



Susanna Reid left embarrassed by 'boob mishap' on Good



Emmerdale spoiler: Will the police discover that Emma Barton...



Strictly Come Dancing's Danny Mac angers Oti Mabuse as he makes...



Girl stands at the end of the bed...and you'll be SHOCKED by what...



Strictly Come Dancing: Laura Whitmore and Giovanni Pernice leave...

## REVEALED: Telling white lies could encourage people to tell BIGGER fibs in the future

TELLING white lies desensitises our brains to guilt and may encourage people to tell even bigger porkies in the future, suggests new research.

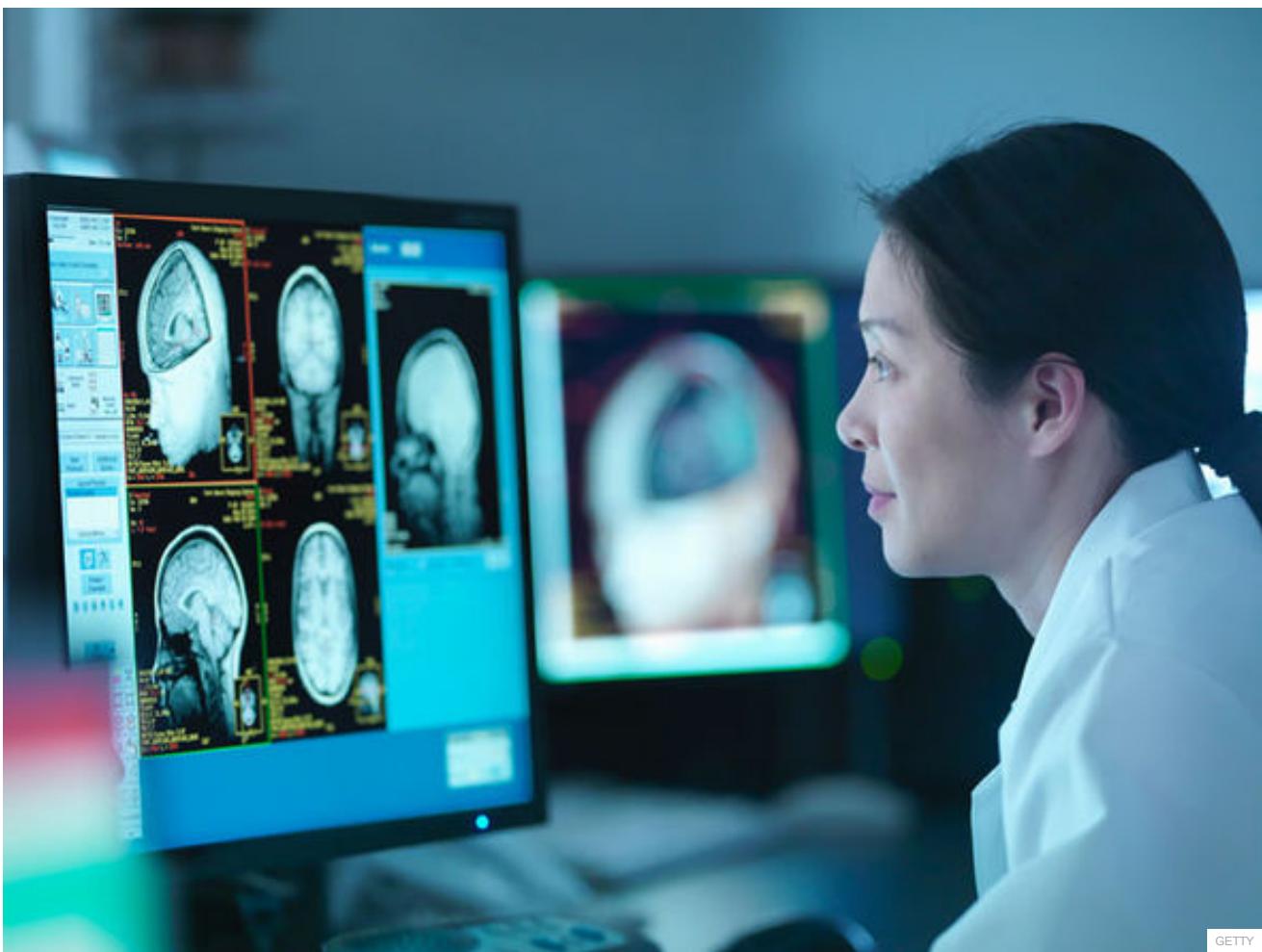


Telling white lies may encourage people to tell even bigger porkies in the future

The research, published in the journal *Nature Neuroscience*, provides the first empirical evidence that self-serving lies gradually escalate and reveals how this happens in our brains.

Scientists scanned volunteers' brains while they took part in tasks where they could lie for personal gain (<http://www.express.co.uk/comment/expresscomment/320410/No-fibbing-a-white-lie-can-be-the-best-tonic>).

They found that the amygdala, a part of the brain associated with emotion, was most active when people first lied for personal gain.



GETTY

Scientists scanned volunteers' brains while they lied for personal gains

But the amygdala's response to lying declined with every fib while the magnitude of the lies escalated.

Crucially, the researchers found that larger drops in amygdala activity predicted bigger lies in future.

Study senior author Doctor Tali Sharot, of University College London, said: "When we lie for personal gain, our amygdala produces a negative feeling that limits the extent to which we are prepared to lie."

"However, this response fades as we continue to lie, and the more it falls the bigger our lies become. This may lead to a 'slippery slope' where small acts of dishonesty escalate into more significant lies."

The study included 80 volunteers who took part in a team estimation task that involved guessing the number of pennies in a jar and sending their estimates to unseen partners using a computer. This took place in several different scenarios.



GETTY

Amygdala, a part of the brain associated with emotion, was most active during the first lie

In the first scenario, the participants were told that aiming for the most accurate estimate would benefit them and their partner.

In various other scenarios, over- or under-estimating the amount would either benefit them at their partner's expense, benefit both of them, benefit their partner at their own expense, or only benefit one of them with no effect on the other.

When over-estimating the amount would benefit the volunteer at their partner's expense, people started by slightly exaggerating their estimates which elicited strong amygdala responses.

Researchers found that the volunteers' exaggerations escalated as the experiment went on while their amygdala responses declined.



GETTY

The amygdala's response to lying declined with every fib while the magnitude of the lies escalated

Study lead author Doctor Neil Garrett said: "It is likely the brain's blunted response to repeated acts of dishonesty reflects a reduced emotional response to these acts.

"This is in line with suggestions that our amygdala signals aversion to acts that we consider wrong or immoral.

"We only tested dishonesty in this experiment, but the same principle may also apply to escalations in other actions such as risk taking or violent behaviour."

Dr Raliza Stoyanova, of the Wellcome Trust which part-funded the research, added: "This is a very interesting first look at the brain's response to repeated and increasing acts of dishonesty.

"Future work would be needed to tease out more precisely whether these acts of dishonesty are indeed linked to a blunted emotional response, and whether escalations in other types of behaviour would have the same effect."