



CALIFORNIA STATE SCIENCE FAIR 2011 PROJECT SUMMARY

Name(s) Melissa R. Long	Project Number S0424
Project Title Who Lies More, Boys or Girls?	
<p style="text-align: center;">Abstract</p> <p>Objectives/Goals The purpose of my experiment was to compare trends in both male and female teens, analyzing rate of lying, types of lies, deception in relationships, self-perception, and feelings about lies. My hypothesis was that male subjects: (1) would report a higher frequency of lies than female subjects, (2) would report lying more to close friends, girlfriends, and parents, while female respondents would report lying more to acquaintances, (3) would report lying more for personal gain, but that female participants would report lying more about feelings, opinions and preferences, and to avoid hurting people's feelings, and (4) would report feeling less guilty about lying than female subjects.</p> <p>Methods/Materials I created a self-report survey, covering the aforementioned categories. The 21 question survey included 8 questions strictly characterizing liars. I administered the survey to teen girls and boys, ages 13-18. Participants were anonymous. No personal identifiers (names, birth dates, social security numbers, etc.) were collected. Subjects were informed: (1) survey was voluntary, (2) they could stop at any time they chose to, (3) they did not have to answer every question, (4) survey was about lying, (5) there were no risks involved, (6) that the study would provide a deeper understanding of the lying habits of teens. Teenagers gave verbal assent to participate. Surveys were collected by project advisor and were locked in her office at all times.</p> <p>Results Out of the 77 subjects, 60.87% of the male teen subjects and 31.48% of the teen girls classified as liars. Although more boys reported lying 3-5+ times a day, a high percentage of girls reported lying 1-2 times a day (males, 34.78%; females, 64.81%; $P=0.0052$). Boys reported lying more to parents, girlfriends ($P=0.0040$), and acquaintances, but girls reported lying more to close friends ($P=0.0140$). Overall, teen girls and boys reported a higher frequency of lies to those they are close to, suggesting that the closer teens are to someone the more deceptive they are. Male respondents reported lying more about accomplishments and knowledge, feelings, opinions, and preferences and to control people, but female participants reported lying more to avoid trouble. The study provides a deeper understanding of the lying habits of teenagers. It reveals that teenagers reflect the lying behaviors of adults; they are not better or worse.</p>	
Summary Statement My experiment compares the lying habits of both male and female teens.	
Help Received Myung Sim, Biostatistician, helped me with statistical analysis.	