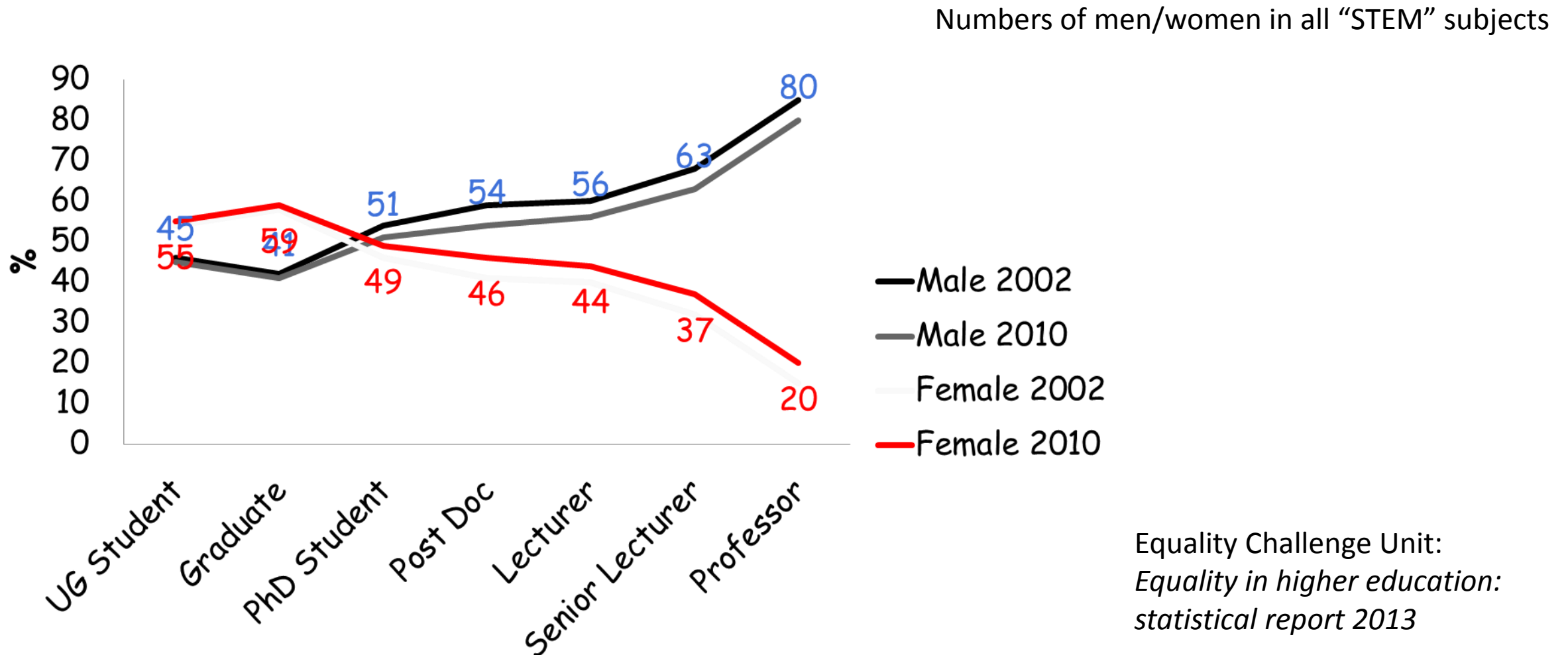


# Gender Balance Initiatives for COST NQO

- What are the problems?
  - Which problems can and should this COST action address?
  - How should we address them?
- 
- First some statistics

# Is there a problem that needs addressing?

Taken from Paul Walton's talk:



# What causes the leaky pipeline?

Most common reasons proposed are:

