

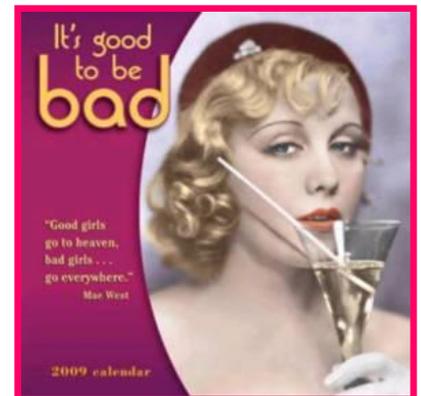
# Gender issues in the assessment of psychopathy



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# Presentation outline

- Psychopathy and violence in women
- Preliminary results multicentre study
  - Psychopathy and violence (risk factors)
  - Psychopathy and motives for offenses



# Can women actually be violent?



# Female violence

- Female violence seems to be on the rise
- Comparable prevalence rate men / women for inpatient violence and intimate partner violence
- Violence by women:
  - Less visible
  - Different expression
  - Different motives
- Intergenerational transfer





# More media attention?



## Geweldscriminaliteit door meisjes neemt flink toe

maandag 4 juli 2011 Elsevier

Criminaliteit door meisjes is tussen 1996 en 2007 harder gestegen dan bij jongens. De toename is vooral groot bij lichte geweldscriminaliteit zoals bedreiging en slaan.



## Meisjes beroven blinde man (76)

## Agressie vrouwen meestal in relationele sfeer



## Gewelddadige meisjes duwen ander meisje op het spoor

Vrouwelijke portiers moeten agressieve vrouwen uit nachtclubs weren



## Jongen mishandeld na demonstratie

AMSTERDAM - Vlak na een demonstratie tegen het toenemende geweld jegens homo's is een jongen mishandeld door twee meisjes van 18 en 19 jaar.

wo 12 okt 2011, 18:46

## Tienersmeisjes vallen agenten aan

## Meisjes verdacht van schoolbrand



## Vrouw doodt man met naaldhak

## Friese Feeks uit Heerenveen gaat wéér in de fout

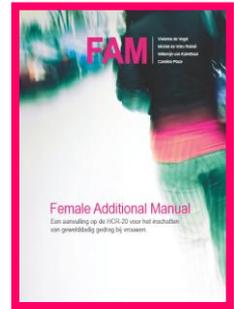
# Psychopathy and violence risk assessment in women

- Differences men / women in expression of violence, violence risk factors and manifestation of psychopathy
- Most tools developed / validated in male populations
- PCL-R item descriptions focus on 'male' (overt antisocial) behavior

Are commonly used tools, like the PCL-R or HCR-20 well enough suited for use in female forensic populations?

# FAM

## Female Additional Manual



- Additional guidelines to HCR-20 / HCR-20<sup>V3</sup> for women:
  - Additional guidelines to several Historical factors (e.g., use of lower PCL-R cut-off score 23; 14 for code 1)
  - New female specific items
  - Additional final risk judgments (Self-destructive behavior, Victimization, Non-violent criminal behavior)
- Preliminary results: promising irr & predictive validity for self-destructive behavior and violence to others

# FAM

## Gender-specific items

### Historical items

- Prostitution
- Parenting difficulties
- Pregnancy at young age
- Suicide attempt / self-harm
- Victimization after childhood

### Clinical items

- Covert / manipulative behavior
- Low self-esteem

### Risk management items

- Problematic child care responsibility
- Problematic intimate relationship

# Psychopathy in women

## Summary research results PCL-R

- Lower scores and prevalence rate psychopathy (9-23% ♀ vs 15-30% ♂)
- Interrater reliability: moderate to good
- Predictive validity: equivocal

True lower prevalence psychopathy in women, or....  
is the PCL-R not optimally fit to assess psychopathy in  
women?

