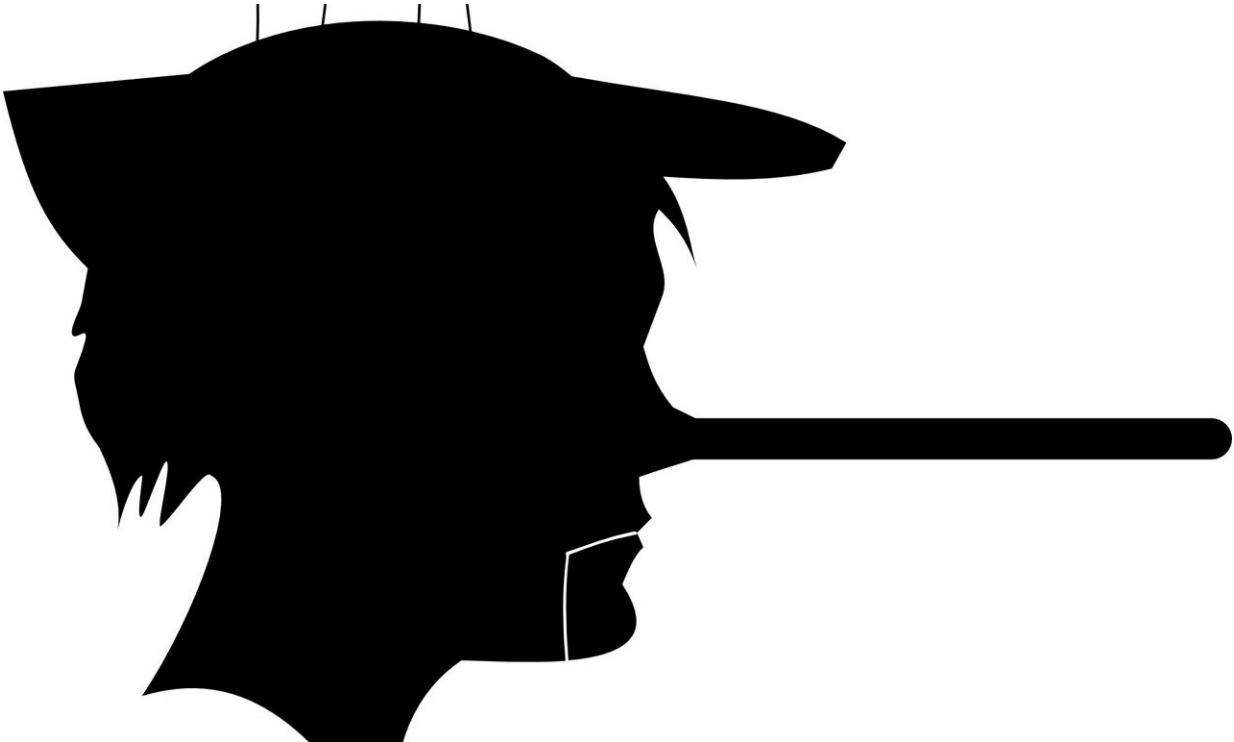


Men think they're better liars

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Men are twice as likely as women to consider themselves to be good at lying and at getting away with it, new research has found.

People who excel at lying are good talkers and tell more [lies](#) than others, usually to family, friends, [romantic partners](#) and colleagues, according to the research led by Dr. Brianna Verigin, at the University of Portsmouth.

Expert liars also prefer to lie face-to-face, rather than via text messages, and social media was the least likely place where they'd tell a lie.

Dr. Verigin, who splits her time between the Universities of Portsmouth and Maastricht, in the Netherlands, said: "We found a significant link between expertise at lying and gender. Men were more than twice as likely to consider themselves [expert](#) liars who got away with it.

"Previous research has shown that most people tell one-two lies per day, but that's not accurate, most people don't lie everyday but a small number of prolific liars are responsible for the majority of lies reported.

"What stood out in our study was that nearly half (40 per cent) of all lies are told by a very small number of deceivers. And these people will lie with impunity to those closest to them.

"Prolific liars rely on a great deal on being good with words, weaving their lies into truths, so it becomes hard for others to distinguish the difference, and they're also better than most at hiding lies within apparently simple, clear stories which are harder for others to doubt."

Dr. Verigin quizzed 194 people, half men and half women, with an average age of 39.

They were asked a series of questions including how good they were at deceiving others, how many lies they'd told in the past 24 hours, the type of lies they'd told, who to, and whether they'd done so face-to-face or via other means.

She said: "Time after time, studies have shown we are not as good at detecting lies as we think we are. At best, most of us have a 50:50 chance of getting it right when someone is pulling the wool over our eyes.

"We wanted to focus on those who are good at lying and try to understand how they do it and to whom."

The study found one of the key strategies of liars is to tell plausible lies that stay close to the truth, and to not give away much information. And the better someone thinks they are at lying, the more lies they'll tell.

The most commonly used strategy among all those who admitted to lying, whether experts or poor liars, was to leave out certain information. But expert liars added to that an ability to weave a believable story embellished with truth, making the lies harder to spot.

In contrast, those who thought they weren't good at lying resorted, when they did lie, to being vague.

Overall, of the 194 people, the most common types of deception, in descending order, were 'white lies', exaggerations, hiding information, burying lies in a torrent of truth and making up things.

Most people chose to lie face-to-face, then via [text message](#), a phone call, email, and last, via social media.

Most expert liars lie most often to family, friends or colleagues. Employers and authority figures were least likely to be lied to.

The study showed no link between level of education and lying ability. Dr. Verigin said more research needs to be done, particularly on better understanding good liars' expertise at embedding lies within truthful information, and at using facts that were impossible to check.

More information: Brianna L. Verigin et al, Lie prevalence, lie characteristics and strategies of self-reported good liars, *PLOS ONE* (2019). [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0225566](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0225566)

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