

# Elderly more 'moralistic' than the young

**O**lder people have a much stronger sense of morality than the young, the world's biggest study into dishonesty suggests.

The British survey of more than 15,000 people found that when it comes to common acts of theft and fraud, the over 50s tend to see crimes as much more black and white than the younger generation.

They were also much more likely to say they would convict the perpetrator in a court of law.

The findings of the online Honesty Lab study by Brunel University are being revealed at the British Science Festival at the University of Surrey in Guildford.

Dr Stefan Fafinski and Dr Emily Finch, co-authors, said that we probably become more judgemental as we get older because we had "more to lose".

"These results could suggest that society is becoming more dishonest as the young are less likely to consider actions are wrong," said Dr Fafinski, a qualified criminal lawyer.

"But it could be that the older you

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get your views change. Maybe it is the older you get the possessions you acquire and so the more you value honesty.

"I don't think we are turning into a nation of petty criminals."

The researchers asked people to judge 50 acts of dishonesty ranging from insurance fraud, to making personal calls on a work telephone, to stealing grapes as you shopped at a supermarket.

On almost all counts, the older the person the more likely they were to judge the act as dishonest and more likely to convict the perpetrator in a court of law.

One of the biggest differences showed up when people were asked whether buying a dress for a one off occasion and returning it for a refund was dishonest.

While more than 93 per cent of over 50s considered it wrong, much fewer (seven out of ten) under 35s thought it was a crime.

When it comes to illegally copying a CD from a friend, just 30 per cent of the younger generation considered it dishonest whereas 56 per cent of the elderly.

Nearly nine out of 10 elderly people felt picking grapes from a bunch at the supermarket and giving them to your child, was dishonest but only 70 per cent of the younger generation.

In almost all cases the elderly also said that if it went to court they would be more likely to convict for the crime.

The survey overall found that insurance crime was considered the most dishonest, with crimes against your employee the least.

The researchers also discovered women were more likely to label conduct as wrong than men, although they were less likely to convict the person for their actions.

They also felt lying in a relationship was more dishonest.

One of the most surprising results was that less than half the people (43 per cent) felt that a carer putting pressure on an elderly person to change their will was dishonest.

In fact women and men were more likely to judge it dishonest to con a clothing store than an elderly patient in a care home, research suggests.

As people got older they seemed to find it more forgivable.

Only a third of over 50s felt it was dishonest compared with nearly half of the under 35s.

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Sharing bed could be bad for your health

**R**esearchers found that sharing a bed often led to poor quality sleep because people were regularly disturbed by their loved ones during the night.

They found that on average couples suffered up to 50 per cent more disturbances when sleeping with their partners than they did on their own.

This often led to "tension" in the relationship as well as health problems associated with lack of sleep, including heart disease and depression.

Yet despite the detrimental effects of snoring, teeth grinding and tossing and turning, people tolerated it because culturally sleeping together is considered a sign of intimacy. To sleep separately is considered "culturally wrong".

The scientists, speaking at a special seminar on sleep at the British Science Festival, said the answer was to speak to your partner before it led to poor health or divorce.

Dr Neil Stanley, a sleep expert at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital, said: "A normal double bed is 4ft 6inches wide.

"That means you have up to nine inches less per person in a double bed than a child has in a single bed.

"Add to this another person who kicks, punches, snores and gets up to go to the loo and is it any wonder that we are not getting a good night's sleep?"

"To save your marriage and your health you should have a discussion about your sleep."

Dr Stanley, who sleeps in a separate bed to his wife, said that the concept of a marital bed was a modern one adopted during Victorian times - but it had become a sign of intimacy.

"Intimacy is good for emotional health but good sleep is good for physical and mental health," he said.

Dr Stanley, who set up the Sleep Lab at the University of Surrey, said: "Sleep is a selfish thing to do. No one can share your sleep.

"If you know that your partner is next to you, then you are awake. If you are sleeping together and it is all right then carry on.

"If not then you should do something about it, not just tolerate it. Getting a good night's sleep is as important as diet and exercise."

Dr Robert Meadows, a sociologist at the University of Surrey, who said on average people needed 7.5 hours sleep, said a study he carried out proved that sleeping with your partner led to more disturbances.

He and his colleagues recruited 40 couples, aged 20 to 59, and asked them to report how well they slept and at the same time wear an Activity monitor on their wrist.

They found on average that sleeping with a partner increased their activity or disturbances by half as much again than if they were on their own.

"Sharing a bed does have a detrimental effect on couple's sleep. Why do we do it? It is to do with feelings of intimacy.

"People actually feel that they sleep better when they are with a partner but the evidence suggests otherwise."

Dr Stanley suggested a number of ways that couples could improve their sleep, if sleeping in separate beds was too much of a leap.

They included buying a bigger bed, having separate duvets and having darker curtains.

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**BARCELONA, Spain (AP)** - Working up a sweat may be even better than angioplasty for some heart patients, experts say. Studies have shown heart patients benefit from exercise, and some have even shown it works better than surgical procedures. At a meeting of the European Society of Cardiology on Sunday, several experts said doctors should focus more on persuading their patients to exercise rather than simply doing angioplasties.

Angioplasty is the top treatment for people having a heart attack or hospitalized with worsening symptoms. It involves using a tiny balloon to flatten a blockage and propping the heart artery open with a mesh tube called a stent. Most angioplasties are done on a nonemergency basis, to relieve chest pain caused by clogged arteries cutting off the heart's blood supply.

"It's difficult to convince people to exercise instead of having an angioplasty, but it works," said Rainer Hambrecht of Klinikum Links der Weser in Bremen, Germany. Hambrecht published a study in 2004 that found that nearly 90 percent of heart patients who rode bikes regularly were free of heart problems one year after they started their exercise regimen. Among patients who had an

angioplasty instead, only 70 percent were problem-free after a year. Hambrecht is now conducting a similar trial, which he expects to confirm his initial findings: that for some heart patients, exercise is more effective than a surgical procedure. Other experts agreed that would likely be the case. An angioplasty "only opens up one vessel blockage," said Dr. Christopher Cannon, an associate professor of medicine at Harvard University and spokesman for

## Exercise beats angioplasty for some heart patients



the American College of Cardiology. He was not linked to Hambrecht's research. "Exercise does a lot more than fixing one little problem." Among other benefits, exercise lowers bad cholesterol while raising good cholesterol, helps the body process sugar better, improves the lining of the blood vessels and gets rid of waste material faster. Exercise also lowers blood pressure and prevents plaque buildup in the arteries. Previous research has estimated one third of heart disease and stroke could be prevented if patients did two-and-a-half hours of brisk walking every week. In

the U.S., that would mean 280,000 fewer heart-related deaths every year. Joep Perk, a professor of health sciences at Sweden's Kalmar University and spokesman for the European Society of Cardiology, said two thirds of heart patients in line for an angioplasty could probably get better benefits by regularly working up a sweat. Experts say less than 20 percent of heart patients get the recommended amount of exercise - about 30 minutes of moderate activity five times a week.

Perk said doctors who performed angioplasties on their patients without asking them to change their lifestyles were ignoring the fundamental problem. "It would be like getting rid of the most troubled rust spots on a car without doing anything to stop more rust from appearing tomorrow." Still, doctors admitted that persuading patients to exercise instead of simply going in for an angioplasty, which can take less than a day, would be a tough sell. "Most patients want the quick fix," Cannon said. Exercise may improve patients' hearts better than an angioplasty, but it may also take months or even longer for patients to feel the benefits. "It's a lot easier to get your artery fixed than it is to exercise every day."