

Twice as many women as men are under psychiatric care. Is there really more mental illness among women? Or are the rules of psychiatry biased so as to guarantee that healthy women appear to be sick?

who assisted him. Spitzer and Williams challenge what they say is a basic assumption of Kaplan's — that a mental problem lies either with society or with the individual; recognizing a societal problem, sexism, does not mean that an individual's problem should not be diagnosed. They ask: "Would Kaplan really argue that if unemployment and poverty contributed to someone's becoming physiologically dependent on alcohol, it would be wrong for a clinician to diagnose him or her as having alcoholism?"

More to the point, they say, Kaplan has ignored DSM III where the evidence doesn't support her charge. It is not true, they say, that the manual contains only examples of female dependency: such criteria as "lets spouse decide what kind of job he or she should have" or "tolerates abusive spouse" are equally applicable to males or females, they argue. In addition, they say that the manual includes other diagnostic categories — Antisocial and

Schizoid Personality Disorders — which could be seen as caricatures of masculine stereotypes and in fact are more often applied to men. If there were a sexual bias written into the book, Spitzer and Williams conclude, females would be expected to be overrepresented in all diagnostic cate-



gories, which they are not.

Spitzer and Williams point to the well-known findings from the studies of Amish families in Pennsylvania, where in the absence of alcoholism (a taboo in Amish so-

ciety) equal numbers of men and women are diagnosed as depressed. In the larger community, women are twice as likely to be labeled depressed, suggesting (they say) that alcoholism is masking depression in men (and presumably that other disorders are similarly masked). But according to Kaplan, such evidence supports her position rather than refutes it. When women express depression, they are called depressed; when men express depression, clinicians see alcoholism, she says. If women express fear of autonomy through dependency, they are called sick; if men express the same fear of autonomy through counter-dependence (or masked dependency) they are undiagnosed. It may be true that men and women express emotional symptoms differently, Kaplan says, but it also may be that the diagnostic rules tend to pick up one kind of expression rather than another. The result, she reiterates, is that women have higher treatment rates than do men. □

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