitate or completely create the sensation at will, *Sensory* and *Response* are fairly obvious, and *Meridian*, is a more polite term for orgasm.” (Cheadle 2012, para.13) Although ASMR has not yet been scientifically proven, it is now widely accepted and used to refer to the experience. ASMR is typically described as a tingling sensation that originates from the back of the scalp which often radiates down the back, shoulders and spine, and in some cases continues to the arms and legs (Bratt & Davis, 2014), unlike that of chills which more frequently start at the extremities (Craig, 2005).

It has been observed from internet sources that triggers can be nearly anything audio, visual or tactile; it is rare that triggers are associated with taste or smell. The most popular kind of ASMR triggers are audiovisual ASMR videos found on youtube that depict grooming role play such as massage, facials, haircuts, etc., but the pool of triggers are as vast as are the many who experience it. The familiarity of ASMR is growing, as is the amount of people who are sharing their experiences. This increasing amount of information maintains a growing menu of triggers that will not be included in this study.

The term ASMR is a social construct accepted by those who experience the sensations to which it refers. A neologism, ASMR is currently not present in academic literature. Only the lay population in internet social networks use it; therefore any academic research into the study of ASMR requires a search of chills, tingles, goose bumps, frisson, or similar terms and musical peaks when it refers to music, with the exception of the paper, Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR): A flow-like mental state, by Barratt & Davis (2014).

In an article in Buzzfeed, the author quotes Hauke Egermann a research associate with the Audio Communication Group at Technische Universität Berlin, who points to a 2011 study that tested musical chill triggers alongside other sounds, "If listeners or participants report this experience in an experimental setting to me, I must take it for real, however, to my best knowledge, the term 'ASMR' has not be [sic] used in our research field" (Collins 2012, para.19).

The preference of the term ASMR over chills or frisson is that it is concise. It refers to a very particular set of sensations in the body that is difficult to explain by current terminology. It is important to validate the term ASMR and its meaning to see if it is a separate experience from typical frisson or chills. Chills can refer to a feeling of being cold and frisson can refer to a feeling of shock or surprise and is often accompanied by goose bumps or piloerection; which is the body's reaction to insulate the skin from the cold (Huron, 2007). ASMR can be triggered by any stimulus. Its triggers are unique to the individual and can be anything from the mundane to the obscure. The physiological sensations are varied but follow a similar pattern; the psychological impressions are individualistic as each person has their own set of personal experiences that are sensitive to specific triggers. The focus of the thesis is to investigate the self reported experiences to see if there is a psychophysiological relationship

that could explain the phenomenon. The term ASMR is a well-rounded term that sufficiently describes the phenomenon and distinguishes it from typical chills or frisson.

2.3 ASMR Types

It had been suggested that ASMR could be divided into two types. The earliest mention of the two types of ASMR is from the website of <http://www.asmr-research.org>, described here:

Most ASMR episodes begin by an external or internal trigger, and are so divided for classification. Type A episodes are elicited by the participant using no external stimuli, and are typically achieved by specific thought patterns unique to the individual. Type B episodes are triggered involuntarily by an external trigger, via one or more senses, and may also involve specific thought patterns associated with the triggering event. Both types of triggers vary between individuals, but many are common to a large portion of ASMR enjoyers. (ASMR Research and Support)

Writers and bloggers have spread this idea by differentiating ASMR into two different types without any support to their claims. Type A is a voluntary triggering of ASMR without any external influences where as type B is an involuntary reaction to environmental stimuli (Valentine, 2014; ChrisLdn, 2015). This has led to confusion within the ASMR community and those who are new to the term ASMR are unsure whether or not they are experiencing type A or type B. This will be one of the areas of interest in the following research that will hopefully bring light to the understanding of ASMR and find more definitive parameters from which to categorize ASMR if so necessary.

2.4 Musical Chills and ASMR

It has been said by some in the ASMR community that ASMR is different from chills experienced when listening to music. The basis for this is subjective, as it has also been reported that people who have ASMR induced by stimuli other than music also experience ASMR when listening to music. This discrepancy leads to confusion when accounting the experience. It is however, possible and necessary to make a holistic connection of the different sensory avenues to a single phenomenon (Grewe, Katur, Kopiez & Altenmüller, 2011). It is not the goal of this research to say who is right or wrong, its goal is rather to gather and analyze the data and to discuss reasonable conclusions that are not based solely on the subjective opinion of a few.

Musically induced chills are most often associated with emotion and emotional peaks and therefore the majority of the literature relates to this interconnection. Often chills themselves are not the focus of study rather they are a tool used to gauge and record the peak states of emotional arousal. In studies that endeavour to explain what chills are and their cause can be deductive research relying on previous research and literature, investigative research implementing new technology to measure the mind and body, or a combination of both. It was found that although there is a better understanding of chills, especially with theoretical research (Huron & Margulis, 2010), and research in brain activity and neurological pathways involved in relation to emotion (Salimpoor et al., 2011), there is still an inadequate understanding of chills. Chills used as a marker to signify times of peak emotional arousal were considered to be by-products and have no other value to the emotion (Salimpoor et al., 2011). This suggests that chills are separate from emotion yet they are still closely correlated with emotional peaks. It has also been found that chills occur without the presence piloerection (Craig, 2005). Research into chills as a separate phenomenon from emotion will clarify what chills are without encumbering the understanding with an emotional pretext.

2.5 ASMR and Sex

Whereas *sensory* and *response* may be obvious, *meridian* is misleading in its description as it seems to refer to ASMR being something sexual in nature. Bratt and Davis (2014) found in their study that only 5 percent used ASMR media for sexually arousing purposes. It is unclear whether or not this induced ASMR in these individuals. The majority of individuals who experience ASMR do not associate it with sexual feelings and even quite the opposite (Barratt & Davis, 2014). It is this misunderstanding that has brought much discontent in those who experience ASMR. Often individuals fear they would be ostracised if they shared their experiences. A peak experience can be embarrassing to share (Maslow, 1964).

2.6 Triggers

The sources of the triggers need to be clarified. There are many different kinds of triggers listed by the data contributors. They are varied but there is clear distinction between the types of triggers described. What can be observed is that the triggers can be separated into two

categories: External and Internal. The External triggers are obvious to the experiencer and are observable. They refer to stimuli of the senses. In this data set they are, auditory, visual, or tactile triggers. There is no mention of olfactory or gustatory triggers. This however is a crude reduction to the kinds of senses that could be stimulated by an external trigger. The majority of people are taught that there are only five senses, taste, touch, smell, sight, and hearing, however there are many more, for example the sense of balance and even each of these five senses could be broken down into more detailed sensory systems (Huron, 2007). It has been observed in the data that the three sensory systems could already be divided. Tactile triggers have been reported to be physical contact and temperature related. Physical contact is a loaded trigger that could be associated with temperature, pressure and pain. The most common form of tactile trigger is grooming hair: washing, cutting or playing. The data contributors reports are not detailed enough to know which of these systems are being activated and even if pressed for an answer would not know how to respond or respond with any measured detail; Experiencers would need to be measured by instruments to be able to observe the subtle changes in stimulus (Hodges, 2009). It could be that there is an optimal balance of pressure, temperature and pain to cause ASMR. It would be an interesting avenue to pursue all of the levels of sensory systems that could be associated with ASMR but will not be covered in the scope of this paper in such detail.

Internal triggers are more elusive. They appear to be states of mind, attention and mood. These triggers are present when a person is in meditation or observing a specific aspect of their environment or state of being. They often coincide with an external trigger, which makes the experience that would typically be overlooked, accessible to the observer.

3 METHOD

The ontological approach of the researcher in this study is one of a passive observer who shares a common experience with the observed phenomenon. The analysis will follow a constructivist paradigm by focusing on the individual and their relationship to their experience. A reflexive approach will be taken to increase the transparency of the study (Storey, 2007). As a passive observer the researcher did not have any interaction with the data contributors therefore did not influence how the data was reported. This is beneficial to the study because it eliminates any variables that could have been seen to exist in the data that would have been consciously or unconsciously subjected by the researcher swaying the data; thus the data is clean from subjective influence by the researcher, which follows naturalistic methodological paradigm of grounded theory (GT).

3.1 Grounded Theory

The grounded theory employed is essentially pluralistic. Following a realist epistemology it assumes that reality is directly reflected by the experiencers' perceptions, yet the knowledge and theories are derived from a contextual constructivist approach by understanding the meanings experiencers connect to the particular events (Lyons, 2007). Methodological triangulation was used in the process of understanding the different philosophical standpoints from which each method was derived. The researcher employed a methodological relativist standpoint throughout the research method, however the motivation for the research came from a philosophical relativist point of view.

There were uncertainties in generating the initial central organizing concepts, if the chosen themes genuinely reflected the data and if they would unintentionally force the emergent theory. These uncertainties were discarded, as any concepts that emerged from the data would be thoroughly scrutinized and would be revised in the axial coding from which the final grounded theory would emerge. The initial central organizing concepts were drawn from the data contributors' words to prevent the emerging theory from concluding too soon (Payne, 2007). Inductive reasoning was used to make conclusions from multiple supporting sources from within the data.

Contrary to the ideology of pure grounded theory, a literature review was undertaken in the development of the research proposal; The true grounded theorist tries to abstain from consulting previous research until the grounded theory has emerged from the data, in this way the theory can be regarded to represent the data without bias. A literature review is however useful for someone who is new to grounded theory; to become familiar with the process and validity of the research engaged in. Glaser (2012) explains that it is in the process of writing that the theory will materialize and become tangible, at this point the researcher must stop endless conceptualization, data gathering and write.

3.2 The Internet as Data Source

Sources from the internet such as blogs are often highly opinionated and usually lack proper validating support. This makes it highly subjective to criticism especially from the academic world; however, their value is not in the realm of science but in the social context that people make self-observations about certain phenomena and share them with the rest of the population. Qualitative methods are concerned with understanding subjective experience (Storey, 2007). An Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) would serve to validate an individual's comments but will not be attempted in the scope of this paper, instead the raw data will be assumed to be valid as a subjective report of the individuals' experiences and will be analyzed as a whole to find a common ground.

The descriptions given by the data contributors are of their general ASMR experiences. The accounts are only occasionally focused on their musically induced ASMR experiences. The musically induced ASMR is often not described in any specific detail. Rather, the general ASMR experience is described with mention of salient characteristics present in the triggers and experiences induced by music. Sometimes the types of music, music characteristics or even specific artists are mentioned. It is an indirect method of collecting data on musically induced ASMR but according to those who experience Musically Induced ASMR the experience is the same regardless of the stimulus.

3.3 Sample Group

The data was extracted from an Internet hub, *ASMR: What is this tingling in my head?* It was found to be the largest body of data on this topic in a usable format where people shared their experiences with little distraction or influence from comments or discussion from other contributors. The original source of the data can be found at: <http://anti-valentine.hubpages.com/hub/ASMR>. Other Internet sources were abandoned as viable data sources, because the majority of the content were strings of comments and discussion that digressed from the original report, or the amount of contributors were small.

The selected hub, *ASMR: What is this tingling in my head?* is indiscriminate with regards to who could comment. No membership is required to leave a comment therefore the data set is assumed to be reasonably random. The data contributors themselves only occasionally mention demographical information; otherwise the data contributors' information is completely anonymous and only makes references to the data contributors' Internet handle. This was considered appropriate also regarding the development of theoretical understanding of musically induced ASMR, because demographic and background factors such as age, gender and musical education have been shown to have little or no influence over the subjective feelings and physiological sensations on tingle frequency (Oliver Grewe, Reinhard Kopiez, Eckart & Altenmüller, 2009). The author and other data contributors were occasionally prompted to answer questions presented by various individuals, but had little or no influence in the data contributors' recounting of their ASMR experience. Comments from the author of the hub were accounted for and eliminated from the data set. Although it was observed that occasionally multiple contributions from the same data contributor were present in the data set they were not eliminated, as they were still considered as relevant contributions to the data regarding the phenomenon.

The original sample consisted of a total of 577 comments. This number was calculated based on the data collected from the website on September 14th 2014. The data was then organized into 4 categories: MusicMain, MusicRelated, NoMusic and Other. The criterion for the division of the data into these groups was the relevancy of music in each reported experience. The authors in the group MusicMain state music as a direct trigger; MusicRelated has an indirect relation to music as an ASMR trigger; NoMusic stated specifically music was not a

trigger and Other had no mention of music at all. In order to extract a data set that would provide most valid and relevant information regarding the target of the study, the musically induced ASMR, it was decided that MusicMain would be the category to be included in the final data set. It was also concluded that Music Main contained a sufficient sample size to analyze and make conclusions about the phenomenon; therefore the other sample groups were excluded from the study. The data sample MusicMain initially contained 56 separate accounts. A preliminary analysis found that a couple of the contributions were from the same authors, which were then grouped together leaving 54 separate authors. Although some of the accounts were very short and seemed to hold little value to the body of the data, they were nevertheless considered to be a relevant part of the data and were not extracted from the sample.

3.4 Thin Slicing

The data was first analysed as a whole to get an impression of the overall content by thin-slicing. Thin-slicing is invoked by the unconscious filtering of the present information to recognize patterns and to gain a sense or first impression (Gladwell, 2012). This is similar to the typical initial familiarization of a transcript in IPA where the overall theme emerges (Storey, 2007), or the initial coding and labelling of categories in GT analysis (Payne, 2007). Notes in a research diary were kept to help guide and organize ideas as insights arose.

A greater sense of the salient themes became more obvious as more time was spent with the data, which led to the creation of the initial concepts. These initial central organizing concepts were categorized and defined by a short explanation to help keep focus on what the concepts represented. This paradigm served to organize the multitude of various contributions from different authors by preventing the misinterpretation of complex excerpts loaded with extraneous data. This was found to be the most economical approach by eliminating dubious interpretation in the early stage of the analysis.

3.5 Creating The Initial Central Organizing Concepts

Creating central organising concepts before open coding is not typically employed in GT. This step is an intuitive process in the initial stage of data familiarization accompanied with memo writing; it is an essential process that logs the analytical process (Payne, 2007). It is a process that is typically employed in the background that helps guide the process of open coding. In this study it was applied to the foreground to help keep the connection between the concepts and the relevant excerpts in the process of open coding. It was much more economic to continue with the analysis without the use of coding software, to have a guide to extract codes from the data. The data was organized into 18 concepts: age, drugs, physical activity, auditory, tactile, visual, activation, sexual, cerebral, command, artistic, connectedness, spiritual, valence, motivational, emotional, self-consciousness and empathy (see table 1 and appendix 2). The excerpts were chosen based on the language used in the data and how it directly related to the concept. This was done to simplify the organization process of the data into categories without interpreting the meaning of the often-ambiguous explanations of the data contributors' experiences. This allowed all relevant data to be included without an interpretive bias. By stringently following this paradigm of highlighting excerpts whose language displayed a direct connection with the theme of a concept.

Table 1. Color code and definitions of the initial concepts.

<p>Age – Cantaloupe: The age of the person and when the experience was first noticed.</p> <p>Drug – Grape: Describing the experience to their own drug experiences</p> <p>Physical Activation – Aqua: Physical activity</p> <p>Auditory – Orchid: Any trigger sounds other than music</p> <p>Tactile – Magenta: Touching or being touched, temperature</p> <p>Visual – Teal: Watching or seeing someone or something, video, etc.</p> <p>Activation – Sky: Relaxing or energizing</p> <p>Sexual – Cayenne: Anything sex related</p> <p>Cerebral – Eggplant: Triggers from stimulating the mind, learning, reading, visualization</p> <p>Command – Tangerine: Learning to control the phenomenon</p> <p>Artistic – Asparagus: The data contributor is artistic or a musician</p> <p>Spiritual – Moss: Data contributors who are religious or spiritual or who practice meditation</p> <p>Connectedness – Strawberry: Feelings of community or being connected, or searching for answers or others</p> <p>Valence – Salmon: Is the experience positive or negative</p> <p>Motivational – Carnation: Motivational triggers</p> <p>Emotional – Maraschino – Intense feelings</p> <p>Self-Consciousness – Ocean: Opinions or feelings of oneself or situation</p> <p>Empathy – Lavender: Feelings of empathy. (There was only one entry after the initial coding (36), moved it to Emotional.)</p>

3.6 Coding

The data was open coded based on content relevance according to the 18 concepts. Colours were assigned to the coding themes in Microsoft Word: Mac 2008 from: *font colour*, *color palates* and *crayons* (see Table 1). The data was coded by highlighting each relevant excerpt with the respective colour assigned to each concept (see Appendix 1). Throughout the coding process the definitions of the concepts were revised to better suit the relevancy of the content extracted from the data. Excerpts were then extracted from the main data set and grouped into each respective concept (see Appendix 2).