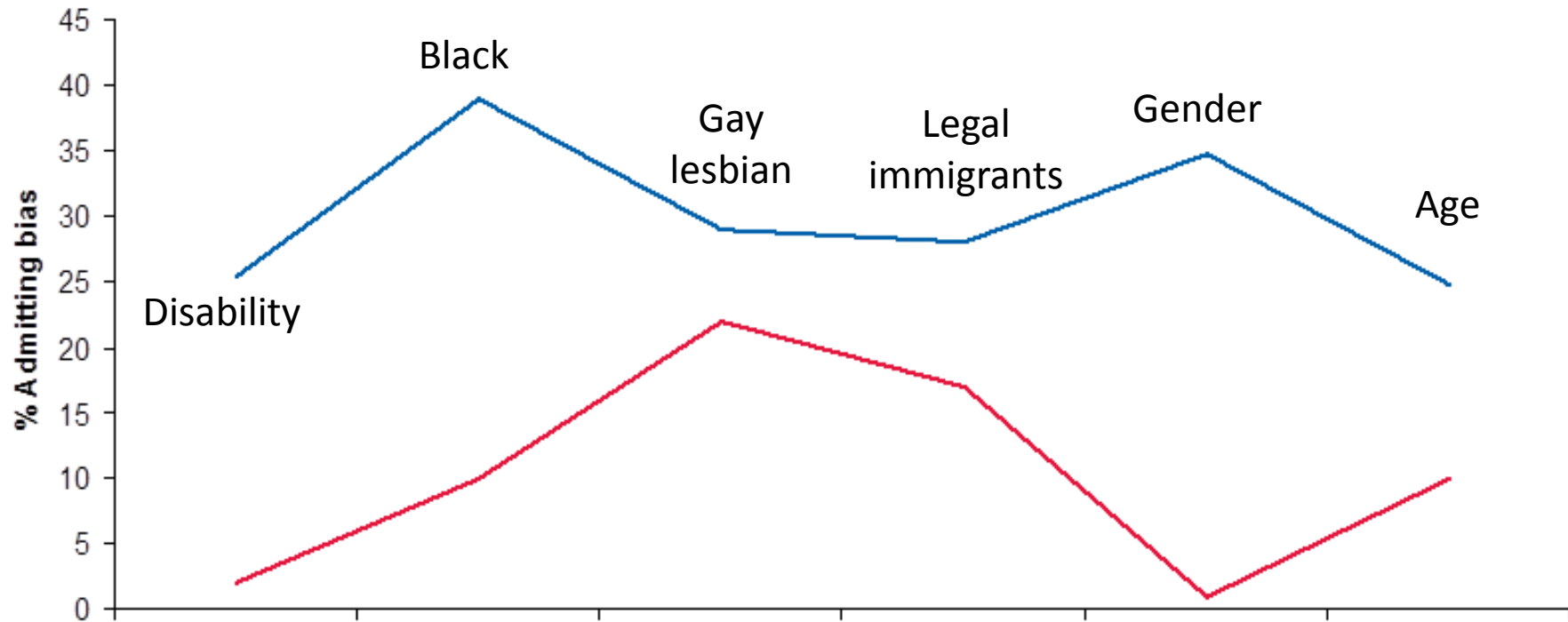
- Low uptake due to inherent sexism of society deterring girls from science and technology?
  - Women having delayed careers due to starting a family?
  - Unconscious bias against women?
  - A male-centric, anti-female work/study environment??
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- What is the evidence and **which** can we do something about?

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# Harvard Implicit Bias Test



