

Appendix

Study 1: Items of the Conspiracy mentality scale (Imhoff & Bruder, 2014):

1. There are many very important things happening in the world about which the public is not informed.
2. Those at the top do whatever they want.
3. A few powerful groups of people determine the destiny of millions.
4. There are secret organizations that have great influence on political decisions.
5. I think that the various conspiracy theories circulating in the media are absolute nonsense. (R)
6. Politicians and other leaders are nothing but the string puppets of powers operating in the background.
7. Most people do not recognize to what extent our life is determined by conspiracies that are concocted in secret.
8. There is no good reason to distrust governments, intelligence agencies, or the media. (R)
9. International intelligence agencies have their hands in our everyday life to a much larger degree than people assume.
10. Secret organizations can manipulate people psychologically so that they do not notice how their life is being controlled by others.
11. There are certain political circles with secret agendas that are very influential.
12. Most people do not see how much our lives are determined by plots hatched in secret.

Study 2: Items of the GCBS (Brotherton et al., 2013):

1. The government is involved in the murder of innocent citizens and/or well-known public figures, and keeps this a secret.
2. The government permits or perpetrates acts of terrorism on its own soil, disguising its involvement.
3. The government uses people as patsies to hide its involvement in criminal activities.
4. The power held by heads of state is second to that of small, unknown groups who really control world politics.
5. A small, secret group of people is responsible for making all major world decisions, such as going to war.
6. Certain significant events have been the result of the activity of a small group who secretly manipulate world events.
7. Secret organisations communicate with extraterrestrials, but keep this fact from the public.
8. Evidence of alien contact is being kept from the public.
9. Some UFO sightings and rumours are planned or staged in order to distract the public from real alien contact.
10. The spread of certain viruses and/or diseases is the result of deliberate, concealed efforts of some organisations.
11. Technology with mind-control capacities is used on people without their knowledge.

12. Experiments involving new drugs or technologies are routinely carried out on the public without their knowledge or consent.
13. Groups of scientists manipulate, fabricate, or suppress evidence in order to deceive the public.
14. New and advanced technology which would harm current industry is being suppressed.
15. A lot of important information is deliberately concealed from the public out of self-interest.

Study 3: Items of the BCTI (Swami et al., 2011):

1. A powerful and secretive group, known as the New World Order, are planning to eventually rule the world through an autonomous world government, which would replace sovereign government.
2. SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) was produced under laboratory conditions as a biological weapon.
3. The US government had foreknowledge about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, but allowed the attack to take place so as to be able to enter the Second World War.
4. US agencies intentionally created the AIDS epidemic and administered it to Black and gay men in the 1970s.
5. The assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., was the result of an organized conspiracy by US government agencies such as the CIA and FBI.

6. The Apollo moon landings never happened and were staged in a Hollywood film studio.
7. Area 51 in Nevada, US, is a secretive military base that contains hidden alien spacecraft and/or alien bodies.
8. The US government allowed the 9/11 attacks to take place so that it would have an excuse to achieve foreign (e.g., wars in Afghanistan and Iraq) and domestic (e.g., attacks on civil liberties) goals that had been determined prior to the attacks.
9. The assassination of John F. Kennedy was not committed by the lone gunman, Lee Harvey Oswald, but was rather a detailed, organised conspiracy to kill the President.
10. In July 1947, the US military recovered the wreckage of an alien craft from Roswell, New Mexico, and covered up the fact.
11. Princess Diana's death was not an accident, but rather an organised assassination by members of the British royal family who disliked her.
12. The Oklahoma City bombers, Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols, did not act alone, but rather received assistance from neo-Nazi groups.
13. The Coca Cola company intentionally changed to an inferior formula with the intent of driving up demand for their classic product, later reintroducing it for their financial gain.
14. Special interest groups are suppressing, or have suppressed in the past, technologies that could provide energy at reduced cost or reduced pollution output.

15. Government agencies in the UK are involved in the distribution of illegal drugs to ethnic minorities.

Study 4: Items of the questionnaire with diverse conspiracy-related items (Bruder et al., 2013):

I think...

1. there are intelligence services that have records of most of my daily activities.
2. governments have deliberately spread HIV among ethnic minorities.
3. there are many very important things happening in the world about which the public is never informed.
4. there are hidden religious groups that perform human sacrifices.
5. there are special security apparatuses that try to silence witnesses of UFO landings.
6. e-mails are often read by intelligence services in other countries.
7. a cure for most types of cancer has already been found, but medical circles are keeping their findings secret in order to continue receiving research funding from governments.
8. there are many groups that secretly plan attacks on our society.
9. the death of Princess Diana was not an accident, but an assassination.
10. the Vatican Bank in Rome has close ties to the Mafia.
11. security apparatuses regularly open my mail secretly.

12. there are religious sects that have complete control over the psyche of their members.
13. there are alternative medical treatment approaches that are denigrated by the authorities and established medicine, although their effectiveness has been proven.
14. politicians usually do not tell us the true motives for their decisions.
15. at least one person in my immediate living environment has connections to terrorist groups.
16. the American government covers up the landing of aliens.
17. governments have intentionally spread HIV among homosexuals.
18. American government agencies were involved in the murder of Martin Luther King Jr.
19. the international banking system is controlled by Jews.
20. barcodes on supermarket products have secret functions.
21. government agencies closely monitor all citizens.
22. there are brotherhoods like the Freemasons or the Skull and Bones Society in America.
23. better car engines have already been developed, but are not being made available commercially because the car and oil industries work together.
24. many public figures are actually murdered, although the media report that they died in an accident or through illness.
25. the infrastructure of terrorist networks can easily keep up with that of police and security services.

26. if I borrow books from a public library, there is a risk that my interests will be monitored by secret services.
27. the "US Apollo" mission never landed on the moon.
28. HIV was created in biochemical laboratories.
29. there was a conspiracy behind the assassination attempt on former US President John F. Kennedy.
30. subliminal advertising (advertising that is shown so fast that we cannot perceive it) exists and has a strong influence on people.
31. secret services regularly listen to my telephone conversations.
32. an existing cure for AIDS is deliberately withheld from the public.
33. underground movements threaten the stability of our society.
34. there are extensive secret databases in which much more information about individuals is stored than is permitted by law.
35. events that at first glance seem unrelated are often the result of secret activities.
36. there were already contacts with aliens, but this information is withheld from the public.
37. the government can find out who I elected in parliamentary elections.
38. there are secret organizations that have great influence on political decisions.

Study 5: Items representing the hoax factor (Imhoff & Lamberty, 2020):

1. The virus is intentionally presented as dangerous in order to mislead the public.

2. Experts intentionally mislead us for their own benefit, even though the virus is not worse than a flu.

Items representing the bioweapon factor (Imhoff & Lamberty, 2020):

3. Corona was intentionally brought into the world to reduce the population.
4. Dark forces want to use the virus to rule the world.