

New Research: Virtually No Difference Between Men's and Women's Brains

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A recent study by researchers at Rosalind Franklin University in Chicago published in the scientific journal [Neuroimage](#) has found no significant difference in the size of male and female hippocampi, the region of the brain believed to play a role in long term memory and that is part of the limbic system, a network of nerves which controls basic emotions and drives such as fear and hunger. The study, led by associate professor of neuroscience Lise Eliot, concluded that "...[though]many people believe there is such a thing as a 'male brain' and a 'female brain', when you look beyond the popularized studies—at collections of all the data—you often find that the differences are minimal."

The authors of the study noted that the hippocampus had previously been reported as being larger in [women](#) than in men in relation to total brain volume. They found that this errant belief had been used in the past to justify gender stereotypes such as women being in more touch with their emotions. However, a 2014 Cambridge University study came to the opposite conclusion of previous studies, finding that males actually had larger hippocampi than women. That study, entitled [A Meta-Analysis Of Sex Differences In Human Brain Structure](#), and also published in *Neuroimage*, concluded that no clear differences in the hippocampus among the sexes exist. The Cambridge study is published under a Creative Commons license and is [available for free download](#).

Both the Rosalind Franklin and Cambridge studies support recent assertions by noted Birmingham, UK neuroscientist Georgina Rippon who has referred to [beliefs about brain differences between males and females as the result of cultural dictates](#) and the "drip, drip, drip of gender stereotyping."

"The bottom line is that saying there are differences in male and female brains is just not true. There is pretty compelling evidence that any differences are tiny and are the result of environment not biology," Prof. Rippon said during her speech at the 2014 International Women's Day Conference.

Both of the recent studies, along with the efforts of Prof. Rippon and the Oxford group [ScienceGrrrll!](#), have helped fuel the proliferation of the hashtag #neurotras, which is being used [by scientists who are speaking up to debunk the "so called" scientific differences between men and women](#).

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