

Psychopaths and the Polygraph

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Psychopaths

- Psychopathy = dangerous personality disorder
 - DSM-IV-TR Axis 2
- Psychotic = out of touch with reality
 - DSM-IV-TR Axis 1

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Psychopathy

- Contrary to popular myths PSYCHOPATHS CANNOT BEAT THE POLYGRAPH TEST
- Numerous studies since 1973 have demonstrated the polygraph to be accurate at detecting deception among known psychopaths
- There is no theoretical rationale explaining why psychopaths could beat the polygraph test

Raskin and Hare (1978)

Observe zero (0) false-negative errors in their studies on polygraph testing of known psychopaths

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Psychopaths and Deception

- Psychopaths can be very good liars
- Psychopaths can be very bad liars
 - Lie when faced with evidence
 - Lie when caught red-handed
 - Lie when it would make more sense to tell the truth
- Psychopaths are very persistent liars
- Psychopaths can sometimes get others to doubt themselves and doubt their own sanity

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Psychopaths and Deception

- Psychopaths know when they are lying
- Psychopaths know why they lie
 - They lying for enjoyment
 - They lie to achieve goals (take advantage of others)
 - They lie for self-aggrandizement

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Psychopathy – NAS (2003)

“Regarding psychopathy, Hammond (1980) found no differences in the detectability of deception using a mock crime scenario among normal individuals, alcoholics, and psychopaths. Similarly, neither Raskin and Hare (1978) nor Patrick and Iacono (1989) found any differences in the detectability of deception between psychopathic and non-psychopathic prison inmates.” [p.136]

(National Academy of Sciences, 2003)

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Psychopaths – polygraph fiction

- To suggest psychopaths can learn to control their autonomic nervous system or accurately mimic ANS responses through PNS activity is to perpetuate the MYTH OF THE OMNIPOTENT PSYCHOPATH
- Psychopaths are non-psychotic persons who do not lack contact with reality
- Psychopaths DO NOT believe their own lies
- To believe one's lies would require a break with reality contact (psychoticism)

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Psychopaths – polygraph fact

- Physically healthy psychopaths have the same ANS response patterns as non-psychopaths
 - Researchers have failed to find meaningful physiological differences between psychopaths non-psychopath
- Psychopaths have the same neuropsychological functions as non-psychopaths
 - Researchers have failed to find meaningful neuropsychological differences between psychopaths and non-psychopaths

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Psychopathy

- Extreme narcissism
 - Charming
 - Superficial
 - Glib
 - Manipulative
 - Skillful liars
- Repeated Behavior that violates rules and rights of others
 - Not always unlawful

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Pychopathy Markers

(PCL-SV)

- Superficiality
- Grandiosity
- Deceitfulness
- Lack of remorse
- Lack of empathy
- Lack of responsibility
- Impulsive
- Poor behavioral controls
- Lacks goals
- Irresponsibility
- Adolescent antisocial behavior
- Adult antisocial behavior

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