Once the data was coded it was found that certain concepts did not return a significant amount of excerpts. Those concepts appeared to be less relevant than was initially thought once a deeper scrutiny was focused on the data. This is typical when there is not ample experience or knowledge about a subject and an explanation is needed to explain the choices made, when the conscious cannot clarify the unconscious choices made (Gladwell, 2012). This could be seen as a fault in the research method however finding that there is little support of an idea can be just as important. This directed the researcher to reconsider the excerpts extracted to support each concept. Once the data was organized into the respective categories it was possible to further scrutinize the highlighted excerpts that supported each theme. This started the interpretation of the excerpts to deduce the underlying themes that were not obvious in the first stages of the analysis. This became an increasingly difficult task; Often a single excerpt seemed to belong to multiple concepts. The process of constant comparison (Nolas, 2011a) was an ongoing strategy throughout the analysis. Open codes were created from the data by extracting excerpts that best represented each concept, they were then arranged in a table to be able to better observe the progression of each concept (table 2). Two to three excerpts were chosen to represent each concept. The excerpts were then coded and the codes revised. Outliers were present in multiple categories that seemed to contradict the general consensus. These outliers were considered in the open coding process however were not chosen to represent the Open Codes, they are needed to outline the boundaries of the category as the emergent theory should be able to explain all instances of the phenomenon (Payne, 2007); Still relevant to the research they would be useful in the discussion.

Table 2. Code Guide

Code Guide			
Initial Concept	Excerpt	Open Codes	Revised Codes
Age	2–I have experiencing [sic] this from a young age. 26–I have experience this sensation my whole life.	‘from a young age’ ‘my whole life’	Lifetime experience
Drug	4–It's like runners high with out doing anything or the euphoric feeling when taking an e. 11–If you take MDMA you will get it not only in your head but all over your body for hours.	‘the euphoric feeling when taking an e’	Similar to MDMA
Physical Activity	6–I'm getting intimate with a girl. 54–Riding the bus.	‘getting intimate’ ‘riding the bus’	Contact Motion
Auditory	33–I get it when people talk and swallow, and make certain sounds with their lips. 32– If I'm outside and not many people are around but there is a breeze then I love listening to the wind. Also hearing the voices of strangers walking by my house. 46– Just the sound of that high squeal coming from the guitar makes my skin tingle all over. I also love a sound of crinkling of potato chip bags.	‘make certain sounds with their lips’ ‘hearing the voices of strangers’ ‘the guitar makes my skin tingle’	Human voice Sound of the guitar
Tactile	2–Usually my triggers are with people touching me on my back, neck, shoulders and ears area. Though most common trigger with me is warmth. 29–I've made it happen inside a sauna, so it's definitely not due to being cold. 46– Love people playing with my hair	‘touching me on my back, neck, shoulders and ears area’ ‘most common trigger with me is warmth’ ‘playing with my hair’	Physical touch Warmth Grooming
Visual	2–Another trigger is watching something very emotional happen. 29–seeing something that captures me the right way	‘watching something very emotional’ ‘seeing something capturing’	Visually emotional Visually captivating
Activation	23–energize your spirit. 27–then I'm totally relaxed.	‘energize your spirit’ ‘totally relaxed’	Energizing Relaxing

Sexual	4—that's why I hate the term brain orgasam [sic], it's a slower build and decline and not sexual	'I hate the word brain orgasm'	Not sexual
Cerebral	42—They usually only came to me when i had an epiphany. 48—it makes me listen to the words and somehow they feel like they mean or telling me something.	'when I had an epiphany' 'mean something'	Realization Insight
Command	21—Throughout the years I've actually learned to increase the intensity, duration and frequency of the sensations 17—im workin on getting this amazing feeling to cover my legs and lower half of my body.	'learned to increase the sensations' 'working on getting this feeling'	Mastering Heighten awareness
Artistic	18—im also a musician, i love nature. 12—I'm artistic and somewhat introverted	'im a musician' 'I'm artistic'	Creative
Spiritual	25—After I started meditating I found I'm able to do this at will. 34—In my opinion, it occurs when we are fully in tune with the energy that flows in and out of our bodies.	'meditation helps' 'in tune with the energy'	Restful mind Mindfulness
Connectedness	29—Finally some other people who know what I'm talking about when I try to explain the sensation :) 16—Wow it's cool to know that other people also experience these wierd spurts of tingling. Thanks a ton for this article glad to see I'm not alone.	'some other people who know what I am talking about' 'it's cool to know other people experience these'	Shared experience Not alone
Valence	17— It is such an amazing feeling 32—Sometimes the feeling can be uncomfortable and I sometimes get a feeling of embarrassment	'amazing feeling' 'sometimes the feeling can be uncomfortable'	Pleasurable Sometimes overwhelming
Motivational	3—the music you hear when you see people charging into battle in a movie, motivational epic speeches 36—Success stories also trigger this feeling!	'when you see people charging into battle' 'success stories'	Empathy Compassion
Emotional	9—I get it from other things too, like really intense movie trailers, or	'I feel like they are really in tune to what I am saying and I become	Heightened awareness Emotionally potent

	<p>when I'm having a conversation with someone and I feel like they are really in tune with what I am saying and I become really intense.</p> <p>17-But i feel "powerful" i guess when i trigger this feeling...maybe its because i almost cry when i do it.</p>	<p>really intense.'</p> <p>'I feel "powerful"; I almost cry'</p>	
Self-conscious	<p>28-It's interesting (and comforting) to know that I'm not the only one experiencing this!</p> <p>43-I'm 17 and i was feeling sort of weirdly lonely before i discovered this.</p> <p>I don't feel so much of a freak anymore :)</p>	<p>'I am not the only one'</p> <p>'I don't feel so much a freak anymore'</p>	<p>Disconnectedness</p> <p>Self doubt</p>

3.7 Axial Coding: Redefining the Codes

The first concepts were chosen intuitively. Distancing the theory from previously established terminology without constructing categories that were not completely arbitrary was unable to avoid however there was no *a priori* list of definitions from which the categories were chosen. They emerged from the meaning of the descriptions that the data contributors gave to the context of the experience (Nolas, 2011b). The concepts are derived from the first impressions of important thematic content present in the data. This allows a base from which to start the analysis. The chosen concepts were useful in organising the data in a meaningful way to an understanding from which 31 open codes emerged.

The analysis of the open coding process brought forth many inconsistencies in the concepts. Possibilities to further divide and define new groups were present within many of the concepts. Some of the themes seemed to be irrelevant as a single stand-alone concept and were merged with other groups based on the relevance of the content. A constant comparison of codes was employed to illuminate similarities and differences to find meaning in the data (Nolas, 2011a). The category Empathy was eventually eliminated and was merged with the category Emotion; the data did not directly support a separate concept of empathy with the

exception of one excerpt. It was also found that some codes were multidimensional; The categories Auditory, Tactile and Visual contained codes that were either content-based (words and meaning) or quality-based (timbre).

Memoing helped to create new categories through abduction to infer meaning into findings to create a new rule or category (Reichert, 2007). Through memoing, it was possible to consider the categories dialectically, to begin the development of new categories and theory (Nolas, 2011a). Writing notes in a research diary helped to organize thoughts and return to ideas that once appeared to be irrelevant. This is a valuable technique, which aided in the constant comparison of data and research progress. The data was reassigned new labels by the process of abstraction, by combining the codes into abstract concepts (Nolas, 2011a).

3.8 Redefining The Concepts

The axial coding brought together all the revised codes and revised central organizing concepts to create the core categories. Each category was constantly compared with each other in each stage of the analysis and coding process from the base of the raw data to the final emerging theory. Tables were created (table 4 & table 5) to organize and visualize the connections between each category in search for the emergent theory. The tables served as a valuable tool to visualize the multiple perspectives into the relationships between the central organizing concepts (tables 4 & 5).

The tables use three different markers: content, quality and neutral, which were chosen to represent the multidimensional quality of particular central core concepts. They were found to be related only to core category: Triggers. Content based triggers refers to “what” the trigger is and can be understood in terms described by Gabrielson (2001) as a cognitive appraisal where there is an intellectual component to the stimulus. Quality based triggers refer to “how” the trigger has been created, which is a more direct experience (Ex. Melody–content, whistled–quality; hair wash–content, cold water–quality). This however this is not clear-cut as it could be interpreted that to distinguish any quality of a stimulus requires a cognitive appraisal. The neutral aspect marks a connection between central core concepts where there seemed to be no content or quality based connection. This is rather a guideline to better

organize and interpret the different stimuli and does not directly influence the outcome of the analysis.

The tables are detailed and each individual connection could be explained and elaborated. However, it would be too tedious to argue the reasoning between each relationship and would cloud the intrinsic insight into the emerging theory. Therefore, the tables must be taken at face value to have meaning as a whole. In making connections between categories it must be noted that the categories can represent both a concrete and an abstract aspect such as “tactile” representing an actual trigger, which also represents “affection.”

Overall, the central organising concepts and the core categories must be understood in relation to how they were chosen to represent the data. Each step in the analysis that brought this research to its conclusion influenced the emergence of the codes and concepts derived from the data, which became more abstract in the search to find a meaningful way to describing the findings. Each category went through a transformation by abduction to create the central organising concepts that presents new perspectives which, infers the underlying essence represented by the data of each category, resulting in 17 central organising concepts and five core categories.

Table 3. Concept abbreviations for tables 4 and 5.

Lifetime Experience
LE–Lifetime Experience
SD–Self-discovery
F–Focus
Description
P–Pleasurable
I–Intensity
In–Intimacy
SB–State of being
Environmental Awareness
C–Community
O–Open
Ob–Observation
Self-Awareness
As–Assimilation
E–Empathy
En–Engaged
HA–Heightened Awareness
Triggers
A–Attention
Af–Affection
SM–State of mind

Table 4. Axial Coding Table

Axial Coding Table				
Core Categories	Revised Concepts	Associated Concepts Content Based	Associated Concepts Quality Based	Associated Neutral Concepts
Life time Experience	LE–Lifetime Experience			F, As
	SD–Self-discovery			F, I, In, SB, C, O, As, E, En, HA , A, Af, SM
	F–Focus			LE, SD, I, SB, C, O, Ob, As, En, HA , A, Af, SM
Description	P–Pleasurable		Af	I, As, E , HA
	I–Intensity			SD, F, P, SB, As, E, En, HA , A, Af, SM
	In–Intimacy	A, SM	A, Af	SD, C, O, Ob, As, E, En, HA
	SB–State of being			SD, F, I, O, As, E, En, HA , Af, A, SM
Environ-mental Awareness	C–Community			SD, F, In, O, Ob, As, E, En, HA
	O–Open			SD, F, In, SB, C, Ob, As, E, En, HA , A, Af, SM
	Ob–Observation	Af	Af	F, In, C, O, As, E, En, HA
Self-Awareness	As–Assimilation	Af, A, SM	Af, A	LE, SD, F, P, I, In, SB, C, O, Ob, E, En, HA
	E–Empathy	A, SM		SD, P, I, In, SB, C, O, Ob, As, En, HA
	En–Engaged	A, SM		SD, F, I, In, SB, C, O, Ob, As, E, HA , Af
	HA–Heightened Awareness	A, Af, SM	A, Af	SD, F, P, I, In, SB, C, O, Ob, As, E, En
Triggers	A–Attention	In, As, E, En, HA	In, As, HA , Af	SD, F, I, SB, O
	Af–Affection	Ob, As, HA , SM	P, In, Ob, As, HA , A	SD, F, I, SB, O, En
	SM–State of mind	In, As, E, En, HA , Af		SD, F, I, SB, O

Self-awareness concepts are highlighted in green.

Table 5. Axial Code Triangulation showing the connections between concepts and categories

		Axial Code Triangulation																
Triggers	SM	n	n		n	c	n		n	c	c	c	c		c			
	Af	n	n		q	n	q	n		n	cq	cq		n	cq	q		c
	A	n	n		n	cq	n		n		cq	c	c	cq		q		
Self-Awareness	HA	n	n		n	n	n	n		n	n	n			cq	cq	c	
	En	n	n		n	n	n		n	n	n		n		c	n	c	
	E	n			n	n	n	n		n		n	n		c		c	
	As	n	n	n	n	n	n	n		n	n	n		n	cq	cq	c	
E A	Ob		n			n			n	n		n	n	n	n		cq	
	O	n	n			n	n		n		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	
	C	n	n			n			n	n		n	n	n	n			
Description	SB	n	n		n				n		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	
	In	n							n	n	n		n		cq	q	c	
	I	n	n		n		n				n	n	n	n	n	n	n	
	P				n						n	n		n		q		
L E	F	n	n		n		n		n	n	n		n	n	n	n	n	
	SD		n		n	n	n		n	n		n	n	n	n	n	n	
	LE		n								n							
&	LE	SD	F	P	I	In	SB	C	O	Ob	As	E	En	HA	A	Af	SM	
	L E			Description				E A			Self-Awareness				Triggers			

Table legend: The types of connection: Content=c Quality=q Neutral=n

In creating tables through selective coding, the core concept that correlated most often with the other categories became obvious. The core concept ‘self-awareness,’ appeared to be the common ground from which the other categories could be connected (see Table 5). This was chosen as the core category, which would be used to explain the emerging theory (Hawker & Kerr, 2007). Green highlighting was applied to the concepts in the category self-awareness to better visualize its prevalence in table 4.

4 RESULTS

Novel, theoretical understanding of the data was created through the grounded theory analysis. The core categories became clear in the process of memoing, which are presented here in a narrative style to elaborate the discovered insights and to outline the progress of the theory. In presenting the narratives, the abduction of the central organising concepts, the codes that were chosen to represent each category and the emergence of the core categories are illuminated. The core categories are presented by listing and describing each category, the central organizing concepts, and the supporting revised codes. The emergent core categories represent aspects of the ASMR experience that are intrinsically part of the whole yet can be identified as separate entities having explanatory power on their own. The central organising concepts were rearranged into these core categories: Triggers, Self-Awareness, Environmental Awareness, Description, and Lifetime Experience.

4.1 Lifetime Experience

The core category Lifetime Experience contains the central organising concepts: Lifetime Experience, Self-discovery and Focus. These are all concepts that relate to ASMR as an experience that happens throughout one's life. The first occurrence usually happens in childhood. It is often a significant experience that can be recollected later in life with much detail. It can also be an experience where specific details of are no longer tangible however the trigger always remains a point of focus. It becomes a learning process during one's life to become familiar with the experience. In the process of learning to be aware of the phenomenon one must learn also about oneself.

4.1.1 Lifetime Experience

The revised code derived from this category is, 'lifetime experience'. Most people who experience ASMR have experienced it their whole lives. The first memories of the tingling feelings start from early childhood and continue throughout their lives. Some people seem to have been more aware of the sensation throughout their lives and remember it well; others have only just realized they have ASMR as one data contributor mentioned, "In my case I never really noticed it until the last two years or so (I am 30). Maybe it happened my whole

life but only recently have I really paid attention to it.” The experience most often leaves a very clear impression in the memory, as the experiencer can recall and describe the trigger and situation, which caused the ASMR. The concept was chosen because ASMR is a phenomenon that is experienced throughout life. It most often occurs from childhood and it is unknown when, if ever it ceases.

4.1.2 Focus

The revised codes derived from this category are, ‘heightened awareness’ and ‘mastering.’ Once the a person is aware they have ASMR they learn to focus their attention on the sensations to try to increase and augment them or induce them without relying on external triggers. Although there are some who report being able to induce them solely in certain moments of relaxation or meditation, most report focusing on the sensations and the trigger during the ASMR when trying to voluntarily enhance the experience. This suggests that the external trigger is necessary to induce the ASMR, mentioned by one data contributor, “I can also do type A when I try to focus on listening to sounds.” (Look at chapter ASMR Types). The data also suggests that the triggers alone are not enough to cause ASMR as described by one data contributor, “Sometimes I will put on certain music at night before I go to bed, and lie in the dark trying to induce the feeling.” Not only does the trigger need to be present, the person needs to be in the right state of mind and focus on the trigger to evoke ASMR.

4.1.3 Self-discovery

The revised codes derived from this category are, ‘disconnectedness’ and ‘pariah.’ The excerpts extracted from the data refer to the experiencers’ negative feelings about themselves being alleviated, described by one data contributor, “I’m 17 and i was feeling sort of weirdly lonely before i discovered this. I don’t feel so much of a freak anymore.” Experiencers feel misunderstood when they cannot explain what they experience or the person, to whom they are explaining it, cannot understand or relate. The experiencers often carry these feelings with them throughout their lives when they do not understand what the sensations are and are left confused when they had tried to share their experience. A large group of the data contributors had thought that they were alone and the only one who experiences ASMR, reported by one data contributor, “something that I had taken for granted for years, and hadn’t known if

anyone else had ever had the same feeling.” Solace was found in discovering that others share the same experience.

