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Montana State University receives U.S. Public Health Service grant for intermodal perception study

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FOR RELEASE THURSDAY, JUNE 1

Montana State University has been awarded \$23,972 U. S. Public Health Service grant for a three-year study of intermodal perception to be directed by Dr. Arnold Miller, assistant professor of psychology, MSU officials said.

Dr. Miller's project is concerned with the way one sense influences other senses. He cited the use of "white noise" by dentists as an application of the psychological principle that one sense tends to affect another. The introduction of sound into the patient's ear has the effect of lessening the sensation of pain, he explained.

Another potential application of findings of research in this field is in helping persons with visual impairment by stimulating other senses, according to Dr. Miller. A dim object is seen more acutely when sound is added, suggesting that the ear can help the eye see better, he said.

This "crossover" may be pronounced in especially perceptive persons, according to the MSU psychologist. For example, he said, certain sounds suggest colors to some individuals, and an artist might say, "I hear blue."

Thomas Kindrick, junior psychology major from Missoula, is Dr. Miller's research assistant on the project. Other MSU students who have worked on the study this year are Robert Pantzer, Gerald Cunningham and Roger Kotila, all of Missoula; Raymond Beck, Anaconda; John Prater, Cut Bank and Rolf Olson, Clinton, Conn.

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