



# CALIFORNIA STATE SCIENCE FAIR 2008 PROJECT SUMMARY

<b>Name(s)</b> <b>Jessica M. Winter</b>	<b>Project Number</b> <b>J0324</b>
<b>Project Title</b> <b>The Fear Factor: What Do You Fear the Most?</b>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Abstract</b></p> <p><b>Objectives/Goals</b> My project was to identify the types of fears people have depending upon their gender and their age less than 21 years or over 21 years. A goal for my project was to demonstrate the wide range of threats people perceive in our world today.</p> <p><b>Methods/Materials</b> To gather information about the fears people really have, groups of my peers were asked to write their top five fears. Talks with adults added input about their fears. Literature and online internet research produced facts about: 1) the human fight vs flight response 2) how phobias and fears differ 3) how hazard scientists have identified threats humans face as shown in The Universe of Hazards diagram. A questionnaire of 86 items was designed, distributed to 70 people (35 non-adults ages &lt; 21 &amp; 35 adults ages &gt; 21), and collected personally and by e-mail.</p> <p><b>Results</b> Questionnaire responses were tallied by both a Simple Tally Count and by a weighted rating of 1 to 5 which respondents gave each item. Top five fears of those under 21 were: 1) Getting Cancer, 2) Dying and Airline Accidents, 3) Parent Dying and Shark Attacks, 4) Terrorists, Murder, Kidnapping, Friend Dying, Losing Hair, 5) Car Accidents. Those over 21 feared: 1) Getting Cancer, 2) Car Accidents, 3) Earthquakes, 4) Terrorism 5) Becoming Old. Only adult men feared not having enough money. Males over 21 were not as fearful of war and earthquakes and other natural disasters as females over 21. Both males and females under 21 had intense fears about death and dying. Global warming did not come through as a strong fear.</p> <p><b>Conclusions/Discussion</b> Valid, balanced and clearly worded questionnaires are very difficult to design. In both age samples, cancer was the number one fear with terrorism also a top fear. Despite the actual earthquake threat in California, there were indications that daily television weather reporting with few photos of earthquakes but many of hurricane and tornado damages affected those under 21 who feared them more than earthquakes compared to those over 21 who had experienced earthquakes and feared them more. Only adult men feared a drought; in their work life in California, men probably see more problems from lack of water. Though the U.S.A. is at war, only adult women feared war. All age groups are very fearful of many of the same things, yet clear gender differences seem to exist.</p>	
<b>Summary Statement</b> My project was to identify the types of fears people have depending upon their gender and their age.	
<b>Help Received</b> My mother helped me by purchasing the art materials for my board.	