# Does psychopathy manifest itself differently in women?

- More histrionic, manipulative sexual behavior
- Lure others to criminal behavior
- More emotionally unstable, impulsive



# Women high on psychopathy

## Summary research results

- Compared to women low on psychopathy
  - More instrumental violence / to strangers
  - More chronic offenders, less often murder
- Compared to men high on psychopathy
  - More fraud, deceit
  - More often a score 2 on the items:
    - *Conning / manipulative*
    - *Promiscuous sexual behavior*



# Psychopathy in women

## Overall conclusions literature

- “What drives both psychopathic men and women is: power over others, the expectation of gain and glorification of the self”  
(Logan & Weizmann-Henelius, 2012)
- Manifestation in women more nuanced and hidden, but still highly destructive to others
- PCL-R has relevance in violence risk assessment in women, but more research and refinement in assessment is necessary

# Multicentre study

## Characteristics of women in forensic psychiatry

- Four Dutch forensic settings
- N = 297 female forensic psychiatric patients
- Comprehensive questionnaire coded based on file information by trained researchers:
  - A. History:** demographic, criminal and psychiatric variables, PCL-R, Historical items HCR-20 / FAM
  - B. Incidents** during treatment
  - C. Dynamic factors** FAM / HCR-20; HCR-20<sup>V3</sup>; HKT-30; SAPROF; START (follow up at least 3 years)

# Study 1: Psychopathic women

## Characteristics and motives for violent offenses

### Procedure

- Criminal history from extensive file information
- PCL-R was used (53% in consensus)
- Taxonomy of motives inspired by Coid (1998)

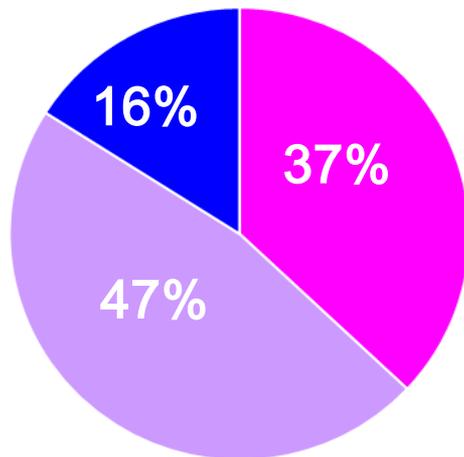
# Study 1: Psychopathic women

## Sample characteristics

- N = 221 female patients with tbs-order
- Mean age 35.7 years
- 83% born in the Netherlands
- 74% comorbid pathology
- 67% substance use problems
- Index offenses
  - Homicide 25%
  - Attempted homicide 24%
  - Arson 29%
  - Violent offenses 16%
  - Sexual offenses 4%

# PCL-R women (N = 221)

- Mean PCL-R score: 16.4 (SD = 6.6)
- Range 2-33.3
- Only 2.7%  $\geq$  30 (official cut-off score)
- FAM cut-off scores:



- Non psychopathic (0-14)
- Possible psychopathy (14-23)
- Serious psychopathy (23-40)

# Criminal history

Women high score on PCL-R ( $\geq 23$ ) compared to PCL-R  $< 23$

- Younger age at first conviction
- More criminal versatility



All  $p < .05$

# Index offense

Women high score on PCL-R ( $\geq 23$ ) compared to PCL-R  $< 23$

## More often:

- Strangers as victims
- Intoxicated while offending
- Financial problems at time of offense

## Less often:

- Arson
- Lethal violence
- Judged as *Not accountable / responsible*

# Violence risk factors<sub>1</sub>

Women high score on PCL-R ( $\geq 23$ ) compared to PCL-R  $< 23$

Significantly higher on HCR-20 / FAM risk factors:

- Young age at first violent incident
- Employment problems
- Substance use problems
- Problematic behavior during childhood (but no difference: Problematic circumstances during childhood)
- Prior supervision failure
- Prostitution
- Pregnancy at young age



All  $p < .05$

# Violence risk factors<sub>2</sub>

Women high score on PCL-R ( $\geq 23$ ) compared to PCL-R  $< 23$

Significantly lower on HCR-20 / FAM risk factors:

