



‘Wasn’t me!’ A field study of the relationship between deceptive motivations and psychopathic traits in young offenders

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Purpose. Evaluating truthfulness is an integral part of any forensic assessment. Unfortunately, the motives underlying the use of deceptive strategies by offenders and how these may be mediated by personality are not well established, particularly in adolescent samples. Accordingly, the aim of the present study was to identify different deception-related motivations in a sample of juvenile offenders, with special emphasis placed on the relationship between these motivations and psychopathic traits.

Methods. Archived file and videotaped information for 60 Canadian federal juvenile offenders were reviewed in order to identify real-life (spontaneous) patterns of deceptive motivations.

Results. It was found that there were significant differences between the low, medium, and high groups across psychopathic traits for the motivations of (1) lies to obtain a reward; (2) to heighten self-presentation; and (3) for duping delight.

Conclusions. Not only were juvenile offenders found to lie for a variety of reasons, but also psychopathy was found to mediate the specific motivational patterns leading to offender perpetrated deception. The relevance of these findings to the assessment of truthfulness in offender populations is discussed.

Lying, dishonesty, and trickery are facts of life when it comes to interpersonal interactions. Indeed, deception – in one form or another – regularly surfaces in our day-to-day exchanges (Ekman, 1991), irrespective of context (e.g., from social to professional), or target (e.g., from strangers to significant others). While the act of lying can be viewed as a relative constant across all interpersonal situations (irrespective of context or target), the reasons why people lie, as well as how people betray their lies, are thought to vary across contexts, targets, and individuals and, as such, warrant concentrated empirical attention (Cooper, Hervé, & Yuille, 2009; Ekman, 1991).

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Yet, despite its real-world applications, the topic has received little research attention. The research that has been conducted has almost exclusively relied on laboratory simulations, which arguably are of limited value when it comes to explaining deception as it occurs in the real world – a world in which the consequences of lying can far outweigh its benefits (i.e., an unachievable situation in the ethical laboratory setting), distraction is the norm (i.e., lack of experimental control), a much greater number of motivations for lying exist (i.e., from prosocial to antisocial, the latter of which can not ethically or appropriately be investigated within the laboratory), and in which the individual and context dictate the need for lying (i.e., rather than the experimenter). The limits of simulation designs become especially problematic when attempting to generalize from the laboratory to the forensic context, where the motivations, stakes, consequences, and distractions are far greater in range and intensity. That is, the motivations that lead antisocial individuals to lie (e.g., to commit and get away with their crimes) are more numerous and salient than those that can be created in sterile laboratory environments.

Not only has there been a lack of field research in this area, but there has also been little attention given to individual differences; that is, to how – for example – personality and age mediate what, why, when, where, and how deception surfaces. The present field study attempted to broach these issues by investigating real-world (i.e., unsolicited) lies in a sample of incarcerated juvenile offenders, with special attention given to motivational factors and personality, most notably psychopathy – a personality disorder partly characterized by the instrumental use of deception and manipulation.

Motivation to deceive

As both motivation and salience affect how lies reveal themselves (i.e., the particular emotions and/or cognitive requirements associated with the diverse motivations for lying result in emotion-/cognition-specific clues to deception; salience increases the clarity of these clues), a better understanding of why people lie can only serve to increase our ability to detect deception. Yet, few studies have investigated this issue, and even a smaller number has been conducted in forensic contexts.

Studies that have explored the motivations for deception in non-forensic samples (Camden, Motley, & Wilson, 1984; Ekman, 1997; Ford, 1996; Hample, 1980; Lippard, 1988; Turner, Edgley, & Olmstead, 1975) are very important in their own right, but the results do not generalize well to forensic populations. For the most part, the participants have been undergraduates instructed to dissimulate about everyday situations (e.g., Ekman, 1997; Ford, 1996). As a result, the consequences of lying were typically minor and the liars generally were less sophisticated than those found in forensic populations (Lippard, 1988; Spidel, 2002). Furthermore, the majority of these studies focused on white lies in an attempt to investigate social motivations, and the motivations for lying therefore were, by design, limited to prosocial lies. That is, these investigations largely investigated false statements that simply help social interactions remain smooth and positive (Ford, 1996). Such motivations have little relevance within forensic milieus. Consequently, their impact on credibility assessment is comparatively trivial with respect to lies committed, for example, to avoid prosecution – a frequent motivation for lying in forensic contexts (Petitclerc, Hervé, Hare, & Spidel, 2000; Spidel, 2002). The current investigation focused on all types of lies of forensic relevance.

