The development of the psychopath: an affective neuroscience approach *Blair J* NIH/NIMH, Bethesda, MD, USA

Psychopathy is a developmental disorder associated with marked emotional impairment (specifically, reduced anxiety, guilt and empathy) and pronounced levels of antisocial behavior (including both goal-direct instrumental and frustration/ threat-based reactive aggression). In this paper, a model of the development of this disorder, grounded in affective neuroscience, will be developed. It will be suggested, and supporting data will be provided, that there is a genetic contribution to the emergence of this disorder. Data will be presented suggesting that this genetic contribution leads to a disruption of the development of the amygdala development. Functionally, this disruption contributes to observed impairments in, for example, aversive conditioning and empathic responding to the fear and distress of other individuals. These impairments interfere with appropriate socialization leading to an individual who is at heightened risk for learning antisocial solutions to environmental conditions. Interesting new data will also be presented suggesting that the disruption in amygdala functioning is particularly marked for the formation of stimulus-punishment rather than stimulus-reward associations. Finally, the role of orbital frontal cortex dysfunction will be considered. Data will be presented showing that there is orbital frontal cortex dysfunction will be considered. Data will be presented showing that there is orbital frontal cortex dysfunction will be considered.

Reasons for these developmental effects will be considered.

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