Wednesday 17 October, 1-2pm, G10 Chandler House

Will Mandy, DClinPsy PhD – Department of Clinical Psychology, UCL

Girls and women on the autism spectrum

Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) are more commonly diagnosed in males than in females: the male-to-female ratio is three-to-one in epidemiological samples and as high as ten-to-one in clinical practice. This likely reflects an underestimation of the true prevalence of ASD in girls and women, arising from systematic biases in diagnostic criteria and clinical services. As a result, females with ASD are less likely to receive an accurate and timely diagnosis, which reduces their chances of benefiting from appropriately targeted health care and educational resources.

This talk will consider the reasons for the under-recognition of females with ASD. This will include the proposal that there is a female autism phenotype that is not well captured by current diagnostic criteria, which were largely based on male cases. In addition, initial evidence for environment contributions to under-diagnosis of females will be presented. Clinical and research implications will be considered.