Thus far, only three studies have investigated motives for deception in forensic populations, and all have been conducted with adult samples (Petitclerc, Hervé,

Hare, & Spidel, 2000; Rogers & Cruise, 2000; Spidel, 2002). Without exception, these studies revealed adult offenders to have a wide range of reasons to engage in unsolicited deception (i.e., deception was identified from archived interview and/or file information rather than solicited for experimental purposes), many of which have significant personal and social consequences (e.g., can result in avoidance of, or reduction in, sentence and can result in dangerous criminals being back on the street, respectively). This evolving line of inquiry is bound to have important consequences for credibility assessment. Knowing why a potential suspect may deceive should help investigators to be better informed on which clues to deception to expect, thereby enabling them to detect deception more effectively when it surfaces (Cooper *et al.*, 2009).

Towards this aim, Petitclerc and Hervé (1999) developed a typology of deceptive motivations, one that spans the various motivations found within forensic contexts. This typology has several advantages over previous frameworks. For instance, it was founded in both clinical and research experience (i.e., it does not reflect an exhaustive list of deceptive motivations but rather provides a list of forensically relevant motivations). Previous motivational typologies, by contrast, largely evolved from self-report data. In an offender context, it is imperative not to rely solely on self-report, as it is unlikely that an inmate would acknowledge a lie, especially one with substantial consequences for him or her. As such, many suggest caution when using self-reports to assess deception in prison populations (Bagby, Rogers, & Buis, 1994; Hare, Forth, & Hart, 1989; Rogers, 1997). In addition, the Petitclerc and Hervé typology was specifically designed for the forensic context. Given that lies in forensic contexts are of a more diverse subject matter than typically revealed in simulation research in undergraduate populations (Ford, King, & Hollender, 1988), the typology also covers a wider array of motivations than typically depicted in the forensic literature.¹ The current typology includes 11 operationally defined motivational categories. Briefly, they are as follows (see Petitclerc & Hervé, 1999; Spidel, 2002, for more details):

Compulsive

These lies are without obvious purpose. They are usually not self-serving and, in fact, may be self-destructive as the deception is random and likely to be discovered. Compulsive lies are usually quite spontaneous (Ford, 1996). Those considered 'pathological liars' are known for their compulsiveness (Ekman, 1997); that is, they cannot control telling lies. The terms 'compulsive liar' and 'pathological liar' are often used in a sense that is broader than the one referred to here.

Secretive

A secretive lie is motivated by an offender's desire to keep some personal information concealed. The offender is reluctant to give the target personal information, regardless of the latter's desire or need to know the truth. The offender may believe that his or her right to privacy takes precedent in such circumstances. This is similar to the lies Ford (1996) described as motivated by a need 'to preserve a sense of autonomy' (p. 88).

¹Note, however, that the lies covered are not specific to forensic populations.

Avoid punishment

Lies to avoid punishment are by definition self-serving. For obvious reasons, these are also probably the most frequently encountered types of lies in the criminal justice system. Ford (1996) and Kropp and Rogers (1993) posited that different types of individuals lie to avoid punishment based on various motivational pressures. Some individuals place their own needs and desires above the consequences of their lies. Others weigh the pros and cons of lying and telling the truth and reason that lying is the best way to cope with their present situation (Kropp & Rogers, 1993). In the first interpretation, the lies can be attributed to the liar's egocentricity, lack of empathy, and irresponsibility, and therefore are seen as egosyntonic (e.g., lying in order to avoid taking responsibility for your own behaviour by, for example, lying that you were the person who raped that woman). In the second interpretation, the lies are attributed to the pressure from the situation, and are seen as egodystonic (e.g., lying in order to avoid incriminating other people by, for example, saying that you were not involved in the gang assault of an individual in order to avoid having to provide information on fellow gang members).²

Avoid negative evaluation

This category includes lies concerning a topic that the offender is shameful or worried about being judged on. The offender deceives to avoid having the target make a negative evaluation about him/her. Such lies are said to occur when the offender is mindful of, and is concerned about, the target's opinion, or when generally careful about self-presentation (Petitclerc & Hervé, 1999).