The opposite has also been mentioned where a data contributor had been surprised that ASMR is not experienced by everyone. It could be true that not everyone experiences ASMR but there is a large number of the population who do. The possibility to connect and find information through the internet has allowed a greater flow of information. This has led to a blossoming of ASMR awareness since it was first coined in 2010 (<http://asmruniversity.com/what-is-asmr/about-asmr/>). It does not mean that people did not have these ASMR experiences before; it just means that people did not have the possibility they have today to share and explain their experiences.

It can be argued that it is not the ASMR that leads to self-discovery rather it is the internet that has facilitated people to search for answers to their questions. People now have the opportunity to share their experiences in blogs from the safety and anonymity of their own homes. It is however the experience itself that motivates the person to search and discover what it is they are experiencing. It is in the concern the individual has of their own self-conscious feelings that has led them to a path of self-discovery.

4.2 Description

The core category Description includes the central organising concepts: Pleasurable, Intensity, Intimacy and State of being. These categories all relate to how the experience of ASMR is described. Essentially the data contained within any of the categories could be used to describe ASMR however these categories seem best suited to describe the sensations and the kind of experience ASMR is within the body.

4.2.1 Intensity

The revised codes derived from this category are, ‘pleasurable’ and ‘sometimes overwhelming.’ ASMR is largely a positive pleasurable experience. It is most often described as an amazing or euphoric experience. There are exceptions where the experience is so intense or that it happens in an inconvenient moment that it is uncomfortable. Only one data

contributor described the ASMR as an anger related experience. What is important to note here, is that ASMR is most often a positive experience that can be very intense or subtle. Regardless of the kinds of emotions it invokes, the triggers can be more or less potent and the ASMR can also vary in intensity.

4.2.2 State of Being

The codes derived from this category are, ‘energizing’ and ‘relaxing.’ ASMR is used to induce or regulate a state of being. ASMR can be either stimulating or relaxing. It is most frequently sought after for its relaxing effect but a few use ASMR, as one data contributor puts it, “[to] pick you up and energize your spirit.” The relaxing effects of ASMR can be quite effective and even sedating. The energizing aspect seems to be more mood uplifting rather than causing someone to be more active with the exception of one individual who states that, “I’ve also noticed that the angrier I get, the stronger they get and the more effects [sic] they have on me.” It has also been reported to ‘energize the spirit.’ This could be related to how music is used as a mood regulator. The revised label was chosen because ASMR can affect people in different ways and it is sought after to change the mood or state of being. People use ASMR to relieve symptoms for various ailments such as insomnia and pain (Barratt & Davis, 2014).

4.2.3 Intimacy

The revised code derived from this category is, ‘not sexual.’ This category was not strongly supported by the data. It is often that sexual feelings have been used as reference to describe ASMR, more specifically it is often described as an orgasm like sensation. It seems to depend on the intensity of the experience. One data contributor reports, ‘collapsing from it like an orgasm.’ Although it has been reported that ASMR was experienced during intercourse there is a tendency to separate sex from ASMR (See chapter ASMR and Sexuality).

The core organising concept was chosen because it seemed that any relation with ASMR and sex is the intimate nature of each experience. Both topics can be sensitive topics to share and bring up in conversation. The descriptions of the data contributors’ experiences depict intimate situations, such as described by this data contributor, “Some of the most intense ASMR I’ve had occurred in quiet public places, especially retail, and was induced by a total

stranger who was near me. The person was very quiet and just browsing or looking over something but, again, I got the definite feeling the person was trying to be as quiet and unobtrusive as possible.” Although some triggers seem to be completely random they relate to triggers that are known to the person in which there is an intimate relationship.

4.2.4 Pleasurable

The code derived from this category is, ‘similar to MDMA’. Drug experiences have been used to describe the physiological sensations experienced. The sensations and tingles that are felt are most often compared to the sensations one experiences under the influence of MDMA (ecstasy). Other drugs (marijuana, hydrocodone) have been mentioned however not as often as MDMA. The revised label was chosen because the effects of drug use are used to describe the physical sensations of ASMR; MDMA has been reported to elicit strong feelings of pleasure and benevolence (Davidson & Parrott, 1997).

4.3 Environmental Awareness

The core category Environmental Awareness includes the central organising concepts: Community, Open and Observation. These categories all relate to the situation of the ASMR experience, which happens outside the body that is not a direct trigger.

4.3.1 Observing

The revised codes derived from this category are, ‘contact’ and ‘motion.’ This category is not well supported by the data. It is most often reported that ASMR is experienced in times of low physical activity. People are most often at rest physically and are mentally engaged in the activity around them when they experience ASMR. The data shows that there is a negative activation in regards to physical activity.

The physical activity that causes ASMR most often coincides with activating tactile triggers. It is possible however that physical activity can trigger ASMR, possibly with extreme physical exertion, as was mentioned by one of the data contributors, “[it’s] like a runner’s high.” Physical activity in this category represents active physical motion, moving the body. It

could then be argued that getting a hair cut could be considered physical activity but with regards to this study, getting a hair cut would be seen as a passive activity and better related to the category Tactile. 'Riding the bus', is similar to the experiencer searching for a tactile trigger but in this case it is the motion of the bus and more specifically the nuances of particular busses that had caused the ASMR. 'Getting intimate', is also closely related to Tactile, being in close proximity and contact with another person. There is also a possibility that there is an Auditory and Visual connection when 'getting intimate', however it is still a physical activity that one engages in. The revised label was chosen because the physical activity one engages in is in the search of contact from another person. It is the certain qualities of the other person that are sought after. It takes patience and awareness to observe others, which is only possible in times of low physical activity.

4.3.2 Open

The revised code derived from this category is 'creative.' It has been observed that ASMR often happens to people who are musical, artistic and creative. One data contributor mentioned that they love nature as well as being a musician and another data contributor reported, '[I] always assumed I was just very creative and could get swept away with it.' This points to the experiencer being open to engaging in their environment.

4.3.3 Community

The revised codes derived from this category are, 'shared experience' and 'not alone.' With little understanding of their own experiences, people search for information about what they have experienced. They are often looking for a diagnosis for their condition of the unknown sensations they feel. It is the validation of the shared experiences by others who have reported the same sensations that peoples' worries and concerns are alleviated. By sharing their experiences with others, people realize they are not alone and share a sense of connectedness, described by one data contributor, "I am honoured to experience these feelings and this blog has given me a sense of community." There is a strong sense of benevolence, a need to connect, to share experiences, to learn and teach each other.

The main aspect of this category is the sense of community and self-assurance gained in knowing that others share the same experience. This is an indirect relationship to the

sensations experienced by ASMR but it has also been mentioned that ASMR is triggered when, “I feel I am really connecting with someone,” described by one data contributor. It is this feeling of benevolence that ASMR elicits, which motivates people to search for each other and come together.

4.4 Self-Awareness

The core category theme Self-Awareness includes the central organising concepts: Assimilation, Empathy, Engaged and Heightened Awareness. These are all indirect triggers that happen internally.

4.4.1 Assimilation

The revised codes derived from this category are, ‘realization’ and ‘insight.’ This category did not return many excerpts from the data. To be intellectually stimulated or to have a realization is a source of triggers. Finding meaning in lyrics, art, or being creative or having an epiphany can trigger ASMR. It is the connections made by the individual that trigger the ASMR.

The central organising concept Assimilation was chosen because; it is the combination of all the variables that surround the trigger that causes the ASMR. This multifaceted category, which in essence includes all of the other categories, is essentially the awareness of the trigger and the sensations of the ASMR induced by assimilating the self in its environment.

4.4.2 Heightened Awareness

The revised codes derived from this category are, ‘restful mind’ and ‘mindfulness.’ This category describes the state of awareness evoked by the ASMR. Secondly it refers to the trigger being meditative or spiritual in nature, as described by one data contributor, “I’ve found I can get it when watching trees blowing and clouds, I guess this is a kind of meditation,” or by another data contributor, “In my opinion, it occurs when we are fully in tune with the energy that flows in and out of our bodies.” Some believe that it is a religious or spiritual experience. The religious comments are few compared to the spiritual experiences and refer to the experiencer recalling a religious dream or that ASMR is, “a gift from god.”

It has been reported that ASMR has been achieved through meditation or when learning to command the experience and was found to be a good technique to enhance the experience. It is important to note the common element in these reports, is that the experience can be associated with a realm outside of the physical body. This has allowed people to connect with and even search for a world around them that is not present in their natural world.

4.4.3 Empathy

The revised codes derived from this category are, ‘empathy’ and ‘compassion.’ This category refers to content-based triggers that are motivationally oriented. Visual or auditory stimuli such as movies or stories or motivational speeches, success stories, compassion or anything emotional or empathetic can trigger ASMR.

4.4.4 Engaged

The revised codes derived from this category are, ‘heightened awareness’ and ‘emotionally potent.’ This concept refers to triggers that are emotional and also outlines the strength of the experience. The triggers are either intense or the ASMR is intense. One data contributor explains that, ‘they become intense’ and another explains that, ‘they get ASMR from music that is intense.’ This would suggest the triggers can have different strengths in how they induce ASMR and also that the experiencer can trigger ASMR by becoming ‘intense.’ The meaning of intense is a bit vague but it could be discerned from the context of its use in the data contributors’ reports that the trigger is thoroughly engaging or the experiencer is thoroughly engaged in the situation. Emotional triggers can originate either internally or externally and the strength of the trigger will affect the outcome of the ASMR. This category is similar to the concept Intensity but is different in the experiencer takes an active role the experience engaged in.

4.5 Triggers

The core category Triggers includes the central organising concepts: Awareness, Affection and State of Mind. These are all direct external triggers. (See chapter Triggers) An external

trigger may be quality or content based which can directly evoke ASMR through sensory stimulation or may affect internal processes that evoke ASMR.

4.5.1 Attention

The codes derived from this category are, 'human voice' and 'sound of the guitar'. There is a strong tendency for the quality of the sound rather than the content of the sound to act as the trigger. The earliest memories reported by the experiencer are most often from childhood where the experiencer remembers being attentive of an adult (teacher, uncle, gardener, etc.), they would quietly attend to the other persons' activities and would be drawn to the sound that was made with the person's mouth or voice rather than what was being said, whistled or sung, etc. The triggers are most often oral: talking, singing, chewing, swallowing, whispering or whistling. The non-oral sounds are: crinkling paper, typing and guitar. The sounds are often described as soft. In the words of a data contributor, "The first time I experienced ASMR (that I can remember) was as a young boy, when listening to my uncle talk. Man was he boring but that didn't matter. He talked very softly, slowly, and ALWAYS gave me this sensation." It is also important to mention that not only the sound itself but also the awareness of the inflection used by the one making it can be part of the trigger, such as quieting the sounds as to not disturb others. This supports the idea that attention to the sound made by another is a large part of the causation of ASMR.

4.5.2 Affection

The revised codes derived from this category are: 'physical touch', 'warmth' and 'grooming.' Physical contact with the skin is the most commonly reported trigger. Touching the skin especially on the head, face, shoulders and back is a source of strong triggers; Grooming the hair is the most frequently mentioned source of triggers. Experiencers have mentioned goose bumps but it is often unclear whether they are referring to piloerection or chills. The relation of piloerection and ASMR could explain why contact with hair is such a strong trigger. Change in temperature especially from cold to warm can trigger ASMR, which suggests that the piloerection experienced during ASMR is not a part of being cold. One data contributor even said that ASMR was experienced in the sauna. ASMR happens most frequently in a warm, relaxed, comfortable setting. Grooming is a form of affection that often focuses on

sensitive body parts that require trust. These trigger areas require physical contact in a gentle, careful and attentive manner.

4.5.3 State of Mind

The revised codes derived from this category are ‘visually emotional’ and ‘visually captivating.’ Visual triggers are content based; visual effects such as brightness or color are not mentioned to affect the experience. It is how visual triggers affect the state of mind that gives them their power. The ability to experience ASMR, “when watching trees blowing or clouds,” mentioned by one data contributor or “watching someone do something mundane,” reported by an other data contributor, is similar to visualization in meditation. It is about being drawn into the situation, “seeing something that captures me right away.” The central organizing concept was chosen because the triggers evoke a relaxed state of mind. There could be an effectual visual aspect but it is not mentioned in the data therefore it is assumed that visual triggers are content based. The cerebral aspect is multifaceted and could involve any number of associations with emotion, memory or consciousness.

4.6 Discussion of Results

The core category Self-awareness appears to have the most connections with all the other categories (see table 5) and has emerged as the Core Concept. The second most prominent category appears to be Triggers with the two categories having the most connections with each other. This would seem to be a necessary relationship in the phenomenon of ASMR because of the individuals’ awareness or self-awareness of the triggers that elicit ASMR. It evokes the complete attention on the stimulus (Gabrielsson, 2001), however it is much deeper than that. When the core concept Self-awareness is used to explain the other central organising concepts, it becomes evident that ASMR essentially motivates a sense of self-awareness. ASMR is a psychophysiological signal elicited by the body to bring a sense of self-awareness to the experience and the situation.

The core concept Self-awareness is understood by the four categories that support it; Assimilation is the absorption of all the salient situational stimuli by the affected faculties of the individual intrinsically and extrinsically; Heightened awareness is the ability to focus on

details that do not normally provoke attention; Empathy is the motivational effect the experience has on the individual to be attentive and aware of their surroundings; Engaged is the act of becoming immersed in the experience.

Chills from a biological perspective is a survival response to the environment in situations of cold, fear, and surprise, which makes music such an interesting stimulus because of its seemingly purely aesthetic value that seems to serve no biological function (McCrae, 2007); Aesthetics in its most rudimentary form is the study of beauty and ugliness (Huron, 2009). The aesthetic response to music has been observed to influence sympathetic responses, such as shivers, chills, increased heart rate and motor synchronization (Pannese, 2012). This may be true but it is suggested that musically induced ASMR is a response that mimics and represents a psychophysiological reaction to a real life experience, as ASMR is induced by a multitude of physical and psychological environmental stimuli. It may be that ASMR follows the same pathways and mechanisms, which are currently theorized in music emotion research, it is suggested that ASMR has a greater function than a conflicting brain process; it is an experience that has the potential to soothe and connect people.

Various theories on musical chills have emerged. The most prominent theories that explain musical chills follow the idea of expectancy. Musical chills happen when there is a conflict in what is expected to what actually happens (Huron & Margulis, 2010). According to Huron (2007) musical chills are a physiological phenomenon, which is related to anticipation and expectation, which he outlines in the ITPRA (imagination, tension, prediction, reaction and appraisal) theory. These are all response reactions to music, which are either positively or negatively valenced or mixed, and elicit chills by either confirming or denying the brain's expectations of the predicted stimulus.

The amount of research on music is quite extensive. There have been numerous studies that have included chills as a topic of concern and the majority of these studies have been in relation to music and emotion. Emotion is a vast and multifaceted area of research and many have debated its description and mechanisms and if music induces "real" emotions, but it has been stated that music elicits emotions through mechanisms that are not unique to music (Juslin & Västfjäll, 2008). However, it has illuminated many insights in how music can effect emotion and how that can be measured, especially in the area of emotional peaks and chills.

Blood and Zatorre (2001) have observed significant psychophysiological activity during music-induced chills, which follows similar brain imaging of euphoria and pleasant emotion, which is considerably different from unpleasant responses. They suggest that this is a significant benefit to mental and physical well-being, which could signify a new aspect of human cognition (2001). The improvement of mental health can support coping skills and return a healthier more emotionally stable person (Campbell, 2014). It is evident that ASMR is a pleasurable experience. Listening to pleasurable music shows a surprising similarity to brain activity induced by euphoric drugs (Fachner, 2006). ASMR has been described using drug-induced experiences. It is the pleasurable aspect of ASMR that motivates people to indulge in its effects. Intense pleasure experienced when listening to music is connected with dopamine activity in the mesolimbic reward system, which has evolved to reinforce necessary evolutionary behaviours (Salimpoor, Benevoy, Larcher, Dagher, & Zatorre, 2011).