- Major mental illness
- Suicide attempt / self-harm



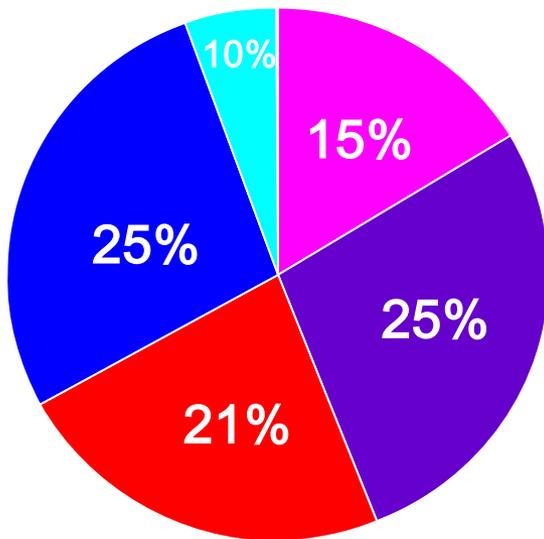
All  $p < .05$

# Motives for index offense

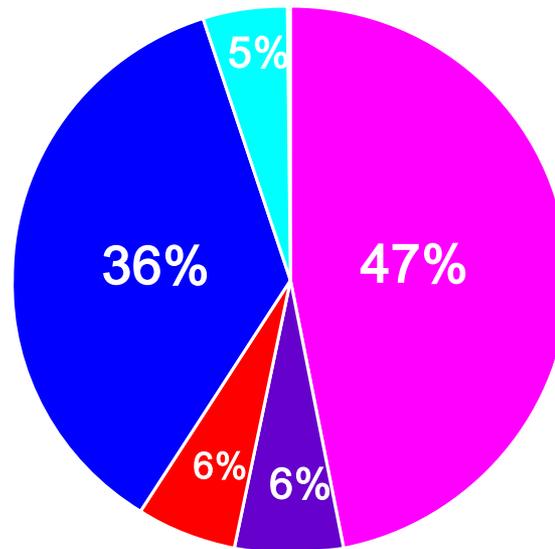
<b>Mad</b>	Psychotic Intoxication Compulsive urge to harm/kill
<b>Bad</b>	Expressive aggression Power domination and control Excitement Undercontrolled aggression Illicit gain
<b>Sad</b>	Cry for help/attention seeking (Extended) suicide Despair Influenced by (male) partner
<b>Relational frustration</b>	Revenge Jealousy Threatened/actual loss Displaced aggression Victim precipitation
<b>Coping</b>	Relief of tension/dysphoria Hyperirritability

# Motive for offense

Differences women PCL-R below or above 23



**PCL-R < 23**  
More 'Sad'



**PCL-R ≥ 23**  
More 'Bad'

- Bad
- Sad
- Mad
- Relational
- Coping

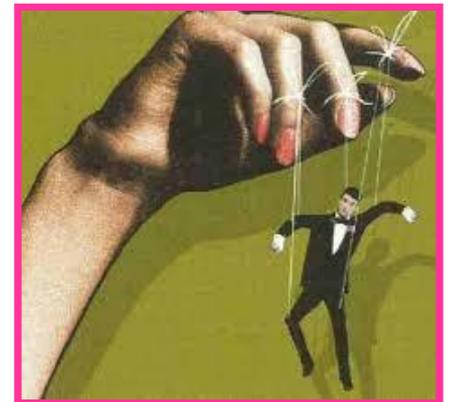
$p < .05$

# Treatment

Women high score on PCL-R ( $\geq 23$ ) compared to PCL-R  $< 23$

- More treatment dropout in history
- Incidents during most recent treatment
  - More often manipulative behavior
  - Less often self-destructive behavior

All  $p < .05$



# Conclusions and implications

## Psychopathy in women

- Significant differences between women PCL-R  $\geq$  23 versus PCL-R  $<$  23
  - Criminal characteristics
  - Motives for offenses
  - Violence risk factors
  - Incidents during treatment
- Implications for treatment
  - Train staff (e.g., in recognizing manipulative behavior)
  - Responsivity

# Future studies

## Psychopathy in women

- Comparison with male population
- Dynamic risk factors
- Predictive validity of tools for women



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