Protective

Lies in this category are used in order to avoid physical retaliation from another. This type of lie is conceived as being a special case of lying that serves to avoid punishment, where punishment is defined as physical harm.

Obtain a reward

Lying to obtain a reward is regarded as more manipulative than lying to avoid punishment. Any gain from this lie is something undeserved, and would not have been obtained by the offender under other circumstances (Petitclerc & Hervé, 1999). In this case, gains could be physical (e.g., obtaining sexual favours), situational (e.g., early release from punishment), material (e.g., money), or internal, (e.g., attention). Ekman (1997) states that this is the second most often mentioned reason for lying, after lying to avoid punishment.

Heighten self-presentation

In contrast to avoiding a negative evaluation, lies to heighten self-presentation serve to present the offender in a positive light (Petitclerc & Hervé, 1999). This may be similar to a 'faking good' strategy, defined as a tendency to deny symptoms or negative behaviour,

²In the present study, the egosyntonic–egodystonic distinction was made based on either the offender's self-report and/or an evaluation of contextual variables.

which has received a relatively large amount of empirical attention (see Austin, 1992; Bagby, Rogers, & Buis, 1994; Bagby, Rogers, Buis, & Kalemka, 1994; Paulhus, Bruce, & Trapnell, 1995).

Altruistic

Altruistic lies are motivated by the perpetrator's desire to protect another from some harm (Ford, 1996). Typically, these lies take the form of lying to shield the feelings of the target, or to protect another from negative consequences.

Carelessness

Unlike compulsive lying, which may be due to an impulse control problem (Ford, 1996) and, therefore, beyond the offender's control, the careless liar is in control of the lying behaviour but does not care whether or not s/he is being truthful.³ In a forensic interview situation, for example, the offender is likely unmotivated to participate, and so does not pay much attention to his/her responses (i.e., the content [or details] of the lie is of little importance), resulting in inconsistent reporting.

Duping delight

These lies are quite simply motivated by the pleasure of deceiving another. For this reason, Ekman (1991) coined the term 'duping delight'. Like the careless lie, the content is of secondary importance. What is primary is the offender's desire to prove his ability to deceive, and to take pleasure in outwitting and conning a target.

Individual differences

As noted above, little is known regarding how individual difference variables, such as personality, mediate lying behaviour. This is surprising, especially within the forensic arena, given the wealth of research showing how personality, most notably psychopathy, mediates a variety of behaviour, including recidivism, type of violence, institutional behaviour, and treatment response, as well as performance on various experimental tasks (see Hare, 2003). Moreover, there is strong clinical and theoretical support suggesting that psychopaths lie more frequently and for a greater variety of reasons than non-psychopaths (see Cooper & Yuille, 2007). Two defining characteristics of the disorder, as measured by the Psychopathy Checklist - Revised (PCL-R; Hare, 2003), are *pathological lying* and *conning/manipulative* (Bolt, Hare, Vitale, & Newman, 2004; Hare, 2003). Corresponding items in the Psychopathy Checklist: Youth Version (PCL: YV; Forth, Kosson, & Hare, 2003) are *pathological lying* and *manipulation for personal gain*, respectively. It could be argued that psychopaths' lack of affective ties to others, superficial charm, and grandiosity make them especially well suited to actively deceive and manipulate others to achieve their selfish goals. Clinical and theoretical wisdom suggests that psychopaths would be especially likely to lie to heighten self-presentation, for duping delight, to avoid punishment, and to obtain a reward, but not for altruistic

³This particular motivation was derived from our clinical experience in forensic settings in which we periodically observed offenders answering questions quickly without care of the truthfulness of their answers in order to conclude the interview as quickly as possible.

purposes. Indeed, indirect evidence suggests that psychopaths engage in impression management when engaged in treatment (Seto & Barbaree, 1999) or when giving accounts of their homicides (Porter & Woodworth, 2007).