ASMR strongly influences a person's state. The *flow state* founded by Csikszentmihalyi (1990) is a state where people are so absorbed in an activity that nothing else matters. Barratt and Davis (2014) connect ASMR with the flow state, and claim that participants who can achieve a flow state can experience ASMR more frequently but it is not always necessary to do so. ASMR could be a kind of flow state as seen from the findings in this study, which bring the individual into a relaxed focused state of mind intrinsically or extrinsically. It can be at the same time sedating and energizing and brings an awareness of one self and the environment. In a peak experience, such as ASMR, the individuals' attention is completely absorbed on the relevant stimulus (Gabrielsson, 2001). Whereas flow most often refers to an optimal state when engaged in physical activity ASMR seems to most often elicit the opposite, a kind of *passive flow* quality. Flow does have a similar quality to ASMR; it is a state of attaining happiness through control over one's inner life (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

What seems more plausible is the idea that ASMR is a form of *vitality*, which is described by Stern (2010) as a dynamic form of emotional life. Stern (2010) states that vitality forms are dynamic forms of emotion but are not the same as emotions, that emotion is only one possible outcome of a dynamic experience. It begins with the *physical dynamics*, the stimuli, which affects the *neuronal dynamics*, from there comes the *vitality dynamics*, which is the physiological/subjective experience, which elicits an *elaborated psychological response* such as emotion or perception. This could explain the absence of emotion in certain ASMR

experiences. It is the intermediary response that regulates the type and dynamic of the action. Cesare, Dio, Rochat, Sinigaglia, Bruschweiler-Stern, Stern & Rizzolatti (2013), have observed that vitality form processing activates the dorso-central sector of the insula, which points to a different pathway from emotional and unemotional actions. Further they state that this specific neurological system could govern the particular feelings elemental to vitality forms in action processing.

Music is an art form in sound that is often accompanied with lyrics, which carry meaning and have representational power of emotion that sounds alone cannot convey. Even without the representational emotional power of lyrics, music has been described as the most emotional art form and is the medium of choice when searching to effect a change in mood (Huron & Margulis, 2010). The power of music is its potential to evoke emotion, emotion derived from a real life event with or without the accompaniment of lyrics. The aesthetic appeal of music cannot be denied. ASMR shows characteristics of the four types of ecstasy experienced in peak aesthetic experiences described by Panzarella (1980): *renewal ecstasy*, an altered perception of the world; *motor sensory ecstasy*; physical and quasi-physical responses; *withdrawal ecstasy*, loss of contact with the physical and social environment; and *fusion emotional ecstasy*, merging with the aesthetic object. People who appreciate the arts notice more about the world, which can be extended to include music and other aesthetic stimuli, are high in Openness, which guides individual differences in attention to both internal and external stimuli (McCrae, 2007).

Piloerection could also function as a tactile trigger itself. This would work in a positive feedback loop, which would explain why often the most potent ASMR or musical chills are accompanied with piloerection. In the right circumstances for ASMR, piloerection could start a chain reaction that would increase the duration and potency of ASMR until the body's resources to sustain the piloerection are extinguished. Piloerection is not always present in times of musical chills (Benedek & Kaernbach, 2011); this suggests that piloerection is only one aspect of ASMR.

Tactile stimuli are the most common direct source of triggers but not as common as sound sources or visual sources. Direct human contact is sought after by most every human being but is not always as easily obtained as indirect sources via audio or visual sources. It is

observed that trigger sources originate from human activity. Even discreet triggers can be very potent stimuli and cause chills, which suggest that triggers are highly individualized, depending on previous experiences and personal preferences (Salimpoor, et al., 2009). Panksepp (1995) reported that chills occurred most often by music chosen by participants rather than music chosen by the researcher, which suggests conditioning to the stimulus a strong factor. This supports the idea that ASMR is caused by familiar stimuli, such as the specific sound of the guitar being identified as a strong trigger. Furthermore the quality of the guitar's sound is very similar to the human voice and its frequency range 82hz – 1396hz is within the range where the human ear is most sensitive (Traube, 2004). The potency of a particular trigger sound could be due to how sound can be interpreted as a tactile sensation (Watanabe, Hayakawa, Matsui, Kano, Shimizu & Sakamoto, 2012). There is a strong connection with ASMR triggers associated with human made sounds and behaviour. Vocal melody is assumed to be the strongest factor in evoking chills (Durza, 2001).

Auditory cues are often present in visual triggers. Movie music or sounds correlating to visual cues described by one data contributor, “watching people unwrap food with crinkly packages,” are strong triggers. ASMR videos, which display role-playing scenarios such as massage, hair cutting, make-up application, etc., take advantage of visual and aural triggers. The videos are often in the perspective of POV (point of view) and contain soft, whispering voices that often pan from left to right (<http://asmrhub.com/videos/>). The combined effect of the sound and content of the video creates a potent trigger. Audiovisual mirror neurons perform almost perfectly in the presence of both visual and auditory stimuli and less when presented with only one (Keysers, et al., 2003). This is also true of music and lyrics having a dual effect of musical sound and syntactic communication, and could be true of any combination of stimuli. People are able to mirror our own mental forms when we perceive the actions of someone else (Keysers, Kohler, Umiltà, Nanetti, Fogassi & Gallese, 2003). This is a prevalent aspect to the person who experiences ASMR. It seems that they are even hyper sensitive to the source of the trigger.

We can understand how people experience ASMR by listening to their experiences. To get a more thorough understanding of the underlying mechanisms would require research that would be able to return very detailed and specific data on each individual experience. It is important to note that people experience ASMR to evoke a relaxed state of mind that allows

the individual a greater perceptual awareness of themselves and their environment. To regard ASMR as a necessary evolutionary behaviour can be seen as a beneficial process. The evolutionary direction of humans is to produce organisms capable of clairvoyance and prophecy (Huron & Margulis, 2010). This is an extravagant conclusion to place on the evolution of humans and yet may be the appropriate direction. At the very least ASMR evokes a sense of empathy, benevolence and compassion.

Grounded theory typically involves theoretical sampling, which involves collecting a new data set to test the emergent theory (Hawker & Kerr, 2007). External validation by testing the theory is a concluding step in grounded theory. This could be done by methodological triangulation, theoretical triangulation or respondent validation however these each has their limitations: Rather than validating the theory it would just create more data and complicate individual insights gained (Payne, 2007). This would be a good point from which to continue or start new research.

The scope of the study was focused on musically induced ASMR therefore the data sample used was limited to music related ASMR. This was necessary to limit the overwhelming amount of data that did not associate music with ASMR. It would be beneficial to include the entire data sample.

5 CONCLUSIONS

It is concluded that musical chills can be ASMR however it can not be definitively concluded that all musically induced ASMR are musical chills without further research into this topic. The factors that play a role in triggering an ASMR are multi-dimensional and it is highly unlikely that any one variable could be extracted from the situation. In any given moment an individual experiences life intrinsically and extrinsically, it is the synergistic effect of all the present variables that an ASMR will be triggered.

The reoccurring theme concluded from previous studies is the need for more empirical research. Previous empirical research has been in the area of emotion and peaks in music by measuring, Skin Conductance Response (SCR) and Heart Rate (HR) (Grewe, Katur, Kopiez, & Altenmüller, 2011; Grewe, Kopiez & Altenmüller, 2009), brain activity with the use of fMRI & PET (Salimpoor, V., Benevoy, M., Larcher, K., Dagher, A. & Zatorre, R., 2011), PET, MRI, electromyogram (EMG) and respiration depth (RESP) (Blood & Zatorre, 2001), and EEG (Lowis, 2010). These studies provide evidence that there are physiological responses in people who reported chills or peaks, however the findings did not help to explain how or what the underlying mechanisms are with any definitive conclusions. Musical chills are an ambiguous phenomenon, which has led to an expanse of theories which all validate the vastness of the phenomenon.

There is currently very little known about musically induced ASMR or ASMR in general and what is known is sourced from internet web pages, blogs and articles written by independent writers for various news media. It is a phenomenon that is experienced by a multitude of people but has had very little research. It has often been deemed an internet fetish to those who seek out 'whisper' communities and indulge in ASMR videos for their relaxing and sedating effects (Hudelson, 2012). It is clear that ASMR is real and that people seek out other ASMR communities to discuss and share their experiences.

Musical chills can be ASMR even though previous research may run contrary to recent findings. Research into musical chills have discovered that:

The most common places in the body that participants reported the shiver/tingling sensation associated with chills were the arms (89% of participants), hands and fingers (63%), face and head (60%), neck (60%), and spine (48%). 79% of participants reported pilo-erection at some point during the chills perceived in the experiment, occurring most commonly on the arms (73% of participants), back of neck (60%), and legs (60%). Other sensations participants reported with chills were a feeling of coldness (79%), increased mental alertness or awareness (71 %), and alleviation of tension and anxiety (75%). (Craig, 2005, pp. 278–279)

The study does not mention the directionality of the chills and only reports a 57% (N=32) piloerection arousal during reported chill experiences on the upper arm (Craig, 2005); Other body parts were not measured for piloerection. In contrast with Barret & Davis' study on ASMR (2014),

63% of participants reported the tingling sensation associated with ASMR to originate consistently in one part of their body, while 27% said this origin varied. Of those that reported a consistent origin, the static tingling sensation was reported to typically originate on the back of the head (41%) and shoulders (29%). When intense, this sensation is able to extend down the line of the spine (50%), arms (25%) and legs (21%), though this does not occur in every session, and every individual does not experience the same route. (P.233–238)

Craig (2005) reported an increase in mental alertness or awareness and alleviation of tension and anxiety. It is well known amongst the ASMR community that ASMR is sought after specifically for these qualities. What is important to note in Craig's study (2005) is a 79% report of piloerection at some point during the chills. This shows that piloerection is a separate reaction from chills. This seems to be a common remark made in other research where chills were involved.

Referring to the data used in this thesis, there is nearly 10% of the population who experience ASMR while listening to music. It has been mentioned by a few contributors from this group that musical chills are different from ASMR but the majority of those who experience Musically Induced ASMR state it is the same. Musical chills may very well be a separate phenomenon from musical ASMR; this is a distinction that will need further research. It must also be considered that in previous studies, in which the measured phenomenon was thought to be musical chills could have actually been musical ASMR. For the purposes of this paper there is enough conclusive evidence that ASMR can be induced by music and that the two phenomena are related and somewhat interchangeable. Assuming that musical chills and

musical ASMR are the same or at least a similar phenomenon opens the possibility for considering the body of research on musical chills as a support to understanding musical ASMR and of ASMR in general.

It would seem that type B has precedent over type A. For someone to be able to control the internal state of mind that triggers ASMR they must have had an experience from which to refer. One data contributor explains her experience, “after reading the information posted here, I know that I am a Type A however I can also get the tingling sensation in my head by external stimuli and when I induce the sensation myself I am usually meditating on some type of external stimuli that I have experienced before” (Valentine, 2014). It is a matter of recalling and focusing on a memory from a real live event. This also shows the redundancy to assign a type to the experience, at least until there is a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. One data contributor describes her experience, “it often comes when I think about nothing, or if im [sic] not aware of that I'm thinking, It's really hard to explain, Im not sure that im [sic] a type A och [sic] B” (Valentine 2014). Another data contributor also has difficulties to properly distinguish his ASMR, “I can also do type A when I try to focus on listening to sounds” (Valentine, 2014). He fails to understand that by focusing on the sounds, he is being influenced by external stimuli. The newest and most comprehensive platform of ASMR, at the website of <http://asmruniversity.com>, does not distinguish these ASMR types. This unifies ASMR and the people who experience it, where there is already much uncertainty.

Aural and tactile cues have been observed to be content based or quality based. Content-based triggers refer to a concrete object or substantive information that is heard and quality based refers to how it sounds, soft, loud, etc. It has been observed in a previous study that loudness of the sound can affect the causation of chills (Huron, 2007). What was observed from this data was not the loudness but the proximity of the sound, described by one data contributor, “I would have my head pressed right up against it [radio] as I lay there,” when listening to headphones or when the person is whispering. It seems that the quality of the sound is a much stronger trigger than the content.

Content-based triggers that are heard are cerebral triggers that stimulate the awareness of the individual in their environment and how they perceive themselves in the environment in which they are present. These triggers are conveyed in words or musical features. Meaning is

drawn from what is heard, which has an impact on the specific individual who is listening. The assimilation of content and quality is a very strong trigger. Unlike aural triggers, visual triggers are only content based, however most visual triggers are almost always accompanied by sound, which would have a dual effect on the one listening and watching. It has been documented that both listening to music (Zatorre, 2005) and imagining music (Haueisen and Knösche, 2001; Zatorre, Chen, & Penhune, 2007) activates the motor system of the brain, suggesting that even in the absence of sound, music imagery involves both auditory and motor components (Pannese, 2012). Without an understanding of the underlying mechanisms of ASMR, the activation of the motor system in the absence of sound and voluntary movement could suggest that listening to music or imagining music could trigger ASMR. This points to the possibility that ASMR could be experienced with or without an external stimulus, but it does not clarify the necessity to divide the experiences, as one is the *a priori* of the other.

Emotions are elusive, fleeting and often ineffable. Emotions can trigger physiological reactions but they too can be internalized and unnoticed or little attention is placed on them. A perceptible change in the galvanic skin response would not be the focus of an experience or would even likely be noticed. ASMR is the body's mechanism that has evolved to signal significant personal environmental stimuli and the internal responses in an experience that cannot be missed. When someone falls in love there are physical and physiological responses that cannot always be explained. The benefit of a loss of appetite, the weakness of the muscles, aching of the heart and loss of concentration seem to have very little use in the pursuit of love. They are however signs that tells us that something significant is happening and brings our attention to the stimulus of desire. ASMR works as a similar notification response but on different level than love. Rather than directing our focus to the stimulus the stimulus triggers something within us that lies dormant in the psyche. It is an introverted experience that brings introspective awareness. In doing so we learn more about ourselves which brings a greater understanding of our environment and how we experience and make sense of the world in which we live.

It seems there is a large number of people who experience ASMR who have had no way to comfortably share or explain their feelings. Relatively new endeavours in which individuals and bloggers have founded ASMR web sites have opened the grounds for others to share and

explain their experiences. The often extremely pleasurable feelings that accompany ASMR can be confused with sexual feelings and can be especially confusing for those who have experienced ASMR in their childhood. One data contributor explained that he thought he was normal but when he tried to talk about it and found that no one knew what he was talking about, he stopped mentioning it. When left to their own speculations about the sensations they feel has often lead these people to the conclusion that they are sick or deviant, and it is often the case that their fears have been supported when they have received negative feedback after sharing their experience with others. One data contributor explained that he was feeling weirdly lonely and was relieved to “not feel like such a freak,” when he discovered that others have the same experience. Skin orgasm is a term that is often used to describe ASMR and chills but has not been accepted by the academic community possibly due to its connotation to sexual activity; it may also make it difficult for participants to separate their own experiences with sexual orgasm so they may objectively report their experience (Harrison & Loui, 2014). It is important to shed light on this topic so people who have ASMR will be confident to share their experiences so that ASMR and the people who experience it may be accepted and understood by the general population. A greater understanding of ASMR through future research will continue to grow as ASMR gains more interest; through a general acknowledgement of its existence by people who are confident to share their experiences.

Much more than our predecessors we are bombarded with media and have become reliant on technology to be connected with each other. We are connected now more often to other people electronically rather than physically. ASMR could be a way that humans have evolved to cope with the loss of real human contact. As more people regard the world in which we live and the implications our actions have on the environment and on the other species we share this earth with, there will be a greater sense of connection and benevolence to all. This awareness is the only thing that will bring a change to the lack of empathy and compassion, as is the world's condition, led by the human species. By becoming more aware of ourselves we also become more aware of how our environment affects our health and well-being. For humans to thrive in a sustainable manner there will have to be an effective change in how we perceive the world and our relation to each other. ASMR could be the catalyst that will effect that change. Life is a learning experience and although there are many who have an innate skill, that skill needs practice and experience to achieve its full potential. Strives in human abilities are made everyday by talented individuals; this can also be true of ASMR as it has

been documented as an experience that can be enhanced and expanded through a process of learning and practice. It may be something that is much more prevalent in the human population that is currently unknown because of the taboo that surrounds it. When brought into the light we can take hold of it and bring ourselves to our full potential.

6 REFERENCES

ASMR Research & Support (n.d.). Retrieved February 15, 2014 from <http://www.asmr-research.org>.

Barratt, E.L. & Davis, N.J. (2014). Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR): A flow-like mental state. *PeerJ PrePrints*. Retrieved January 20, 2015 from <https://peerj.com/preprints/719v1.pdf>.

Benedek, M. & Kaernbach, C. (2011). Physiological correlates and emotional specificity of human piloerection. *Biological Psychology*, 86, pp.320–329.

Blood, A. J. & Zatorre, R.J. (2001). Intensely pleasurable responses to music correlate with activity in brain regions implicated in reward and emotion. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 98(20), 11818-11823. Retrieved from www.scopus.com.

