

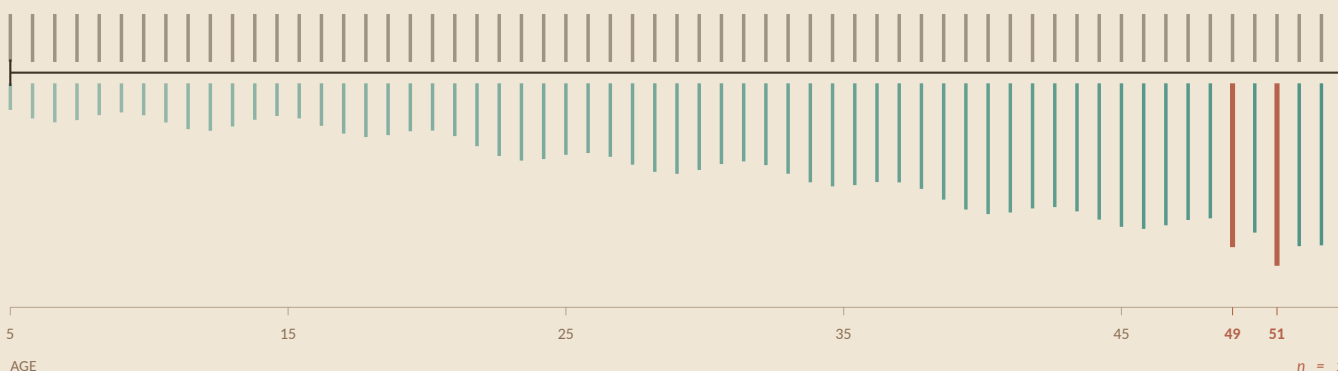
The second reading.

The women in your practice with ADHD or autism do not present the way the criteria describe. For most of the last century, the criteria were built by watching boys.

REGISTER I the criteria

Drawn largely from male samples. Externalised, observable, scoreable in a single hour.

MALE-DERIVED



REGISTER II the presentation

The same traits across a woman's life. Internalised, compensated, legible only in the history.

BUILT ON BOYS

Autism was first described in girls in 1927. That paper was not translated into English until 2020. The criteria that filled the intervening century were shaped by male samples and male-referred cases; a 2023 meta-analysis found a male bias in autism diagnosis,¹ and items on the ADOS-2 have been shown to function differently by sex.²

WHAT CAMOUFLAGE HIDES

Women camouflage more - and the more a woman camouflages, the later she is diagnosed. That relationship is stronger in women than in men.³ Most clinicians were never trained to see autism or ADHD once it has been compensated. The signal is rarely in the room. It is in the developmental history.

THREE QUESTIONS TO ADD

- 1 Is it lifelong and context-stable, or situational and recent?
- 2 What did it cost - rehearsing, scripting, hours alone to recover?
- 3 What came first: sensory and demand load, or the interpersonal moment?

None of this replaces your clinical judgement. It adds a developmental history to it. A woman whose autism or ADHD goes unrecognised does not simply go untreated - she concludes that the failure is hers. And that conclusion becomes a presenting problem of its own.

THE LATE DISCOVERY WORKBOOK a structured nine-month resource to place in a client's hands

1 Is There a Bias Towards Males in the Diagnosis of Autism? A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. Neuropsychology Review, 2023.

2 Sex Differences on the ADOS-2: differential item functioning in autism assessment.

3 Milner, Colvert, Hull et al. Does camouflaging predict age at autism diagnosis? A comparison of autistic men and women. Autism Research, 2024.

Historical note: G. E. Sukhareva described autistic children in 1925 and autistic girls in 1927; the 1927 paper reached English in 2020.