To date, only three studies have investigated the relationship between psychopathy and lying in forensic contexts.⁴ The most recent of these studies (Spidel, 2002) was a follow-up investigation of the pilot study by Petitclerc *et al.* (2000) on motivations for lying in psychopathic and non-psychopathic adult offenders. Consistent with the results of the pilot study and with the aforementioned predictions, Spidel (2002) found psychopaths, as compared to non-psychopaths, to lie more often to obtain a reward, to heighten self-presentation, for duping delight, and to avoid punishment in an egosyntonic manner, as opposed to an egodystonic manner (i.e., internally or self-generated vs. externally or other motivated, respectively).⁵ Similarly, Rogers and Cruise (2000) found adult psychopathic offenders to lie more than non-psychopathic offenders in order to create an implausible presentation, to con and manipulate the target, and to deny criminality – motivational categories theoretically similar to those used in the Petitclerc *et al.* (2000) and Spidel (2002) studies.

As these studies were all conducted with adult samples and given the paucity of field research in this area, little is known whether or not these findings would generalize to adolescent offenders. Yet, we know that adolescent offenders engage in deception. Indeed, in a review of seven studies, Stouthamer-Loeber (1986) found that approximately half of delinquent youth exhibit frequent lying behaviour. Clearly, these results illustrate the need for further and more specialized research in the area.

The purpose of the present field study was to examine the relationship between deceptive motivations and psychopathic traits in young offenders, thereby addressing some of the limitations of the existing literature. As Petitclerc and Hervé's (1999) model is an initial step towards a comprehensive understanding of deceptive motivations in offenders, we used their paradigm. To compliment this model of deceptive motivations, we adopted Ekman's (1997) definition of lies. To classify a statement as deceptive, two criteria must be met. First, deception must be intentional. That is, the offender must be aware and conscious of the fact that the statements s/he is making are indeed misrepresentations of the truth. Any false statements due to failures in memory, delusional thinking, or incorrect interpretations do not meet this criterion. Secondly, the target must have no prior warning (either implicitly or explicitly) that s/he is being deceived. To maximize generalizability to the real world, lies were coded from archived files and/or interviews. Once a lie matching these criteria was discovered the deceptive motivations and their associations with psychopathic traits were assessed.

In line with previous studies (Petitclerc *et al.*, 2000; Rogers & Cruise, 2000; Spidel, 2002) and clinical and theoretical wisdom, we expected youths higher psychopathy scores to be motivated to lie more than those with lower psychopathy scores across four distinct categories: to heighten self-presentation, duping delight, to avoid punishment, and to obtain a reward. However, youths high on psychopathy were not expected to lie for altruistic reasons.

⁴While laboratory studies have been conducted, they are not reviewed here given their lack of applicability to the current topic: lies as they occur in the field.

⁵The egosyntonic versus egodystonic distinction was added to a revised version of the Petitclerc and Hervé paradigm (1999) in light of the results of the Petitclerc *et al.* (2000) pilot study.

Method

Participants

Sixty participants were selected from a database of juvenile inmates who had taken part in research conducted at Youth Forensic Services in Vancouver, British Columbia. To be included in the investigation, participants had to have an audiotaped personality interview on file, which consisted of a combination of the PCL: YV interview schedule and a modified personality interview (i.e., the Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-IV-TR SCID-II; First, Spitzer, Gibbon, & Williams, 1997). Interviews were of the same duration and structure for all the participants. The interviewer was a graduate student in the clinical psychology programme at UBC.

Of the offenders in the sample, 45 were male and 15 were female. Due to the small representation of females, no gender comparisons were performed. The average age of the participants was 15.02 years ($SD = 1.23$, range 12–18). In terms of ethnicity, 53.3% of the sample was Caucasian, 23.3% Native, 8.3% Indo-Canadian, 6.7% African-Canadian, 5.0% Asian, and 3.3% fell within other ethnic categories. In this sample, 28.3% were convicted (i.e., index offence) of a violent offence (e.g., assault, robbery, murder), 53.3% of a property offence (e.g., breaking and entering, shoplifting), 11.7% of a sexual assault, and 6.7% of a drug offence.

Psychopathy assessments

PCL: YV assessments were completed from file information (i.e., institutional records, including collateral reports, victim impact statements, court records, police reports, etc.) and the audio taped interviews. The raters were PhD students who had completed a PCL-R training workshop and had a relatively large amount of practical experience using the PCL-R and PCL: YV. The Spearman–Brown intra-class correlation coefficient of reliability for a single rating and for the average of two independent ratings of psychopathy ($N = 16$) was .95 and .98, respectively.

