

ADOLESCENT IMPULSIVITY AND LIE-TELLING: A LONGITUDINAL EXAMINATION

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INTRODUCTION

- Rates of lie-telling have been shown to increase throughout childhood, peaking during adolescence (Debey et al., 2015; Levine et al., 2013).
- Impulsivity has been shown to follow a similar developmental trajectory, also peaking in adolescence (Collado et al., 2014; Galvan et al., 2007; Leshem & Glicksohn, 2007).
- Previous research suggests that populations with impulse control difficulties (e.g., externalizing problems; Lavoie et al., 2018) lie more frequently, but the association between impulsivity and lie-telling has not yet been directly examined.

The Current Study:

- **Aim:** To examine longitudinal associations between self-reported impulsivity and lie-telling in childhood and adolescence.
- **Hypothesis:** Greater impulsivity will predict more frequent lie-telling over time.

METHOD

Participants (N = 1148 at T1):

- Aged 9-15 years, $M_{age} = 11.55$, $SD = 1.69$, 49.8% male at T1

Measures:

Lie-Telling Rates

- **How often, since the beginning of last summer, have you lied:**
 - To your parents
 - To your friends
 - To your teachers
 - About cheating
 - 5-point scale (1 = never lied, 5 = lied 10 or more times)

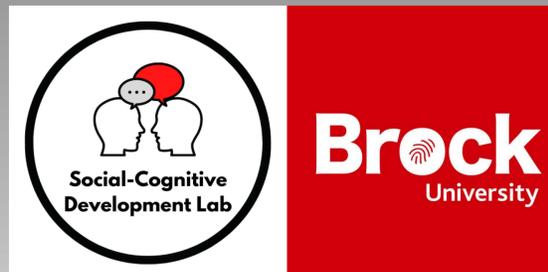
Impulsivity

- **Barratt Impulsiveness Scale** (4 items; Patton et al., 1995)
 - Participants were asked to what extent a series of impulsivity-related behaviors described them (i.e., "I plan tasks carefully")
 - 4-point scale (1 = almost never, 4 = almost always)

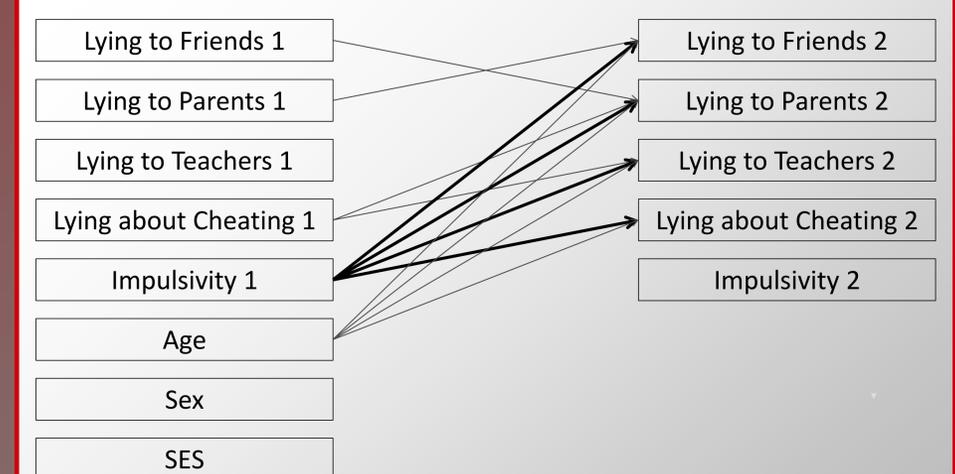
Procedure:

- Participants completed the survey during school visits at two time points one year apart.

Greater impulsivity predicted
more frequent lie-telling
to parents, friends, and teachers,
as well as about cheating.



RESULTS



Note. Only significant paths are indicated above. Bolded lines indicate cross-lagged paths of interest.

- As hypothesized, greater impulsivity at T1 predicted lying more frequently to parents ($\beta = .113$), to friends ($\beta = .091$), to teachers ($\beta = .133$), and about cheating ($\beta = .129$) at T2.
- Self-reported lie-telling rates were all positively associated with age.

Model fit was well-specified, $\chi^2(48) = 137.31$, $p < .001$, CFI = .975, and RMSEA = .038, 90% CI [.031, .046], $p = .996$.

DISCUSSION

- While previous studies have demonstrated the importance of top-down processes, such as inhibitory control, in lie-telling behaviors (e.g., Walczyk et al., 2009), our findings highlight the role of bottom-up processes.
- The focus on short-term benefits (e.g., to avoid punishment) without consideration for long-term consequences (Tsukayama et al., 2012) may help explain the peak rates of lie-telling that are observed in adolescence.

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