Campbell, E. (2014). *Music as an Intervention for Pain Relief*. (Master's Thesis). Retrieved from Jyväskylä University Digital Archive. Asseccion No. URN:NBN:fi:jyu-201406021894.

Cesare, G., Dio, D., Rochat, M., Sinigaglia, C., Bruschweiler-Stern, N., Stern, D. & Rizzolatti, G. (2013). The neural correlates of 'vitality form' recognition: an fMRI study: *Soc Cogn Affect Neurosci*. doi:10.1093/scan/nst068.

Cheadle, H. (2012, July). ASMR, the Good Feeling No One Can Explain. *Vice*. Retrieved February 16, 2013, from <http://www.vice.com>.

Collins, S.T. (2012, September). Why Music Gives You The Chills. *Buzzfeed*. Retrieved March 9, 2013, from <http://www.buzzfeed.com>.

Craig, D.G. (2005). An Exploratory Study of Physiological Changes during "Chills" Induced by Music. *Musicae Scientiae*. July, 9: 273-287, retrieved March, 28 2014 from <http://msx.sagepub.com>.

ChrisLdn (2015, February 20). ASMR: a guide to those mysterious head tingles. Retrieved from <http://chrisldn.hubpages.com/hub/asmr-2>.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. New York: Harper & Row.

Davidson, D. & Parrott, A. C. (1997). Ecstasy (MDMA) in Recreational Users: Self-Reported Psychological and Physiological Effects. *Human Psychopharmacology*, 12, 221–226. Retrieved from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com>

Durza, J. (2011). *Structural and perceptual correlates of the musical peak experiences*. (Master's Thesis). Retrieved from Jyväskylä University Digital Archive. (Asseccion No. URN:NBN:fi:jyu-2011112611734).

Ekman, P. (1992). Are there basic emotions? *Psychological Review*, 99(3), 550-553. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.99.3.550>.

Fachner, J. (2006). Music and Drug Induced Altered States of Consciousness. In David Aldridge (Ed), *Music and Altered States : Consciousness, Transcendence, Therapy and Addictions*. (pp. 82–96). London, GBR: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Frisson. (2014). In *Merriam-Webster.com*. Retrieved September 30, 2014, from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/frisson>.

Frisson. (2014). In *The Free Dictionary.com*. Retrieved September 30, 2014, from <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/frisson>.

Gabrielsson, A. (2001). Emotions in Strong Experiences with Music. In Patrik N. Juslin & John A. Sloboda (Ed.), *Music and emotion: Theory and research* (pp. 431–449). New York, NY, US: Oxford University Press.

Gabrielsson, A. & Lindström Wik, S. (2003). Strong Experiences Related to Music: A Descriptive System. *Musicae Scientiae*, 7(2), 157-217.

Gladwell, M. (2005). *Blink: The power of thinking without thinking*. New York: Little, Brown and Co.

Glaser, B. (2012). Stop. Write! Writing Grounded Theory. *Grounded Theory Review: An international journal*, 11, (1). Retrieved from <http://groundedtheoryreview.com>.

Grewe, O., Katzur, B., Kopiez, R. & Altenmüller, E. (2011). Chills in different sensory domains: Frisson elicited by acoustical, visual, tactile and gustatory stimuli. *Psychology of Music*, 39(2), 220-239. Retrieved from www.scopus.com.

Grewe, O., Kopiez, R. & Altenmüller, E. (2009). Chills as an indicator of individual emotional peaks. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, Volume 1169, 351-354. Retrieved from www.scopus.com

Grewe, O., Kopiez, R. & Altenmüller, E. (2009). The chill parameter: Goose bumps and shivers as promising measures in emotion research. *Music Perception*, 27(1), 61-74. Retrieved from www.scopus.com.

Grewe, O., Nagel, F., Kopiez, R. & Altenmüller, E. (2005). How does music arouse "chills"? investigating strong emotions, combining psychological, physiological, and psychoacoustical methods. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1060, 446-449. Retrieved from www.scopus.com.

Grewe, O., Nagel, F., Kopiez, R. & Altenmüller, E. (2007). Listening to music as a re-creative process: Physiological, psychological, and psychoacoustical correlates of chills and strong emotions. *Music Perception*, 24(3), 297-314. Retrieved from www.scopus.com.

Harrison, L. D., & Loui, P. (2014). Thrills, Chills, Frissons, and Skin Orgasms: Toward an Integrative Model of Transcendent Psychophysiological Moments in Music. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 5. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00790.

Hawker, S. & Kerr, C. (2007). Doing Grounded Theory. In Evanthia Lyons & Adrian Coyle (Ed.), *Analysing Qualitative Data in Psychology*. (pp. 87–97). London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Hodges, D.A. (2009). Bodily responses to music. In S. Hallam, I. Cross, M. Thaut (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Music Psychology* (pp. 121-130). New York: Oxford University Press.

Hudelson, J. (2012, December 10). Listening to Whisperers: Performance, ASMR Community and Fetish on YouTube. Retrieved from <http://soundstudiesblog.com/author/joshuahudelson>.

Huron, D. (2007). *Sweet anticipation: Music and the psychology of expectation*. Cambridge, Mass.

Huron, D. (2009). Aesthetics. In S. Hallam, I. Cross, M. Thaut (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Music Psychology* (pp. 151-159). New York: Oxford University Press.

Huron, D. & Margulis, E. (2010). Musical expectancy and thrills. In Patrik N. Juslin & John Sloboda (Ed.), *Handbook of Music and Emotion: Theory, Research and Applications* (pp. 578–604). New York: Oxford University Press.

Jones, L. (2012, December 9). Which moments in songs give you chills. *NME*. Retrieved February 16, 2013, from <http://www.nme.com>.

Juslin, P. (2009). Emotional Responses to Music. In Hallam, S., Cross, I. & Thaut, M. (Ed.), *Oxford Handbook of Music Psychology* (pp. 131–140). New York: Oxford University Press.

Juslin, P., Liljeström, S., Västfjäll, D., Barradas, G. & Silva, A. (2008). An Experience Sampling Study of Emotional Reactions to Music: Listener, Music, and Situation. *Emotion*, (8)5, pp. 668–683.

Juslin, P. & Västfjäll, D. (2008). Emotional Responses to Music: the need to consider underlying mechanisms. *Behavioural and Brain Sciences*, (31), p.559-621.

Keysers, C., Kohler, E., Umiltà, M., Nanetti, L., Fogassi, L. & Gallese, V. (2003).

Audiovisual mirror neurons and action recognition. *Springer-Verlag*. Retrieved from <http://link.springer.com.ezproxy.jyu.fi/article/10.1007/s00221-003-1603-5>.

Larsen, R. J. (2000). Toward a science of mood regulation. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11 (3), 129-141.

Lehmann, A. C. (1997). Affective response to everyday life events and music listening. *Psychology of Music*, 25(1), 84–90.

Lewis, M. J. (2010). Emotional Responses to Listening to Music: A review of some previous research and an original 5-phase study. *Journal of Applied Arts and Health*, (1)1, 81-92. Retrieved March 15, 2015, from <http://docserver.ingentaconnect.com>.

Lyons, E. (2007). Analysing Qualitative Data: Comparative Reflections. In Evanthia Lyons & Adrian Coyle (Ed.), *Analysing Qualitative Data in Psychology*. (pp. 158–172). London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Marsden, R. (2012, July 21). Maria spends 20 minutes folding towels: Why millions are mesmerised by ASMR videos. *The Independent*. Retrieved February 16, 2013, from <http://www.independent.co.uk>.

Maslow, A.H. (1964). *Religions, Values and Peak Experiences*. Ohio State University Press.

Maslow, A.H. (1971). Peak Experiences in Education and Art. *Theory into Practice*, (10)3, 149-153.

Mayer, J. & Salovey, P. (1997). What is emotional intelligence? In P. Salovey & D. Sluyter (Eds.), *Emotional development and emotional intelligence: Implications for educators*, pp. 3-31. New York: Basic Books.

McCrae, R. (2007). Aesthetic chills as a universal marker of openness to experience. *Motivation and Emotion*, 31(1), 5-11. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11031-007-9053-1>.

Menon, V. & Levitin, D. (2005). The rewards of music listening: Response and physiological connectivity of the mesolimbic system. *NeuroImage*, 28, 175–184.

Nagel, F., Kopiez, R. Grewe, O., & Altenmüller, E. (2008). Psychoacoustical correlates of musically induced chills. *Musicae Scientiae*, 12(1), 101–113.

Nolas, S. (2011a). Grounded Theory Approaches. In Nollaig Frost, *Qualitative Research Methods In Psychology*. (pp.16–43). Berkshire, GBR: McGraw-Hill Education.

Nolas, S. (2011b). Pragmatics of Pluralistic Qualitative Research. In Nollaig Frost, *Qualitative Research Methods In Psychology*. (pp.121–144). Berkshire, GBR: McGraw-Hill Education.

Panksepp, J. (1995). The Emotional Sources of "Chills" Induced by Music. *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, (13)2, 171-207.

Pannese, A. (2012). A gray matter of taste: Sound perception, music cognition, and Baumgarten's aesthetics. *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*, 43, 594–601.

Panzarella, R. (1980). The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Peak Experiences. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 20(1), 69-85.

Payne, S. (2007). Grounded Theory. In Evanthia Lyons & Adrian Coyle (Ed.), *Analysing Qualitative Data in Psychology*. (pp. 65–86). London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Reichertz, J. (2007). Abduction: The Logic of Discovery of Grounded Theory. In A. Bryant, & K. Charmaz (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Grounded Theory*. (pp. 214-229). London, England: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Saarikallio, S., Nieminen, S. & Brattico, E. (2012). Affective reactions to musical stimuli reflect emotional use of music in everyday life. *Musicae Scienriae*, 17(1), 27–39.

Salimpoor, V., Benevoy, M., Larcher, K., Dagher, A. & Zatorre, R. (2011). Atomically distinct dopamine release during anticipation and experience of peak emotion to music. *Nature Neuroscience*, 14(2), 257-264.

Salimpoor, V., Benovoy, M., Longo, G., Cooperstock, J. & Zatorre, R. (2009) The Rewarding Aspects of Music Listening Are Related to Degree of Emotional Arousal. *PLoS ONE* 4(10): e7487. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0007487.

Sloboda, J. (1991). Music Structure and Emotional Response: Some Empirical Findings. *Psychology of Music*, (19) 2, pp. 110-120.

Sloboda, J.A. & Juslin, P.N. (2001). Psychological perspectives on music and emotion. In Patrik N. Juslin & John A. Sloboda (Ed.), *Music and emotion: Theory and research* (pp. 71-104). New York, NY, US: Oxford University Press.

Stern, D. (2010). *Forms of Vitality: Exploring Dynamic Experience in Psychology, the Arts, Psychotherapy, and Development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Storey, L. (2007). Doing Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis. In Evanthia Lyons & Adrian Coyle (Ed.), *Analyzing Qualitative Data in Psychology*. (pp. 51–64). London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Traube, C. (2004). *An Interdisciplinary Study on the Timbre of the Classical Guitar*. (PhD. Dissertation). Retrieved from <http://www.academia.edu/914878>.

Valentine, A., (2014, September 24). ASMR: What is This Tingling Sensation in My Head? Retrieved from <http://anti-valentine.hubpages.com/hub/ASMR>.

Watanabe, J., Hayakawa, T., Matsui, S., Kano, A., Shimizu, Y. & Sakamoto, M. (2012). Visualization of Tactile Material Relationships Using Sound Symbolic Words. *Haptics: Perceptin, Devices, Mobility, and Communication*, 175–180. Retrieved from <http://link.springer.com>.

Zatorre, R., Chen, J. & Penhune, V. (2007). When the brain plays music:

auditory-motor interactions in music perception and production. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 8(7), 547–558.

Zatorre, R., & Halpern, A. (2005). Mental concerts: Musical imagery and auditory cortex. *Neuron*, 47(1), 9–12.

7 APPENDIXES

7.1 Appendix 1: Open Codes

1 Anti-Valentine

When I was a young boy, I remember having these experiences where I would listen to the radio on the bed. I would have my head pressed right up against it as I lay there, taking in every word – to the point where it actually left deep grooves in the side of my head (they went away eventually, don't worry).

I also clearly remember when I was about eight or so, sitting outside in the sun on the back porch, near the pool, listening to the old gardener we used to have years ago whistle while he worked. I was just so caught up in the moment, and had these intense tingling sensations just flow from my head.

This was the beginning of a life-long journey that would bring me to my most recent discoveries, and attempts to try and get behind the origin of this seemingly undocumented phenomenon – something that I had taken for granted for years, and hadn't known if anyone else had ever had the same feeling.

I continued to have these sensations throughout my childhood, my teenage years, and in to adulthood. It was only in 2009 that I searched for something related for the first time online, even though I'd had the internet for years, and came across a forum where people were discussing this exact thing: a strange, but pleasurable feeling that felt like tingles in the head – which some described as akin to an orgasm or perhaps being on a high after recreational drug use. Some addicts who also experience these sensations claim it even rivals Ecstasy or "E" as far as the effects are concerned.

I naturally read through this two-part series of threads where people talked about it, and gave their opinions on what it was, and what caused it. Not only that but I began to search for other threads similar in topic, and also began to actively try and experience this sensation more and more often. One thing I did was to start collecting audio clips, watch video clips online, listen to the radio, and watch certain programs on TV that were dead certs – that is to say, guaranteed to create this head tingling sensation.

2 Sarah

Hi, I don't know if I have this. At first I was sure but once I passed the triggers list I wasn't so sure anymore. Usually my triggers are with people touching me on my back, neck, shoulders and ears area. Though most common trigger with me is warmth. Especially if I take a warm shower while its freezing outside or I am hugged by someone who is really warm while I'm really cold. I know that I have experiencing this from a young age (I'm 15) I remember telling my patents about how my brain feel like its growing, and it's tingly or how it's running down my spine. It still happens but less often since the triggers come across less often. Another trigger is watching something very emotional happen or being a part of something very emotional, or even music with a deep base and an amazing sound turned up in my head phones. Is this considered ASMR? Or is it something else. I have been wondering about it for most of my life. I asked friends and most didn't understand what I was trying to describe. My mom is in the medical field and she didn't know anything about it either. When I tried to search it up online previous times, my searches were too vague and general since I knew too little about it.

3 TheConfusedGuy

I don't know if this is even ASMR, I don't get the feeling with ANY of the "causes" but when I listen to techno, dubstep, hardstyle, cool raps, the music you hear when you see people charging into battle in a movie, motivational epic speeches and such, not soft sounds at all, can someone please identify what this is?

4 Ninjablossom

Glad I found this! I was trying to describe it to a friend and best I could come up with is **- it's like flipping a bliss switch in my head!** **It's like runners high with out doing anything or the euphoric feeling when taking an e.** I'm interested in people who don't get it from videos etc. I've found I can get it **when watching trees blowing and clouds**, I guess this is a **kind of meditation** but **some music can bring it on. But no tingling for me, it's like a wave of warmth and the euphoria which when it lasts is like blissing out or buzzing and just calms down slowly** - that's why I hate the term brain orgasam, it's a slower build and decline and **not sexual** - **and it leaves a kind of content ness**. Some days it feels triggered easily and others not at all so wonder if my mood effects it.... And I've noticed it so much more since **I quit drinking**. This is one of the more rounded articles I've read on this, thankyou!

5 Vik

I always have these and it's **the most euphoric thing on earth, drugs and sex? crumbles next to it. i get it from music and music videos often ambient or intense** . sometimes **it's like waves of tingling energy across my scalp** , other and much more intense are the ones that are like a feeling i'm having trouble describing, sort of **like an orgasm that shoots between the end of your neck and back of your skull and rises ballooning upward and it freezes you up** , happens usually at the climax of a musical piece and lasts few seconds and then **you just fall apart and collapse in relaxation and just breathe heavily for a moment** .i haven't discussed this feeling with anybody else because i've heard no outside mention of it until now , everybody has shivers **from awe inspiring music** and film but i haven't seen anybody just **orgasm and collapse from it like me** . i also have other bodily **feelings from intense music** and all of them are just **wonderful ...just thought i'd share**, i'm probably not coming back here again, if you want to contact me just email me on vga01@mail.aub.edu

6 Craig

I used to get these a lot when I was younger, not so much now, but I think the serotonin theory is most likely, in my late teens/early twenties **I took a lot of ecstasy, and the feeling of 'coming up' on E was nearly identical to that of ASMR episodes**, and of course the way ecstasy works is by releasing loads of serotonin into the brain. I only get it nowadays from **listening to very melodic and uplifting trance music (as in the form of electronic dance music)**. or if **I'm getting intimate with a girl** and she is **whispering or breathing into my ear**.