The current study employed the PCL: YV as a categorical measure of psychopathy. The sample was divided into high ($N = 16$), medium ($N = 28$), and low ($N = 16$) PCL: YV groups, using the recommended cut-off of 30 and above for the high group and 20 and below for the low group (see Forth, Kosson, & Hare, 2003).

Lie identification

Offender perpetrated deception was identified by file and interview reviews. An offender's statement was deemed to be a lie if it was found to be inconsistent across file information and/or the videotaped interview. There were several different ways in which lies were identified.⁶ Some lies were reported in the file by a third person. In other cases, the offenders themselves may have confessed to lying. The coders could also detect lies by finding contradictions between two different statements made by an offender, or contradictions between an offender's statement and file information from reliable sources. The sources were deemed reliable if they were mental health professionals, case management officers, police, or the courts. In some rare cases, the evidence for a lie came from the coder's own judgment, as when the offender's claim

⁶Clearly, the method utilized restricted the number and types of lies that could be identified/analysed. For example, without data relating to historical truth/fact, some lies were likely missed (e.g., prevarication).

was so extreme that it was deemed virtually impossible. The reliability of the likelihood that both raters detected the same lies ($N = 10$) was $K = .932$, $p < .0001$. Both raters identified the lies 94% of the time.

Deceptive motivations

Deceptive motivations were assessed according to the Petittlerc and Hervé's (1999) protocol. In this protocol, each of the 11 motivations for deception (including the revisions of the category of 'avoiding punishment' into egosyntonic and egodystonic) was operational defined (see above for summary descriptions of each category; see Petittlerc & Hervé, 1999, for details). Trained research assistants (RAs), blind to personality disorder diagnosis, used these operational definitions to identify the motivation underlying particular lies (as identified in the above noted manner). When unsure of the motivational category of a particular lie, RAs were instructed to proceed by the process of elimination (i.e., selecting the most likely candidate once all other types have been ruled out).

Once all individual lies were categorized RAs were instructed to make more general judgments about the prevalence or pervasiveness of particular deceptive motivations for each offender, with ratings completed on a three-point scale:

- 0 - Not at all characteristic of the individual (i.e., there is no evidence that the individual has ever been motivated in this way to lie);
- 1 - Somewhat characteristic of the individual (i.e., although the offender has lied in this fashion in the past, he has not extensively done so; that is, (s)he does not rely on this type of lie every time (s)he is in a similar condition/context); or
- 2 - Extremely characteristic of the individual (i.e., the offender repeatedly lies in this fashion; they may even seem unable to control their use of this type of deception under similar circumstances).

This constituted the summary motive rating, made for each offender. Note that having one characteristic motivation to lie does not preclude having another. That is, the same offender may characteristically lie under several motivations. The Spearman-Brown inter-class correlation coefficient was .98, $p < .01$ for the reliability of the classification of individual lies into motives across two raters.

Results

Table 1 shows the group means and standard deviations for the lie categories across motivations. The summary motive ratings of the low, medium, and high psychopathy groups offenders were compared via a MANOVA. The summary motive ratings were used in the analyses because they were considered the most appropriate measure to index the deception motivation(s) most characteristically employed/displayed by participants. Due to low power (i.e., small sample size), an analysis of the egosyntonic and egodystonic distinction could not be completed, resulting in a global category of 'avoiding punishment'. Since these predictions were made *a priori*, the Bonferroni correction was not used. Across the predicted motivations, the overall contrasts were significant for lies to obtain a reward ($F(2, 59) = 12.14$, $p = .000$), to heighten self-presentation ($F(2, 59) = 9.40$, $p = .000$), and for duping delight ($F(2, 59) = 17.34$,

Table 1. Differences between low ($N = 16$), high ($N = 16$), and medium ($N = 28$) PCL: YV groups in their motivations for lying

Motivation	Low PCL group		Medium PCL group		High PCL group		Planned orthogonal contrasts t
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Compulsive	0.38	0.81	0.75	0.84	0.69	0.60	1.24
Secretive	0.38	0.72	0.39	0.69	0.13	0.50	0.95
Avoid punishment	0.81	0.40	0.61	0.69	0.63	0.81	0.54
Avoid negative evaluation	0.56	0.81	0.96	0.88	1.31	0.95	2.90
Protective	0.00	0.00	0.21	0.57	0.19	0.54	1.08
Obtain a reward	0.06	0.25	0.14	0.45	0.88	0.81	12.14*
Heighten Self-presentation	0.19	0.40	0.82	0.91	1.37	0.81	9.40*
Altruistic	0.13	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.40
Careless	0.06	0.25	0.11	0.42	0.00	0.00	0.60
Duping delight	0.13	0.50	0.06	0.77	0.11	0.42	17.34*

* $p < .001$.

