



**CALIFORNIA STATE SCIENCE FAIR
2004 PROJECT SUMMARY**

Name(s) Elan D. Lee	Project Number J1711
Project Title Can People Be Made Sick?	
Abstract Objectives/Goals The question asked in this study was, #Will people claim various medical complaints from a phantom environmental exposure?# Phantom risk is when people feel or claim various symptoms from exposure to a chemical, but the risk of harm is not real. There have been various cases of phantom toxic terrors such as mercury fillings, saccharine, and DDT. The hypothesis for this study was that a suggestion of an environmental exposure and possible illness would cause people to believe they are sick. Methods/Materials 100 healthy adult San Diego residents completed a health survey of 22 different symptoms. The control half of the group completed a questionnaire of the various symptoms over the past week, and the phantom half had the same survey with a written suggestion that people have become ill from the recent San Diego fires. Results The results showed that both the control and phantom study groups had similar demographics and chronic illness. The control group had a total of 104 symptoms and the phantom group had a total of 106 symptoms. Conclusions/Discussion The hypothesis was false in introducing a phantom exposure that caused people to claim various symptoms. San Diegans did not believe they were sick from the firestorms.	
Summary Statement My project attempted to introduce a phantom risk and see if people would think they were sick just by giving them a suggestion that they can be sick.	
Help Received My parents, Dr. Roneet Lev and Dr. Stephen Lee helped me enroll people to my study. My teacher, Mrs. Sangster helped me get my project into the Science Fair.	