

# Female psychopaths 'more common than we think,' says researcher

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Female psychopaths are up to five times more common than previously thought, according to an expert who will present his work at the Cambridge Festival later this month.

Current scientific evidence suggests that male psychopaths outnumber [females](#) by around 6:1. However, an expert in corporate [psychopathy](#), Dr. Clive Boddy of Anglia Ruskin University (ARU), argues that studies may be failing to identify female psychopaths because they are largely based on profiles of criminal and male psychopaths.

During [his talk at ARU's Cambridge campus](#) on Saturday, 16 March, Dr. Boddy will argue that the characteristics of female psychopaths differ from males and that gender bias plays a role in the under-reporting, with society ignoring what people perceive to be male traits when they are displayed by women.

Dr. Boddy will present his own research, which shows that using measures of primary psychopathy, which exclude psychopathy's antisocial behavioral characteristics and concentrate on its core elements, the real ratio of male-female psychopathy may be about 1.2:1—up to five times higher than previously suggested.

Referencing research into corporate psychopaths and how they operate in high-achieving roles in the workplace, Dr. Boddy will explain how female psychopaths are more manipulative than males, use different techniques to create a good impression, and utilize deceit and sexually seductive behavior to gain social and financial advantage more than male psychopaths do.

Dr. Boddy, Deputy Head of the School of Management at Anglia Ruskin University (ARU), said, "People generally attribute psychopathic characteristics to males rather than to females. So even when females display some of the key traits associated with psychopathy—such as being insincere, deceitful, antagonistic, unempathetic, and lacking in emotional depth—because these are seen as male characteristics, they may not be labeled as such, even when they should be."

"Also, female psychopaths tend to use words, rather than violence, to achieve their aims, differing from how male psychopaths tend to operate. If female psychopathy is expressed differently, then measures designed to capture and identify male criminal psychopaths may be inadequate at identifying female non-criminal psychopaths."

"Female psychopaths, while not as severely psychopathic or as psychopathic as often as males are, have nevertheless been underestimated in their incidence levels and are therefore more of a potential threat to business and society than anyone previously suspected."

"This has implications for the criminal justice system because current risk management decisions involving partners and children may be faulty. It also has implications for organizational leadership selection decisions because female leaders cannot automatically be assumed to be more honest, caring, and concerned with issues such as [corporate social responsibility](#)."

Dr. Clive Boddy has been researching the effects of having psychopaths in the workplace since 2005 and has published more on corporate psychopaths than any other academic. His research interests include toxic leadership and, particularly, the effects of corporate psychopaths on employees, organizations, and society.

Provided by Anglia Ruskin University

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