$p = .000$). There was no significant difference between the groups for the lies to avoid punishment ($p < .05$), contrary to prediction. However, in line with predictions there was no significant difference between the groups for altruistic lies ($p > .05$) (see Table 1, for means and results of all the comparisons). Tukey *post hoc* comparisons of the three groups indicate that the high PCL: YV group had significantly higher deception scores than the low ($p < .05$) and medium ($p < .05$) group for the motivation of obtaining a reward. There were also significantly higher deception scores between the high PCL: YV group and the low ($p < .05$) and medium ($p < .001$) group for the motivation of duping delight. When looking at self-presentation, there was a significant difference between the high and low PCL: YV groups ($p < .05$). Comparisons between the low and medium groups were not statistically significant at $p < .05$ for any of the three deceptive motivations and there was no significant differences for self-presentation between the medium and high PCL: YV groups at $p < .05$.

Discussion

As predicted, the current study found significant personality mediated differences for psychopathy across several deceptive motivational categories. Individuals with a higher psychopathy score were more likely to engage in deception for duping delight and in lies to heighten self-presentation and to obtain a reward, than were those with a lower psychopathy score. However, psychopathy was unrelated to the use of the other deceptive motivations: compulsive, secretive, careless, avoiding negative evaluation, protective, altruistic, and avoiding punishment, the latter two being contrary to prediction.

The present findings were generally consistent with those found in adult populations (e.g., Spidel, 2002). While the differences between the present study and those conducted in adults may reflect methodological differences (see below for details), supplementary analyses that directly compare adolescents and adults on their patterns

of deceptive motivations are nevertheless warranted before any conclusions regarding the interaction of age, personality disorder, and motivations to deceive can be made.

That offenders in the higher psychopathy group engaged in more duping delight than did those in the lower psychopathy groups is not surprising given that this behaviour has long been viewed as a defining characteristic of the disorder. The present investigation simply adds empirical support for this clinical insight. Two general explanations for this behaviour in psychopaths have been proposed. The first suggests that the behaviour is a form of sensation seeking: when these individuals are feeling powerless (or bored) they may find it thrilling to try to con others (Ford, 1996). The second suggests that duping delight may be an ego defence mechanism to bolster their self-esteem (Ford *et al.*, 1988). Indeed, psychopaths take great pains to appear superior and to dominate others (Hare *et al.*, 1989). By lying for duping delight, they may be reinforcing their self-perception of intellectual superiority by projecting a sense of worthlessness or inferiority on to the target of the lie while engaging in conscious manipulation (Ekman, 1997; Ford, 1996). In terms of presentation, both may take the form of elaborate lies, which may deviate significantly from the truth, with the former being more likely to be associated with signs of pleasure and the latter contempt.

While less obvious, the finding that psychopathy was related to a propensity to engage in deception to heighten self-presentation and to obtain a reward makes intuitive sense. Indeed, these individuals are known to actively act upon their environments to their advantage. That is, they are rarely content with the *status quo* but instead are constantly seeking situations that may benefit them. Being grandiose, self-centred individuals, they are prone to twist information in such a way as to bolster their self-esteem. In addition, given that a 'successful con' requires one to build some rapport with the target and that psychopaths are routinely trying to con others, engaging in positive impression management is bound to be an integral part of their interactions with others.⁷ Being parasitic and manipulative individuals, they are prone to take advantage of any situation that may result in underserved rewards. At a more basic level, there is plenty of research indicating that the behaviour of psychopathic individuals is consistently self-serving (or instrumental) and more intense than that of non-psychopathic individuals and, therefore, it should not be surprising that they also take deception one-step further. With regards to presentation, both types of lies are likely to lead to signs of pleasure (as they are getting away with something) and/or contempt (as they are taking advantage of 'lesser' people), with signs of displeasure (anger/disgust) surfacing as goal attainment is thwarted. The form of these lies is likely to depend on the context; that is, they are likely to be as elaborate as required for success.

