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Gender-Stereotypical Categorization of Trait and Job Labels (Summary)

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People tend to associate words with gender stereotypes, even if the word isn't inherently masculine or feminine. For example, people might associate the word *nurse* with feminine, even though it's not necessary for a nurse to be female.

Most previous research investigated situations using words with definitional gender (e.g., *father* must be male; *queen* must be female). One researcher did her investigation with words that aren't inherently gendered. In that experiment, and in this one, the researchers noted that when two related words are presented, you can answer questions about them faster than if they're unrelated. Thus, if you associate a word like “nurse” with femininity, you would react more quickly if then presented with the name of a female rather than the name of a male.

References

Karylowsky, J. J., Motes, M.A., Wallace, H.M. (2001, March 19). Spontaneous gender-stereotypical categorization of trait labels and job labels., *Current Research in Social Psychology*, 6(20). Retrieved September 8, 2009, from <http://www.uiowa.edu/~grpproc/crisp/crisp.6.6.html>