



## You can't hide your lyin' eyes (or pulse) from this \$1100 test

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He has started coming home late. Suddenly he no longer answers his mobile phone. Then there's the smell of perfume. And finally he no longer wants sex with his wife.

But he keeps denying such telltale signs mean that he is having an affair.

Now, suspicious spouses can submit their partners to a lie-detector test in the quest for the ultimate truth about whether they are faithful or not.

More than a dozen NSW couples do so every month, including film stars, lawyers, doctors, and high-flying businessmen and women. Most fail the test.

Many, in fact, simply confess when confronted with the equipment, says Warren Mallard, the only private eye conducting the \$1100 test in the state.

Lie detectors try to identify behaviour associated with lying by measuring blood pressure, heart rate, breathing and sweating. Tubes, cuffs and metal plates are attached to the chest, arm and fingers.

However, the machines are far from infallible. In NSW it is illegal to use lie detectors to screen employees and evidence collected from the devices cannot be used in court.

They can be a "helpful tool" to assist a broad investigation, but they are unreliable as the only

way to detect lying, said forensic psychologist Ross Leonard.

For example, self-confident, socially skilled people without a strong motive to lie could fool a detector, he said.

Mr Mallard admits the system is not 100 per cent reliable, but is confident that he has never wrongly accused anyone of lying because he always errs on the side of caution.

His clients are from all walks of life and about 60 per cent of those taking the test are men. Some take it before they marry.

Many, convinced or coerced by their other half into submitting to the three- to four-hour test, feel they have nothing to lose.

Often they have been presented with an ultimatum: "do the test or I will leave". "They are backed into a corner," he said.

Some are able to patch up their relationship after a confession. Others remain suspicious even if their partner passes the test with flying colours.

However, Anne Hollonds, the head of Relationships Australia, said that people using private investigators or lie-detector tests should be aware that such an approach could seriously damage the relationship.

Such "extreme measures" can often be a sign of deep insecurity and a lack of confidence.

But they also show the couple has failed to deal with other issues in their relationship and that they need professional help.