7 Alicia

I have had this for as long as i can remember, i called it **"fizzy head"** **i can induce it my self** but i get it when i **listen to uplifting music**, i also can **get this feeling in my butt, thighs, shoulders lower back and when its someting really plesent the sensation starts at my head and shoots all the way down to my legs** and **the feeling that comes with it is "i feel so good to be alive"** I have also had it when i am ill like with the flu and **while meditating**. I love it.

8 Bosu

Thought I was alone in this, never bothered to do a Google search... Surprise. Growing up, I recall experiencing this frequently when **listening to strangers speak, acoustically-dynamic music**, finally figuring out a painting... I've been able, **by doing a sort of movement of my back with my eyes closed and putting a sort "pressure" behind my eyes**, to give myself this feeling whenever I want. **It rushes from my head to my toes.**

9 Kale

Good music is my failsafe trigger for this feeling. Almost my entire music collection is comprised of tunes that give me **that tingling sensation**. Its true, the more you listen to the same song the more you get "used" to hearing it and the feeling eventually doesnt happen from that song anymore. Some songs manage to get me every time, though.

I get it from other things too, like really **intense movie trailers**, or when **I'm having a conversation with someone and I feel like they are really in tune with what I am saying** and **I become really intense**. I think the feeling has a lot more to do with emotions and inner feelings than it has to do with any physical touch. **There's a huge difference between this feeling and just plain "goosebumps" from being grazed or touched lightly.**

10 BryWhit

I have had many things like this. Whan my brothers and sisters are watching TV and **I'm listening**, not watching, **I feel small tickels in my stomach. When music is on and it ends, I sometimes get watery eyes. But only certain music, like music with singing.** When I woke up this morning, I was worried I was late for class. I then saw small balls moving together to make what time it was after I closed my eyes. I went down stairs and it was a minute after the time I saw in my mind. I could also tell where my brother was hiding, by getting impatient about finding him. I usaully have these things when I have problems with controllling emotions. I can not force push, but I can force sense. Some of my brothers have the same thing, it might be in certain geans of familys. When I am afraid when I am in the dark, I see in my mind after I close my eyes, that there is nothing to be afraid of. I then do what I had to do and leave the darkness. When I watch tense things, I get scared because I don't know what will happen next. When a sudden move or noise occurs, I get scared and do the same thing I do when I'm in the dark. If I weren't born with this sensitivite, I would not be posting this!:)

11 L

If you take MDMA you will get it not only in your head but all over your body for hours. Music triggers the normal short-lived one easily in my head. It is definitely a large release of serotonin.

12 Artist

It is go great to see so many people that have this, I thought I was the only person that ever had this. None of my friends or family ever mentioned anything like this.

I get the tingle on the left side of my head. My triggers are: **people chewing gum, whistlers, people using something that is mine, people speaking softly and live guitar music.**

I'm artistic and somewhat introverted, which are two things that a number of others seem to be.

Thanks to everyone who shared.

13 Justin

I've had this too, **all my life.** Mine mainly comes **when I watch someone learning something, or reading. I've always explained it to myself as a "knowledge uptake/absorption frequency that people broadcast. that I pick up/receive".**

music and watching people write can do it too. glad there are other people!..

14 Paul flint

hi I also experience this fantastic sensation, I have even made it travel through the whole of my body and I see everything turn White.Pleased to find out I'm not the only one.Music does it for me

15 Namekeshak

I think this is awesome !!! finally, I found the **strange tingly feeling** is a experienced by others. i only get this feeling when i hear certain people speak, **listening to certain music**, & **cutting my hair!**
thanks

16 Bro #666

Wow it's cool to know that other people also experience these **wierd spurts of tingling**. Personally I think they're awesome and I too have been enjoying them since I was a kid. The main thing that triggers them for me would **definitely be music, mainly dubstep and rock**. I think it's really cool and they should do more research on it to see what causes ASMR. `

17 Josh843

This is my first time looking this up even though i felt it all the time, i just figured it was the chills or something like that, but recently ive REALLY gotten **into spirituality (not religion)** and i get this feeling a lot, **mostly when listening to music, but i can actually trigger it consciously!** It is such an amazing feeling, im working on getting my whole body to feel that way **but it will start either in the head, neck, or lower back, and it will travel throughout most of my body**, im workin on getting this amazing feeling to cover my legs and lower half of my body. I dont wanna say too much and look foolish on here because im not some genius and im trying to lose ego so you see where im going with this. But hopefully my 3rd eye will open or ill be able to have OBE's or something playing around with this wonderful sensation more. Peace and Love!

17 Josh843

Oh! I almost forgot... The way i can recall "learning" to trigger this sensation at will, Like i said in my last comment "i get this feeling a lot, **mostly when listening to music**" Its kinda hard to put into words **but i just want EVERYONE to feel what i feel more**, especially the ones who have NEVER exp this!!! Okay so, **when i listen to music that i like, my favorite genre is (pop punk) i just get this really good feeling in my heart and soul** and im sure people who will try this will most likely get instant effects unless you are a emotionless robot or something, jk jk. But right before this i was listening to music and i felt it and everything and the feeling takes over and goes away, **kinda like the current of an ocean, yknow (innn and outtt)** i guess hah. **But for consciously triggering this**, the last time i did it (like 5 minutes ago) i was imagining my body with my eyes closed looking up at the sun feeling the wind and the energy from the sun with my arms wide open. I wasnt thinking about the future or the past, i was completely in my own world for a minute, living in the now, per say. **But i feel "powerful" i guess when i trigger this feeling..maybe its because i almost cry when i do it**. But that is the best way i can help on this topic, the rest is completely up to you. Peace and Love!

18 Glecy

hi im glad im not alone i just experienced this **tingling in my head** last night when i was **watching & listening on you tube some Reiki Meditation**. it goes away but comes back **whenever i listen 2 some peaceful music**. that night also i dream about seeing the crucifixion of Jesus it was the 3 cross and Jesus at d middle then suddenly i heard his voice but did not see him jst his voice from heaven but i dont remember what he told me. all i remember was he had **the most beautiful voice that would realy touch d heart..** someone help me d meaning of dis dream? i remember also when i was graders dreaming of the virgin Mary on a cave.. and crying because i felt her pain and also the feeling of seeing her is unexplainable feeling.. **anyways im 23 now.. im also a musician, i love nature.. and dis is the first tym i felt this feeling..**

19 Dirk83

Yea I know this also :)).

I get it at random times. It seems to relate to anything and can intensify depending on circumstances.

Like once in the train when someone was eating an apple and the **sound of the bites and chewing** would **totally space me out**, and then the focusing on the temperature in the train being just on the **warm side of perfect and it made me almost completely numb...** **It's better than weed** or anything else I know.

I also get it with **people typing, people talking** and it somehow seems to be very amplified if there's a woman involved, or clean and pretty woman's hands for instance.

I **get it with music from time to time** and **when sound switches fast from left to right ear (or vice versa)**.

20 Axle

Wow this is crazy. **I'm 17 and really just found my ASMR**. My triggers are different then most but the **outcome is beyond amazing**. My trigger I most commonly use is being in a completely dark room lying down with **earphones and music. Usually fast past music such as dubstep only makes the experience super powerful**. Also i am an aspired fantasy author so when imaging about it while with the music creates **amazingness**. This can last for as long as I concentrate but I never do more than 10 min. **it always starts with head then back**. But if it's really good **it will crawl up to my cheeks and then waves go up and down in my body,** **it's so unreal**. **Some other triggers are mostly random that all have to do with high emotions that are typically good**

21 EG

From what I can recall I have been able to control this sensation since puberty around age 11(26 now). **Throughout the years I've actually learned to increase the intensity, duration and frequency of the sensations** but they are also triggered by external sources **from intense pleasurable sensory signals from great music , favorite food,** etc...

Not sure if it's linked to brain development, **since the control manifested with around puberty**. From my personal searching through the web and medical books, I always thought the sensations where caused by a controlled response of electrical signals sent to the pituitary gland to release endorphins via the bloodstream into the brain and spinal cord causing the wave like sensation.

On a side note I was wondering if anyone else **get goosebumps sometimes with the sensations**. I thought they were both related because the electrical signals would continue throughout my body causing the small muscles around the hair follicles to contract. Out of curiosity could ASMR have another group type? I am able to control the sensations in almost any environment unlike type a group but I am also prone to uncontrolled triggers as in type b group from external sensory stimuli.

22 Anonymous

I get these feeling alot **when listening to trance music like deadmau5 or kaskade...**like a natural ecstasy haha... but it only lasts several seconds

23 Kelly Bryant

its no **bad thing i think of it as a gift from god** it can ease your sole at the peek of depression **pick you up** and **energize your spirit** or just plain just **make you feel good ive had this sensation since i was a child in the 1970s** and believe me it helps im guessing everyone at some point in there life has had this feeling but just dont talk about also in my openion it **Colombians body spirit** and sound to creat this **tingling sensation but i only have it when i listen to music**

24 Brit

I would always get this feeling when someone physically touched my skin. I used to get my friends when I was younger to play with my hair or braid it, just to feel this head rush. I remember telling them I wanted a different style just so they would keep playing with my hair. haha. I also got it when I went to the hair salon, or if someone painted my nails, or if someone massaged my back. Even the slightest skin to skin contact would not only give me a head rush, but would give me chills down my spine that felt good. I also found out recently that watching massage videos with soft spoken voices and relaxing music gives me this head rush, as well as makes me tired. I also have Type A as well, as sometimes just thinking of something, or being so relaxed, it would give me that tingly feeling in my head.

25 Wes

Yeah I thought everyone got this feeling when they heard a peice of music that touches them or see something inspirational.

After I started meditating I found I'm able to do this at will, so anytime I need a boost, I just focus the tingling energy in the back of my head and down my spine.

26 Vivi

I have experienced this sensation my whole life. I always thought everyone experienced it, but never had a conversation with anyone about it. Today I had to switch radio stations while driving because I blood pressure was going up listening to NPR and the discussions of Congress and the debt. So I switched randomly to a classical station and got that old relaxed, tingly feeling again. Feels great, but not great when you're driving! Got back to my desk and decided to finally look up what causes it. I was sure it was well documented, everyone experienced it, and that there was a real name for it. Who knew it was rare and relatively unknown?!

Vivi

Left my last comment before reading everyone else's. Now I'll add a bit more. I have never done drugs, and never have more than one drink at a time when I occasionally have one. Nice to know I have been experiencing, for free and naturally, a feeling that so many people chase with drugs. My first memories of this feeling come from my mom doing my hair. As a Black little girl, this is a long and daily process, so I loved it. Also hearing my parents vacuuming the floor in another room triggered it. Music has always been a trigger, as well as certain sounds, many of the ones mentioned above. After reading all the comments, I realize that watching someone do something mundane is also a huge trigger for me. Sometimes I will put on certain music at night before I go to bed, and lie in the dark trying to induce the feeling. It does not always work, but most times it does. I am also amazed, as some of you, that not everyone experiences this. They don't feel this when they get a massages?! How sad for them. Now I'm going to go and ask friends and family if they have this. Thanks for starting this page and discussion.

27 ShaggyPete

WOW!! Thank you so much for this site!!

The first time I experienced ASMR (that I can remember) was as a young boy, when listening to my uncle talk. Man was he boring--but that didn't matter. He talked very softly, slowly, and ALWAYS gave me this sensation--first a tingling in the scalp, a euphoric feeling, then I'm totally relaxed, and feel waves of it. He could also play the guitar and produce the effect. I didn't think much of it--as a young boy, I thought it was normal. But when I brought it up in conversation, I found no one knew what I was talking about. I stopped mentioning it--now I'm 35, continue to experience it from listening to someone speaking (I'm 100% heterosexual, but it's nearly always soft-spoken men who produce the effect), music (for me it helps for it to be live, and acoustic guitar seems to work best), and perhaps a combination of being hungry and intaking caffeine and a bit of fatty food -- this is actually what I was experimenting with when I thought, "hey, the world web internet computer web thingy has gotten pretty full--maybe i can find someone talking about it!" and BAM, here I am, literally crying tears of joy at the knowledge I'm not "weird"--or maybe I AM, and it's a good thing! I'm going to bring this back up with people -- having a term for it makes you sound much less insane! -- starting with my wife and kids and close

friends. I'm going to find someone else who experiences ASMR (other than all of you internet people--I know you're not real. lol)!!

To me, **it feels like a "natural high" that rivals Hydrocodone**. I first googled euphoria and was disappointed in the wikipedia entry -- I think we should add an entry for ASMR on wikipedia -- and link it from the euphoria entry!

Again, thanks so much -- I would love to participate in some experiments to add my data point here and there:)

28 Silverraven1313

I've felt these sensations as far back as I can remember. I never knew it was an actual condition; my family and I just thought I was a little odd (they called it "tweaking"). My trigger **is generally music, especially orchestral pieces**. I play the violin and was in a chamber orchestra for years, so I guess I unknowingly surrounded myself with endless new triggers. Also, **I can generally bring on small "waves" by concentrating**, but a full on experience usually comes from external stimuli. **It's interesting (and comforting) to know that I'm not the only one experiencing this!**

29 Trey

Finally some other people who know what I'm talking about when I try to explain the sensation :)

For as long as I can remember I can cause myself to feel this, and I sometimes get it from **listening to some music, or seeing something that captures me the right way**.

It starts with the back of the head and spreads out to the rest of the body. I've shown people the physical effects of this, but they just say it goosebumps. **It's different though, because it's not temperature related. I've made it happen inside a sauna, so it's definitely not due to being cold.**

It's odd that artists are mentioned in the original write-up, as I work as an illustrator. I frequently experience this sensation when visualizing concepts for my sketches.

30 Randomfeeling

Also, **when i listen to music i get a chill down my spine, but it's not pleasurable** it almost like the voice is amazing and sends shivers but the cloudy **feeling is wayyyy more euphoric** and feels way different...are both ASMR?? or just hte cloudy feeling??

31 Dalri

I get this from hair cuts, washes, watching people unwrap food with crinkly packages, watching people prepare food in a slow manner, preferably with little to no talking, or from someone unexpectedly taking interest in me (nonsexual). **I've gotten it since I was a kid, and it was most often induced by musical moments.**

32 Marcelo

I'm 23yr old male and I get type B a lot through music: **Porcupine Tree, Blackfield, Opeth (their softer songs). Steve Wilson (the frontman to Porcupine Tree and part of Blackfield) has this soft English voice and a lot of his music will have ambient sounds. Brazilian music will also have this effect on me, especially Bossa Nova. I also get it through classical music, on the radio recently I heard this Wynton Marsalis solo and that's when it happened. I tend to like really layered music too so some Metallica songs will work.**

I've also had that experience in the salon **with somebody washing my hair** and I was always very sensitive when getting my haircut. People tend to comment on how I flinch very quickly when they touch the back of my head or go for that area and I'm not expecting it.

I've also gotten this feeling when I've felt alone **and heard soft noises** in the distance. If I'm outside and not many people are around but there is a **breeze then I love listening to the wind. Also hearing the voices of strangers walking by my house.**

I can also do type A when I try to focus on listening to sounds. Then I've gotten type B as **well when people touch my hair**, or **whisper close to me. I also like touching hair**, I don't know if it's related or not.

Sometimes the feeling can be uncomfortable and I sometimes get a feeling of embarrassment but 9 times out of 10 I really like it. It's funny I always associated this with **good music**.

When I was a little kid my grandfather has this story of me when I was in Disneyland. I was the only person listening to this band playing and after they finished I got up and clapped. I don't remember the experience but I can bet I got that feeling when I listened to them play.

It's a great feeling, I didn't know that not everyone experienced it.

Also, I'm not sure I get it when I lend people things and watch them use it. I do get it when people observe what I'm doing very closely. I can't focus when that happens due to it.

33 Lilly

I can't believe other people have this. For me, I get it when I listen to music that has vocal harmony, or when the artist has a really good voice. I also get it when people are brushing my hair with soft strokes, and I get it when people talk and swallow, and make certain sounds with their lips. Weird....But hey its worth mentioning. I didn't know there was a certain diagnose for it. Anyways, very interesting article:)

34 Jerome

I've been feeling this sensation for years but for some reason never looked into it. It is a completely euphoric feeling and usually occurs when I am feeling centered and focused on the present. Often music will induce the feeling, but it also occurs during seemingly inconsequential moments. In my opinion, it occurs when we are fully in tune with the energy that flows in and out of our bodies. If you've read the Celestine Prophecy - I have similar beliefs, and I think it's very possible that ASMR can be explained through this energy transfer...

35 Rachel

Wow!! I'm so glad that I found this site-- I've always gotten this tingling feeling. I remember getting it when I was little when I would read books, when people would 'play with my hair' and listening to people whisper.

