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Health

'Pinocchio effect': Lying sends nose-tip temperature soaring, but size unchanged: scientists

Thermal imaging showed the researchers that when someone tells a lie the tip of the nose heats up.

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BY LEE MORAN / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

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It takes a 'great mental effort' to cool the nose down - says the University of Granada's Emilio Gómez Milán and Elvira Salazar López. They have dubbed the newly-found phenomenon, discovered by using thermal imaging cameras on volunteers, 'The Pinocchio Effect'.

Telling a lie may not make your nose grow like Pinocchio but it does send its temperature soaring, according to Spanish scientists.

A rise in anxiety will see the tip of the nose heat up - while making a 'great mental effort' will help in cooling it down - says the University of Granada's Emilio Gómez Milán and Elvira Salazar López.

They have dubbed the newly-found phenomenon, discovered by using thermal imaging cameras on volunteers, 'The Pinocchio Effect'.

It is an homage to Italian writer Carlo Collodi's 19th century literary wooden character whose nose grew when he came under stress - especially when he failed to tell the truth.

The pair's doctoral thesis research, released yesterday, indicated the temperature of the nose increases or decreases according to mood, as does the orbital muscle area in the inner corner of the eyes.

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They claimed that thermal imaging can detect sexual desire and arousal in both men and women, evident by an increase in temperature in the chest and genital areas.

And their work also demonstrated that, at a physiological level at least, men and women become aroused at the same time, although women subjectively indicate that they are not.

They made their conclusions after finding that, when people lie about their feelings, the brain's insular cortex is altered.

The scientists' statement said: 'The insular cortex is involved in the detection and regulation of body temperature, so there is a large negative correlation between the activity of this structure and the magnitude of the temperature change.

'The more activity in the insular cortex (the higher the visceral feeling), lower heat exchange occurs, and vice versa.'

Part of the results of their study have been published in scientific journals, while others have not, reported El Mundo newspaper.

The pair also found thermal footprints (that is body patterns with specific temperature changes) for aerobic exercise and distinct types of dance, such as ballet.

Salazar said: 'When someone dances Flamenco, the temperature in their buttocks lowers and it rises in their forearms. This is the thermal footprint for Flamenco, although each type of dance has its own.'

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