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Huge Sex Ratios at Upper End

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Hyde's (August 1981) gender-differences article cites the first report our now 10-year-old Study of Mathematically Precocious Youth (SMPY) issued. That report was based on the 223 boys and 173 girls in the first of our eight talent searches thus far; to date these searches have involved a total of approximately 34,000 students 11–13 years old. Even with the girls *matched* with the boys on scores on in-grade mathematics tests and with a tendency for only the better-motivated girls to enter the talent searches, boy–girl ratios we have found on the mathematical part of the College Board's Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT–M) are as follows: 2:1 at ≥ 500, 5:1 at ≥ 600, and 17:1 at ≥ 700 (Benbow & Stanley, 1980, 1981; cf. Fox, 1976, p. 184). The last-named ratio is climbing, because in our persistent recent nationwide search for youths who before reaching their 13th birthday score at least 700 on SAT–M we have found 61 boys and 0 girls. The 7 girls reaching that criterion in our earlier seeking participated in the January 1978, 1979, or 1980 talent searches; none was found in the other five searches, the latest of which (January 1981) attracted 7,371 girls and 7,306 boys. Clearly, looking at mean differences does not illuminate much the status of gender differences in mathematical reasoning ability.

Thus, despite Hyde's guarded optimism, we view the situation as grave where mathematical reasoning ability of the level needed to obtain a PhD degree in the mathematical sciences, physics, or engineering with distinction from a top-flight university is concerned. It seems to us that much research into causes and remedies is sorely needed, rather than further efforts trying to minimize the magnitude of the sex differences.

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Researchers' Ethical Conscience: Debriefing From 1960 to 1980

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Since 1953 the American Psychological Association (APA) has given attention to the necessity of using debriefing procedures with human subjects. Most recently, the importance of debriefing has been formalized in the *Ethical Standards of Psychologists* (APA, 1979). Principle 9 of the code states that "when the methodological requirements of a study necessitate concealment or deception, the investigator is required to insure as soon as possible the participant's understanding of the reasons for this action and of sufficient justification for the procedures employed" (p. 7). Principle 9 also states that "after the data are collected, the investigator provides the participant with information about the nature of the study and to remove any misconceptions that may have arisen" (p. 7). The extent to which these principles have been incorporated into experiments using human subjects was partially assessed by Perry and Abramson (1980).

These authors examined two APA journals that publish studies using human subjects (*Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* and *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*), limiting their survey to a four-year time span (1975–1978). The authors reported that over two thirds of the studies appearing in these journals did not report debriefing of subjects. The authors pointed out that it is difficult, using their method, to accurately assess the degree to which debriefing has been assimilated into experiments, because one cannot determine whether debriefing actually occurred and was not reported.

The present comment probes further into the issue of the reporting of debriefing by examining a 20-year span of time to determine if there is a trend in the reporting of debriefing. In addition, this temporal examination of the literature adds a historical perspective that allows one to relate events of ethical significance in the use of human subjects to the reporting of debriefings in experimental procedures.

To assess the extent that debriefing was reported in experiments using human subjects, every article in alternate years of the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* (JASP; 1960, 1962, 1964), and the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (JPSP; 1966, 1968, . . . 1980), was examined. (JPSP began publication in 1965, and JASP became the *Journal*