I get it still now- I'm 18- when people speak gently to me, like when I'm at the eye doctor, listening to certain music, or if I listen to whispering videos.

I noticed that 'creative' people get this more? Says the article, I am an artist- I paint and draw- and I have been playing the piano since I was three and taking lessons since I was five.

I'm so glad to know that others experience this wonderful feeling. My Mom thought it was weird, because she didn't understand, though she has described goosebumps on her arms when she listens to certain music, but that's not the same as my tingling feeling... **The one that starts in the back of the head creeps over the head and down the spine.** Haha I always thought I was weird or something.

36 Andrew

Music is the main trigger for me. String instruments and orchestral music trigger the tingling! Chord changes really intensify these feelings. My profession is music/(Deejay and creator). Though it is also triggered from compassion whether it be visual(films/Tv) or stories and books. Success stories also trigger this feeling! Happy or sad. Basically anything emotive. I can sometimes manage the feeling and control it by a shrug of the shoulders. **The tingling is experienced from my upper back, shoulders, neck and the back of my head.** I am honoured to experience these feelings and this blog has given me a sense of community. Thank you.

37 Marr

This so strange. I have had this sensation all my life.

When I really listen to music and relax to it it hits me like a wave. I feel it in my neck and back. My head tingles. It rides my spine. It so wonderful. I have had this since young childhood. Music or soft touch on my back or neck have always done it. Or when I feel I am really connecting with someone. Very glad I found this.

I always assumed I was just very creative and could get swept away with it. Out of all the people I know only one other person has ever felt this way. I have taken many mind altering substances, Acid, Mushrooms and E all of similar effects to this. Though with the drugs its harder to really sense where the sensation is coming from.

38 Leigh

i get this quite alot. but **only to music?**

im **constantly looking for more music that gives me this sensation, its strange**

39 Cubia

I get an **all over head tingle when I listen to certain music**. Ex. I use to watch .hack//sign and now every time I hear the opening theme (obsession-by dream field) I experience it.

40 Alex

You know, this has been something I've experienced almost my entire life, but it's specifically triggered from music. I don't know if it's from all the time I spent in the orchestra, or what, but there are certain songs that are just guaranteed triggers for me. The song Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity, by Holst for example, has 2-3 guaranteed triggers near the end of the song -- but there are times when I never see it coming.

Glad to see someone who's actually compiled some data on this, because I've been trying to think of a way to describe it to people for years.

41 Evan Mills

It is amazing that other people have the same "**tingling in their head**" I always get it when i listen to "**Robot Sciecne**" "**Nirvana**" and other great music. I also get it when i experience a sexual orgasm. except the tingling in my head is almost more stronger than than the orgasm itself!

42 Prelicator

So glad i found this post, I have been experiencing these sensations almost all of my life with no one to talk to about it. They usually only came to me when i had an epiphany or watched an epic scene in a movie but about a year ago(age 19) i realized some music could trigger it if i concentrated. specifically spiritual music,epic scores or music with epic choir in different languages, specifically Latin or angelic female voices also seem to trigger it. after about a year of focusing on this feeling i can trigger it when i meditate and now i have alot of other things that can trigger it with out me trying.For instance just reading this post triggered it multiple times.The wave usually is triggered in the middle of my back and then spreads in both directions towards my head and feet and almost feels like i am sending energy out of my body.

@Brian i think you might be right because this whole time i have been studying Buddhism and different meditation practices in my spare time and they have absolutely allowed me to expand my ability in regards to this sensation. I am sure there is a scientific explanation of exactly what is happening in the brain but focusing on spirituality is without a doubt what has allowed me to expand the duration and frequency of recurrence.

43 Daniel

Hey, omg i'm so happy that someone else besides me gets this, :D. I'm 17 and i was feeling sort of weirdly lonely before i discovered this. At first, i thought it was some sort of nostalgic feeling, but when i mentioned it to my best friend, she said she got a smell when something was nostalgic, so i knew it wasn't the case. I usually get ASMR feelings when i listen to music i love, or watch certain parts of a film. Like the star trek nemesis theme. My phone's filled with music that gives me the feeling, but as mentioned here, they get old and it doesn't happen with some of them anymore, so i seek out new songs. The yugioh theme in particular makes it happen, hell even reading this page a second time over gave me a massive 'jolt' of it. Sometimes it originates in the centre of my spine, but mainly from the back of my head and spreads down to my toes. I don't feel so much of a freak anymore :) anyone else feel the same after finding this? I don't have an account but i'll check back here in a few days. :)

44 Plynx

I just got the feeling reading some of these posts. I never really looked it up before, so was happy to find that others have written a bout it. As I was reading Seraph's posting I did lightly **scratch the back of my head and it intensified it**. I've never done that before. Thanks Seraph, for the idea. **In my case I never really noticed it until the last two years or so (I am 30). Maybe it happened my whole life but only recently have I really paid attention to it. Often triggered by really beautiful music for me**, as well as many of the other triggers you mentioned. Thanks!

45 Meh

Hey I get this feeling to I get **it when listening to music**, my mind starts to get really creative and then BAM! there it is **that sweet feeling I always thought it was differnt** and now i found this site heh heh and.. your right about the misunderstood part and people who are gentle

46 Anon

I've always wondered what this was, **this tingling in my scalp, the goosebumps and then chills going down my spine**. I always get this feeling when ever **i listen to metallica, or iron maiden. I dont really start feeling the effect till the guitar solos. Just the sound of that high squeal coming from the guitar makes my skin tingle all over**. my main songs that i listen to, that cause these effects are songs like **Metallica - Fade to Black or Iron Maiden Wasted Years**. These two songs are amazing. **I also love a sound of crinkling of potato chip bags**, and i **Love people playing with my hair**

47 Norman

I've gotten these my whole life! I remember my teacher triggering them **as a little kid** whenever I asked her for help on something. It was all **vocals that triggered them** as a kid. But now it's really different, **I'm starting to get different types of tingles**. It's almost as if I have a tingle for each emotion. I've noticed that **they're strongest when I'm angry and listening to thrash metal**. **I've also noticed that the angrier I get, the stronger they get and the more effects the have on me**. For instance, the other day my mom really pissed me off so I started listening to thrash metal and I noticed that **the tingles started making me feel powerful.... I feel almost invincible when I get my angry tingles now**. **I've even done tests to see if they actually have some type of effect on pain tolerance and strength**. Turns out that they actually do, if something is causing me physical pain while I have my angry tingles, they actually just increase the intensity of the tingles making me feel even more invincible. Almost like **it's self sustaining or something**. They also can increase my stamina and my strength somewhat, but not by much. Just enough to know that there's a difference.

48 Steven webb

I know exactly how every one feels.....**thought I was alone but something is not right with me as I'll explain quickly....**

I'm a normal 28yr male English...not married?

Ever since I can remember I get weird tingling sensations in my head or body....something's can trigger it off eg.. A song on the radio....it makes me listen to the words and somehow they feel like they mean or telling me something...get severe goose bumps feel all light....

Now I done a self hypnosis video on you tube as I was bored...but ever since then I have been having flashbacks etc..... Went doctors and found out I had PTSD as. Child....I nearly died twice but feel in my heart the lord made me live, but made me forget these terrible memories.....now I'm remembering that I wrote a book as I growing up to tell people what's was happening to me as I couldn't tell anyone as of my family background and bad people would be back....so if I was taken by these peps how'd I survived?

I'm trying to find this doctor that was the only one who helped me through my troubles...

I'm a no one, but keep feeling that this is above me and I'm being guided.... I'm seeing signs all the time now....eg... The day I asked my dad if anything happened when I was young and tv programme came on relating to my question....it spooked me out....

Xxx

I'm not a religious person but believe there is one lord.....

I feel I'm going mad but something inside making push for answers.....,

49 JoeH

Like many others here I thought everyone experienced this sensation, it's exciting to think this isn't the case.

When it happens to me **it starts in my head then goes to my shoulders then my torso and tops of my legs, it's very refreshing.**

Listening to The World in Union by Various Artists causes an almost constant cascade of tingles.

Also thank you for making this hub, the information is invaluable.

50 Jon

I am now experiencing ASMR **when listening to a specific Annie Lennex track**, I have so far played it five times this morning. **I think I am now engaged to Annie !!**

And strangely while reading through these comments, **the word sensillations** triggered another one. Strange but true.

I think I need to focus on all the other possible triggers to see if anything happens. I think I am on a roll.

51 Marius

This feeling is indeed beautiful, when **I hear a song that I really like, the tingling sensation is all over my head and sometimes in all the body**, is somehow funny because in that moment the hair its slightly upwards like it would be electrified

It would be really interesting to meet other persons that that have the same feeling

52 Stringpicker

Great article! **I'm 30 and I remember having this feeling ever since I was a child**. It usually happens in reaction to **certain songs**, or **when people play with my hair**. However, for the past few months I have started to feel it when **studying or reading articles** and to be frank, it is s, so I have to keep taking quick breaks. Is anybody else going through this?

53 Norm

I have had this ever since i can remember, mainly when listening to specific music or watching particular film scenes etc **However I experience the tingling all over not just my head**. It this common?

54 Angela

I'm female, **age 49**. **First remember having ASMR as a child** when other little girls would **brush my hair**. I have seen a number of other people experience it when having their hair played with but I never asked anyone if they have other triggers.

Other triggers for me:

Certain voices (like the ones in the youtube relaxation, **whispering** and ASMR videos. And, yes, like many others have mentioned, **Bob Ross!**).

Someone else in the house who is moving around and doing something but **they are trying to be very quiet** so they won't disturb me because I'm either lying down or studying.

People **keyboarding and clicking a mouse, especially if they are trying to be as quiet as possible.**

Some of the most intense ASMR I've had occurred [in quiet public places](#), especially retail, and was induced by a total stranger who was near me. [The person was very quiet](#) and just browsing or looking over something but, again, I got the definite feeling the person was [trying to be as quiet](#) and unobtrusive as possible. It feels like as they are looking at whatever it is they are looking at they are also paying some attention to me in some .

[Riding the bus](#) - there are different buses on my route, of course, but it seems there's one or two buses in particular that induce ASMR in me and combined with particular drivers, their way of driving, induces ASMR. There have been times when I had really bad insomnia that [this helped relax me a lot](#). The buses are numbered and I always try to ride the ones that induce ASMR in me.

In the past year I've had spontaneous ASMR. Reading everyone's comments and the mention of serotonin is intriguing and I wonder if there is a connection b/c in the past year I've improved significantly after being in a major depression for a few years ... so maybe my body is making more serotonin than it normally does and that is triggering the spontaneous ASMR.

I'm very intuitive, introverted, lots of creative ideas but I can also be very detail oriented, too. Always [been interested in the spiritual](#), the paranormal and I've had many experiences that can only be described as clairvoyant, claircognizant, etc.

For me, ASMR is very different from the shivery, goose bump feeling that comes from listening to music sometimes - [because ASMR is so relaxing whereas the music response is more exciting, stimulating](#). For anyone interested in the music shivers, Dr. Paul Silvia, (University of North Carolina at Greensboro- Psychology dept.) has been researching this phenomenon.

7.2 Appendix 2: Coding Extract

1 Age – Cantaloupe: the time and or occurrence when the phenomenon had been experienced

1 [When I was a young boy](#), I remember having these experiences

I also clearly remember [when I was about eight or so](#),

I continued to have these sensations [throughout my childhood, my teenage years, and in to adulthood](#).

2 [I have experiencing this from a young age \(I'm 15\)](#)

6 [I used to get these a lot when I was younger](#)

7 [I have had this for as long as i can remember](#)

13 [I've had this too, all my life](#)

16 [I too have been enjoying them since I was a kid](#)

17 [i felt it all the time](#)

18 [*anyways im 23 now](#)

and dis [is the first tym i felt this feeling](#)

20 [*I'm 17 and really just found my ASMR](#)

21 [From what I can recall I have been able to control this sensation since puberty around age 11\(26 now\). since the control manifested with around puberty](#)

23 [ive had this sensation since i was a child in the 1970s](#)

- 24 I used to get my friends when I was younger to play with my hair or braid it, just to feel this head rush
- 26 I have experienced this sensation my whole life.
My first memories of this feeling come from my mom doing my hair.
- 27 The first time I experienced ASMR (that I can remember) was as a young boy, when listening to my uncle talk
I didn't think much of it--as a young boy, I thought it was normal. But when I brought it up in conversation, I found no one knew what I was talking about. I stopped mentioning it--now I'm 35,
- 28 I've felt these sensations as far back as I can remember.
- 29 For as long as I can remember I can cause myself to feel this,
- 31 I've gotten it since I was a kid,
- 32 *I'm 23yr old male I don't remember the experience but I can bet I got that feeling when I listened to them play.
- 34 I've been feeling this sensation for years
- 35 I've always gotten this tingling feeling. I remember getting it when I was little
I'm 18
- 37 I have had this sensation all my life.
I have had this since young childhood
- 40 I've experienced almost my entire life,
- 42 I have been experiencing these sensations almost all of my life
(age 19)
- 43 I'm 17 and i was feeling sort of weirdly lonely before i discovered this.
- 44 * In my case I never really noticed it until the last two years or so (I am 30). Maybe it happened my whole life but only recently have I really paid attention to it
- 47 I've gotten these my whole life! I remember my teacher triggering them as a little kid whenever I asked her for help on something. It was all vocals that triggered them as a kid.
- 48 I'm a normal 28yr male English...not married?
Ever since I can remember I get weird tingling sensations in my head or body....something's can trigger it off eg..
- 52 I'm 30 and I remember having this feeling ever since I was a child.
- 53 I have had this ever since i can remember,
- 54 I'm female, age 49. First remember having ASMR as a child when other little girls would brush my hair.

2 Drug – Grape: describing the experience to their own drug experiences

4 It's like runners high with out doing anything or the euphoric feeling when taking an e I quit drinking

5 I always have these and it's the most euphoric thing on earth, drugs and sex? crumbles next to it

6 I took a lot of ecstasy, and the feeling of 'coming up' on E was nearly identical to that of ASMR episodes

11 If you take MDMA you will get it not only in your head but all over your body for hours.

19 It's better than weed or anything else I know.

27 "natural high" that rivals Hydrocodone.

37 . I have taken many mind altering substances, Acid, Mushrooms and E all of similar effects to this. Though with the drugs its harder to really sense where the sensation is coming from

3 Physical Activity – Aqua: physical activity

6 I'm getting intimate with a girl and she is whispering or breathing into my ear.

54 Riding the bus

Seems that being physically active does not affect the tingles rather the individual tends to be in a relaxed observant state:

4 Auditory – Orchid: Any trigger sounds other than music

1 where I would listen to the radio on the bed. I would have my head pressed right up against it as I lay there, taking in every word listening to the old gardener we used to have years ago whistle while he worked. One thing I did was to start collecting audio clips, watch video clips online, listen to the radio, and watch certain programs on TV that were dead certs

2 the music you hear when you see people charging into battle in a movie, motivational epic speeches and such, not soft sounds at all,

6 or if I'm getting intimate with a girl and she is whispering or breathing into my ear.

8 Growing up, I recall experiencing this frequently when listening to strangers speak,

12 My triggers are: people chewing gum, whistlers, people using something that is mine, people speaking softly and live guitar music

15 i only get this feeling when i hear certain people speak,

18 when i was watching & listening on you tube some Reiki Meditation.

19 Like once in the train when someone was eating an apple and the sound of the bites and chewing would totally space me out

I also get it with [people typing](#), [people talking](#) and it somehow seems to be very amplified if there's a woman involved, or clean and pretty woman's hands for instance. and [when sound switches fast from left to right ear \(or vice versa\)](#).

24 I also found out recently that [watching massage videos with soft spoken voices](#)

27 [The first time I experienced ASMR \(that I can remember\) was as a young boy, when listening to my uncle talk](#). Man was he boring--but that didn't matter. [He talked very softly, slowly](#), and ALWAYS gave me this sensation—
continue to experience it from [listening to someone speaking](#) (I'm 100% heterosexual, but it's nearly always [soft-spoken men](#) who produce the effect),

31 [watching people unwrap food with crinkly packages, watching people prepare food in a slow manner](#), preferably with little to no talking, or from someone unexpectedly taking interest in me ([nonsexual](#))

32 I've also gotten this feeling when I've felt alone and [heard soft noises](#) in the distance. If I'm outside and not many people are around but there is a [breeze then I love listening to the wind](#). Also [hearing the voices of strangers walking by my house](#).

[I can also do type A when I try to focus on listening to sounds](#). Then I've gotten type B as [well when people touch my hair](#), or [whisper close to me](#).