Counter to predictions, psychopathy was unrelated to the use of lies to avoid punishment. Indeed, given that lies to avoid punishment are the most common of all lies, as well as the fact that the forensic context creates numerous opportunities for such lies, irrespective of personality, this superordinate classification is not likely to be very discriminative. Consistent with this view, Pettilerc *et al.* (2000) only found psychopaths to differ from non-psychopaths in this regard once lying to avoid punishment was separated into egosyntonic and egodystonic categories. The lack of significant findings pertaining to altruistic lies may be related to the low base rate for such lies, a reflection of the particular context of investigation (i.e., correctional settings likely to do not foster

⁷Consistent with this view, there was a non-significant trend for offenders in the high psychopathy group to engage in more lies to avoid negative evaluation than was the case for offenders in the Low psychopathy group.

altruistic acts). It also is possible that the sample contained a high prevalence of general personality pathology associated with selfishness.

Generalization of the results of this study to the 'real world' is limited by the nature of the data: archival data that included (but were not limited to) non-naturalistic information (i.e., research interviews). Further research comparing lies in research interviews with those in investigative interviews (e.g., conducted by law enforcement or mental health professionals) is required. In addition, the current investigation was hampered by the relatively small sample size and the many analyses performed, notwithstanding the use of *a priori* predictions. As a result, a number of factors could not be investigated, such as the egosyntonic–egodystonic distinction, gender differences, psychopathic subtypes, and/or the role of other personality disorders. The results therefore need to be interpreted with caution. Although the findings are similar to those found in an adult male population, these data have implications only for convicted young offenders assessed for psychopathy. We are not in a position to make statements regarding other relevant deceiver characteristics in other populations. For example, the current study did not look at gender differences, which may moderate the relationship between deceptive motivations and personality disorders. In fact, gender differences have been found in deceptive behaviour, with girls being able to mask their internal feelings at an earlier age than boys (Lewis, 1993). It may also be the case that girls possess more deceptive skill than boys (Lewis *et al.*, 1989, as cited in Gervais, Tremblay, & Desmarais-Gervais, 2000). As a result, investigations of gender differences would be an important avenue for future research, especially as a function of psychopathy.

The present findings suggest that what may separate high and low psychopathy offenders are not the behaviours evidenced by each (as they all lie), but the underlying motivations behind their acts (see Widiger & Frances, 1988). Motivation reflects, at least in part, emotions and cognition, which in turn affect the manner in which lies betray themselves (Cooper *et al.*, 2009; Ekman, 1991). Research along these lines might help investigators better assess how particular types of lies leak out (irrespective of psychopathy). Moreover, if the probable deceptive motivations of a particular type of offender are understood and known, the interviewer can be on guard for these types of lies. During criminal investigations this information may help guide the investigator with regards to the nature of collateral information needed to support self-report information, as well as help tailor assessment procedures to increase the chances of detecting deception. For example, knowing that psychopathic offenders are likely to lie to heighten self-presentation in an interview can alert the interviewer to probe areas where they describe situations that make them look better than normal. Moreover, knowing that a psychopathic offender may lie to heighten their self-presentation or for duping delight, may cause the psychologists working with them to be more vigilant and wary of their claims of improvement (Kosson, Gacono, & Bodholdt, 2000). This may be beneficial in that it will decrease the instances of parole granted on the report of a misled psychologist who incorrectly attests to the successful recovery of a manipulative psychopath (Hare, 1993).

Being able to assess credibility effectively and to identify the reasons for deception are also crucial to effective treatment. Although lying is rarely the central reason for therapy, it can be of benefit to intervene when lying is determined to be pathological or to be interfering with the therapeutic process. Indeed, lying may impede progress or cause the therapist to feel that substantial gains have been made (Rogers & Cruise, 2000). As certain personality disorders frequently are associated with lying (Ford *et al.*,

1988), it is important to determine the types of lies typically seen in these individuals to avoid stagnation in therapy and to enable the therapeutic process to evolve.

The effectiveness of professionals to assess the credibility of the information they receive is central to accurate decision making, particularly in – but not limited to – the forensic context, where errors can be costly for all involved, from the interviewee to society at large. Research in this area should help professionals to understand how deception occurs in the real world and how it varies across individuals. It also may help to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to evaluate truthfulness in the forensic context (see Cooper *et al.*, 2009).

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