33 I get it [when I listen to music that has vocal harmony, or when the artist has a really good voice](#). and I get it when people talk and swallow, and make certain sounds with their lips. Weird....But hey its worth mentioning

35 [listening to people whisper](#)

I get it stil now- [I'm 18-](#) [when people speak gently to me](#), like when I'm at the eye doctor, [listening to certain music](#), or if I listen to [whispering videos](#).

42 [Latin or angelic female voices also seem to trigger it](#).

46 [Just the sound of that high squeal coming from the guitar makes my skin tingle all over](#).
[I also love a sound](#) of [crinkling of potato chip bags](#),

47 It was all [vocals that triggerred them as a kid](#).

50 And strangely while reading through these comments, [the word sensillations](#) triggered another one.

54 [Certain voices](#) (like the ones in the youtube relaxation, [whispering](#) and ASMR videos. And, yes, like many others have mentioned, [Bob Ross!](#)).

Someone else in the house who is moving around and doing something but [they are trying to be very quiet](#) so they won't disturb me because I'm either lying down or studying.

People [keyboarding and clicking a mouse, especially if they are trying to be as quiet as possible](#).

Some of the most intense ASMR I've had occurred [in quiet public places](#), especially retail, and was induced by a total stranger who was near me. [The person was very quiet](#) and just browsing or looking over something but, again, I got the definite feeling the person was [trying to be as quiet](#) and unobtrusive as possible.

5 Tactile – **Magenta**: touching or being touched, temperature

2 Usually my triggers are with people touching me on my back, neck, shoulders and ears area. Though most common trigger with me is warmth. Especially if I take a warm shower while its freezing outside or I am hugged by someone who is really warm while I'm really cold.

8*I've been able, by doing a sort of movement of my back with my eyes closed and putting a sort "pressure" behind my eyes, to give myself this feeling whenever I want.

15 cutting my hair!

19 then the focusing on the temperature in the train being just on the warm side of perfect and it made me almost completely numb...

24 I would always get this feeling when someone physically touched my skin. I used to get my friends when I was younger to play with my hair or braid it, I remember telling them I wanted a different style just so they would keep playing with my hair. I also got it when I went to the hair salon, or if someone painted my nails, or if someone massaged my back. Even the slightest skin to skin contact would not only give me a **head rush**

26 My first memories of this feeling come from my mom doing my hair.

29 It's different though, because it's not temperature related. I've made it happen inside a sauna, so it's definitely not due to being cold.

31 I get this from hair cuts, washes,

32 I've also had that experience in the salon with somebody washing my hair and I was always very sensitive when getting my haircut. Then I've gotten type B as well when people touch my hair, or whisper close to me. I also like touching hair,

33 I also get it when people are brushing my hair with soft strokes,

35 when people would 'play with my hair'

37 soft touch on my back or neck have always done it.

44 As I was reading Seraph's posting I did lightly scratch the back of my head and it intensified it.

46 Love people playing with my hair

52 or when people play with my hair

54 First remember having ASMR as a child when other little girls would brush my hair.

6 Visual – Teal: watching or seeing someone or something, video, etc.

1 One thing I did was to start collecting **audio clips**, watch video clips online, listen to the radio, and watch certain programs on TV that were dead certs

2 Another trigger is watching something very **emotional** happen or **being a part of something very emotional**,

3 when you see people **charging into battle in a movie**,

4 I've found I can get it when watching trees blowing and clouds

12 My triggers are: **people chewing gum**, **whistlers**, people using something that is mine, **people speaking softly and live guitar music**

13 Mine mainly comes when I watch someone learning something, or reading. watching people write can do it too.

24 I also found out recently that watching massage videos with **soft spoken voices**

26 I realize that watching someone do something mundane is also a huge trigger for me.

29 seeing something that **captures me the right way**.

31 watching people unwrap food with **crinkly packages**, watching people prepare food in a slow manner,

32 *Also, I'm not sure I get it **when I lend people things and watch them use it**. I do get it when people observe what I'm doing very closely. I can't focus when that happens due to it.

42 watched an **epic scene in a movie**

43 watch certain parts of a film. **Like the star trek nemesis theme**

53 watching particular film scenes

7 Activation – Sky: relaxing or energizing

5 happens usually at the climax of a musical piece and lasts few seconds and then **you just fall apart and collapse in relaxation and just breathe heavily for a moment**

9 ***I'm having a conversation with someone and I feel like they are really in tune with what I am saying and I become really intense.**

18 ***whenever i listen 2 some peaceful music.**

19 Like once in the train when someone was eating an apple and the **sound of the bites and chewing** would **totally space me out**,

23 ***its no bad thing i think of it as a gift from god** it can ease your sole at the peek of depression **pick you up** and **energize your spirit** or just plain just **make you feel good**

24 **as well as makes me tired.** I also have Type A aswell, as sometimes just thinking of something, or being so relaxed, it would give me that **tingly feeling** in my head.

25 *After I started meditating I found I'm able to do this at will, so anytime I need a boost, I just focus the **tingling energy in the back of my head and down my spine.**

26 So I switched randomly to a **classical station and got that old relaxed, tingly feeling again.**

27 **first a tingling in the scalp, a euphoric feeling, then I'm totally relaxed, and feel waves of it.**

47 For instance, the other day my mom really pissed me off so I started listening to thrash metal and I noticed that **the tingles started making me feel powerful.... I feel almost invincible when I get my angry tingles now**

49 *it's very refreshing.

54 There have been times when I had really bad insomnia that **this helped relax me a lot.**

For me, ASMR is very different from the shivery, goose bump feeling that comes from listening to music sometimes - because ASMR is so relaxing whereas the music response is more exciting, stimulating.

8 Sexual – **Cayenne:** anything sex related

4 that's why I hate the term brain orgasam, it's a slower build and decline and **not sexual - and it leaves a kind of content ness**

5 **like an orgasm that shoots between the end of your neck and back of your skull and rises ballooning upward and it freezes you up**
everybody has shivers **from awe inspiring music** and film but i haven't seen anybody just **orgasm and collapse from it like me**

41 I also get it when i experience a sexual orgasm.

9 Cerebral – **Eggplant:** triggers from stimulating the mind

8 finally figuring out a painting

42 They usually only came to me when i had an epiphany
For instance just reading this post triggered it multiple times

43 hell even reading this page a second time over gave me a massive 'jolt' of it.

44 my mind starts to get really creative and then BAM!

48 **A song on the radio....it makes me listen to the words and somehow they feel like they mean or telling me something...get severe goose bumps feel all light.**

52 feel it when studying or reading articles and to be frank

10 Command – **Tangerine**: learning to control the phenomenon

7 i called it "fizzy head" i can induce it my self but i get it when i listen to **uplifting** music,

8 I've been able, **by doing a sort of movement of my back with my eyes closed and putting a sort "pressure" behind my eyes**, to give myself this feeling whenever I want.

14 I have even made it travel through the whole of my body and I see everything turn White.

17 but i can actually trigger it consciously! It is such an amazing feeling, im working on getting my whole body to feel that way but it will start either in the head, neck, or lower back, and it will travel throughout most of my body, im workin on getting this amazing feeling to cover my legs and lower half of my body.

... The way i can recall "learning" to trigger this sensation at will, Like i said in my last comment "i get this feeling a lot, **mostly when listening to music**" Its kinda hard to put into words **but i just want EVERYONE to feel what i feel more**, especially the ones who have NEVER exp this!!! Okay so, **when i listen to music that i like, my favorite genre is (pop punk) i just get this really good feeling in my heart and soul** and im sure people who will try this will most likely get instant effects unless you are a emotionless robot or something, jk jk. But right before this i was listening to music and i felt it and everything and the feeling takes over and goes away, **kinda like the current of an ocean, yknow (innn and outtt)** i guess hah. **But for consciously triggering this**, the last time i did it (like 5 minutes ago) i was imagining my body with my eyes closed looking up at the sun feeling the wind and the **energy** from the sun with my arms wide open.

21 Throughout the years I've actually learned to increase the intensity, duration and frequency of the sensations

24 I also have Type A aswell, as sometimes just thinking of something, or being so relaxed,

25 After I started meditating I found I'm able to do this at will, so **anytime I need a boost, I just focus the tingling energy in the back of my head and down my spine.**

26 Sometimes I will put on certain music at night before I go to bed, and lie in the dark **trying to induce the feeling.**

29 For as long as I can remember I can cause myself to feel this, and I sometimes get it from **listening to some music, or seeing something** that captures me the right way.

32 I can also do type A when I try to focus on **listening to sounds**

36 I can sometimes manage the feeling and control it by a shrug of the shoulders.

47 *I've even done tests to see if they actually have some type of effect on pain tolerance and strength. Turns out that they actually do, if something is causing me physical pain while I have my angry tingles, they actually just increase the intensity of the tingles making me feel even more invincible. Almost like it's self sustaining or something.

11 Artistic – **Asparagus**: the author is artistic or a musician

12 I'm artistic and **somewhat introverted**

18 im also a musician, i love nature

35 I am an artsit- I paint and draw- and I have been playing the piano since I was three and taking lessons since I was five.

36 My profession is music/(Deejay and creator).

37 I always assumed I was just very creative and could get swept away with it

12 Spiritual – Moss: authors who are religious or spiritual or who practice meditation

4 I've found I can get it when watching trees blowing and clouds, I guess this is a kind of meditation but some music can bring it on.

7 I have also had it when i am ill like with the flu and while meditating.

17 but recently ive REALLY gotten into spirituality (not religion) and i get this feeling a lot, mostly when listening to music,
But hopefully my 3rd eye will open or ill be able to have OBE's or something playing around with this wonderful sensation more.

18 hi im glad im not alone i just experienced this tingling in my head last night when i was watching & listening on you tube some Reiki Meditation. it goes away but comes back whenever i listen 2 some peaceful music. that night also i dream about seeing the crucifixion of Jesus it was the 3 cross and Jesus at d middle then suddenly i heard his voice but did not see him jst his voice from heaven but i dont remember what he told me. all i remember was he had the most beautiful voice that would realy touch d heart.. someone help me d meaning of dis dream? i remember also when i was graders dreaming of the virgin Mary on a cave.. and crying because i felt her pain and also the feeling of seeing her is unexplainable feeling.

23 its no bad thing i think of it as a gift from god it can ease your sole at the peek of depression
my openion it Colombians body spirit

25 After I started meditating I found I'm able to do this at will

34 In my opinion, it occurs when we are fully in tune with the energy that flows in and out of our bodies.

42 i realized some music could trigger it if i concentrated. specifically spiritual music,epic scores or music with epic choir in different languages,
after about a year of focusing on this feeling i can trigger it when i meditate
studying Buddhism and different meditation practices in my spare time and they have absolutely allowed me to expand my ability in regards to this sensation.
I am sure there is a scientific explanation of exactly what is happening in the brain but focusing on spirituality is without a doubt what has allowed me to expand the duration and frequency of recurrence.

48 *I'm not a religious person but believe there is one lord

54 Always been interested in the spiritual, the paranormal and I've had many experiences that can only be described as clairvoyant, claircognizant, etc

13 Connectedness – Strawberry: feelings of community or being connected, or searching for answers or others

1 This was the beginning of a life-long journey that would bring me to my most recent discoveries, and attempts to try and get behind the origin of this seemingly undocumented phenomenon

13 I've always explained it to myself as a "knowledge uptake/absorption frequency that people broadcast. that I pick up/receive".
glad there are other people!..

16 Wow it's cool to know that other people also experience these **wierd spurts of tingling**
Thanks a ton for this article glad to see I'm not alone

17 Its kinda hard to put into words but i just want EVERYONE to feel what i feel more, especially the ones who have NEVER exp this!!!

27 this is actually what I was experimenting with when I thought, "hey, the world web internet computer web thingy has gotten pretty full--maybe i can find someone talking about it!"

29 Finally some other people who know what I'm talking about when I try to explain the sensation :)

33 I cant believe other people have this.

36 . I am honoured to experience these feelings and this blog has given me a sense of community. Thank you.

37 Or when I feel I am really connecting with someone. Very glad I found this

38 constantly looking for more music that gives me this sensation, its strange

43 I don't feel so much of a freak anymore :) anyone else feel the same after finding this?

50 I am now experiencing ASMR **when listening to a specific Annie Lennex track**, I have so far played it five times this morning. I think I am now engaged to Annie !!

51 It would be really interesting to meet other persons that that have the same feeling

14 Valence – Salmon: is the experience positive or negative

4 and it leaves a kind of content ness

5 I always have these and it's the most euphoric thing on earth

7 the feeling that comes with it is "i feel so good to be alive"

14 hi I also experience this fantastic sensation

15 I think this is awesome !!! finally, I found the **strange tingly feeling** is a experienced by others.

16 Personally I think they're awesome and I too have been enjoying them since I was a kid

17 It is such an amazing feeling

20 My triggers are different than most but the **outcome is beyond amazing.**
it's so unreal
amazingness.

21 but they are also triggered by external sources **from intense pleasurable sensory signals from great music**
, **favorite food**, etc

23 it can ease your sole at the peek of depression **pick you up** and **energize your spirit** or just plain just **make you feel good**

26 Nice to know I have been experiencing, for free and naturally, a feeling that so many people chase with drugs.

27 **first a tingling in the scalp, a euphoric feeling, then I'm totally relaxed, and feel waves of it.**

30 ***when i listen to music i get a chill down my spine, but it's not pleasurable** it almost like the voice is amazing and sends shivers but the cloudy **feeling is wayyyy more euphoric** and feels way different...are both ASMR?? or just hte cloudy feeling??

32 **Sometimes the feeling can be uncomfortable and I sometimes get a feeling of embarrassment** but 9 times out of 10 I really like it.
It's a great feeling, I didn't know that not everyone experienced it.

34 **It is a completely euphoric feeling** and usually occurs when I am feeling centered and focused on the present.

35 I'm so glad to know that others **experience this wonderful feeling.**

37 **This so strange. I have had this sensation all my life.**
It so wonderful.

44 **Often triggered by really beautiful music for me,**

45 BAM! there it is **that sweet feeling**

46 . I also love a sound of **crinkling of potato chip bags**

47 ***I've noticed that they're strongest when I'm angry and listening to thrash metal. I've also noticed that the angrier I get, the stronger they get and the more effects the have on me.**

48 I get **weird tingling sensations in my head**

49 When it happens to me **it starts in my head then goes to my shoulders then my torso and tops of my legs,**
it's very refreshing

51 **This feeling is indeed beautiful,**

15 Motivational – **Carnation**: motivational (compassion) triggers

3 the music you hear when you see people charging into battle in a movie, motivational epic speeches and such, not soft sounds at all, can someone please identify what this is?

36 Though it is also triggered from compassion whether it be visual(films/Tv) or stories and books. Success stories also trigger this feeling! Happy or sad. Basically anything emotive.

16 Emotional – **Maraschino**

5 i get it from music and music videos often ambient or intense

9 I get it from other things too, like really intense movie trailers, or when I'm having a conversation with someone and I feel like they are really in tune with what I am saying and I become really intense.

17 But i feel "powerful" i guess when i trigger this feeling...maybe its because i almost cry when i do it.

20 Some other triggers are mostly random that all have to do with high emotions that are typically good

36 Though it is also triggered from compassion whether it be visual(films/Tv) or stories and books Happy or sad. Basically anything emotive.

17 Self-Conscious – **Ocean**: opinions or feelings of oneself or situation

1 something that I had taken for granted for years, and hadn't known if anyone else had ever had the same feeling.

2 I have been wondering about it for most of my life.

8 Thought I was alone in this, never bothered to do a Google search...

9 I think the feeling has a lot more to do with emotions and inner feelings than it has to do with any physical touch.

12 I thought I was the only person that ever had this.

14 Pleased to find out I'm not the only one

18 hi im glad im not alone

27 and BAM, here I am, literally crying tears of joy at the knowledge I'm not "weird"--or maybe I AM, and it's a good thing!

28 It's interesting (and comforting) to know that I'm not the only one experiencing this!

34 and usually occurs when I am feeling centered and focused on the present.

35 I'm so glad to know that others experience this wonderful feeling.
Haha I always thought I was wierd or something.

43 I'm 17 and i was feeling sort of weirdly lonely before i discovered this.
I don't feel so much of a freak anymore :)

45 I always thought it was different

48 I know exactly how every one feels.....thought I was alone but something is not right with me as I'll explain quickly....
I'm a normal 28yr male English...not married?

49 Like many others here I thought everyone experienced this sensation, it's exciting to think this isn't the case.
52 to be frank

18 Empathy/Compassion – Lavender: there was only one entry after the initial coding (36), moved it to Emotional. Suspect that this is the main theme of all the codes or experiences.