Explicit



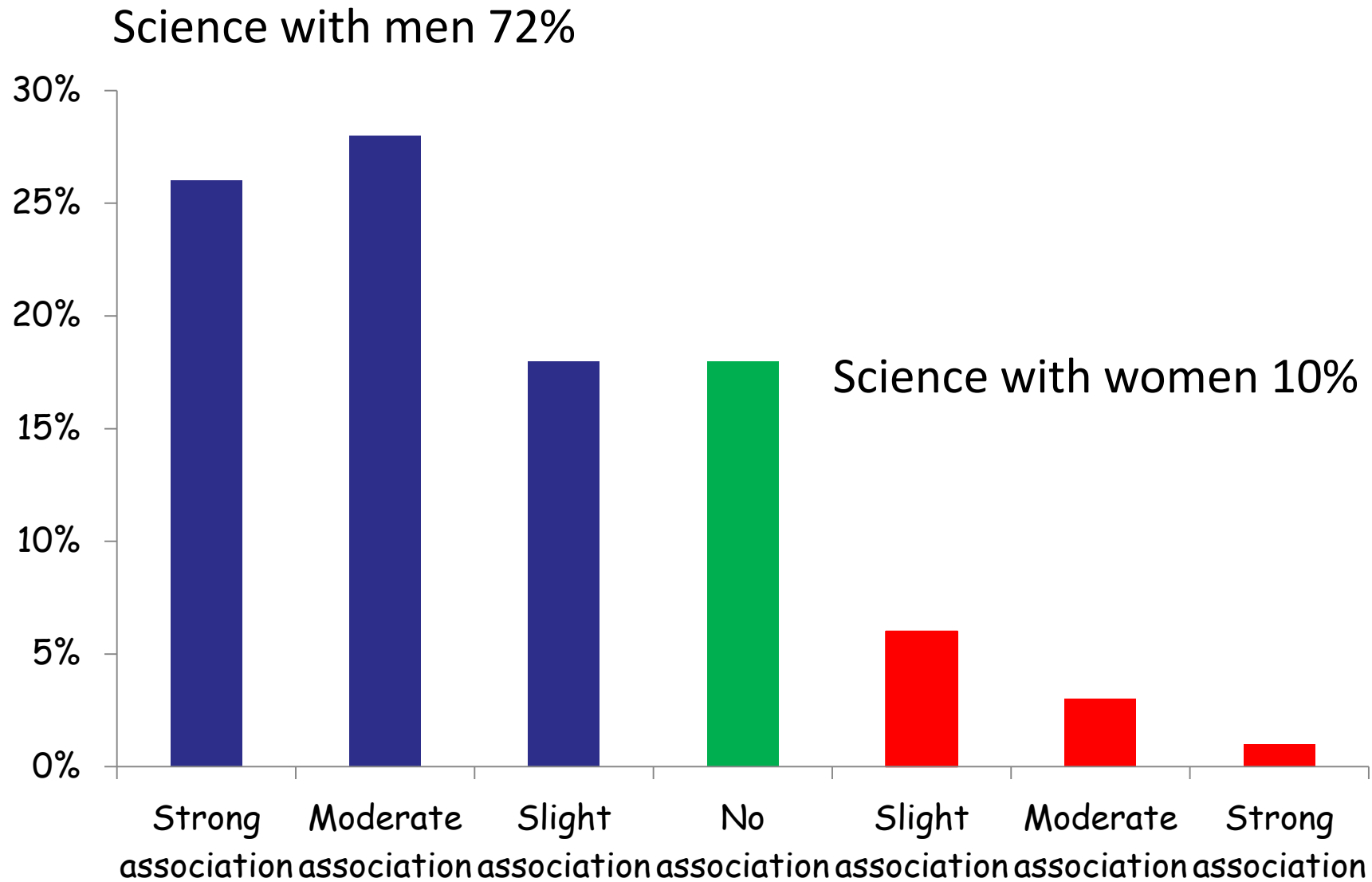
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

Implicit



Equality Challenge Unit and *Implicitly*  
[www.ecu.ac.uk](http://www.ecu.ac.uk)

# Harvard Implicit Association



# Elite male faculty in the life sciences employ fewer women

Jason M. Sheltzer<sup>a,1</sup> and Joan C. Smith<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>David H. Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA 02139; and <sup>b</sup>Twitter, Inc., Cambridge, MA 02139

## Women and academic medicine: a review of the evidence on female representation

Maryse Penny<sup>1</sup>, Rosanna Jeffries<sup>1</sup>, Jonathan Grant<sup>1,2</sup> and Sally C. Davies<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>RAND Europe

<sup>2</sup>King's Policy

<sup>3</sup>Department

Correspondi

## Leaks in the pipeline: separating demographic inertia from ongoing gender differences in academia

Allison K. Shaw<sup>1,\*†</sup> and Daniel E. Stanton<sup>1,2,\*†</sup>

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ial University,*

## Science faculty's subtle gender biases favor male students

Corinne A. Moss-Racusin<sup>a,b</sup>, John F. Dovidio<sup>b</sup>, Victoria L. Brescoll<sup>c</sup>, Mark J. Graham<sup>a,d</sup>, and Jo Handelsman<sup>a,1</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Department of Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology, <sup>b</sup>Department of Psychology, <sup>c</sup>School of Management, and <sup>d</sup>Department of Psychiatry, Yale University, New Haven, CT 06520

Edited\* by Shirley Tilghman, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ, and approved August 21, 2012 (received for review July 2, 2012)

Despite efforts to recruit and retain more women, a stark gender disparity persists within academic science. Abundant research has gender disparity in science (9–11), and that it “is not caused by discrimination in these domains” (10). This assertion has re-



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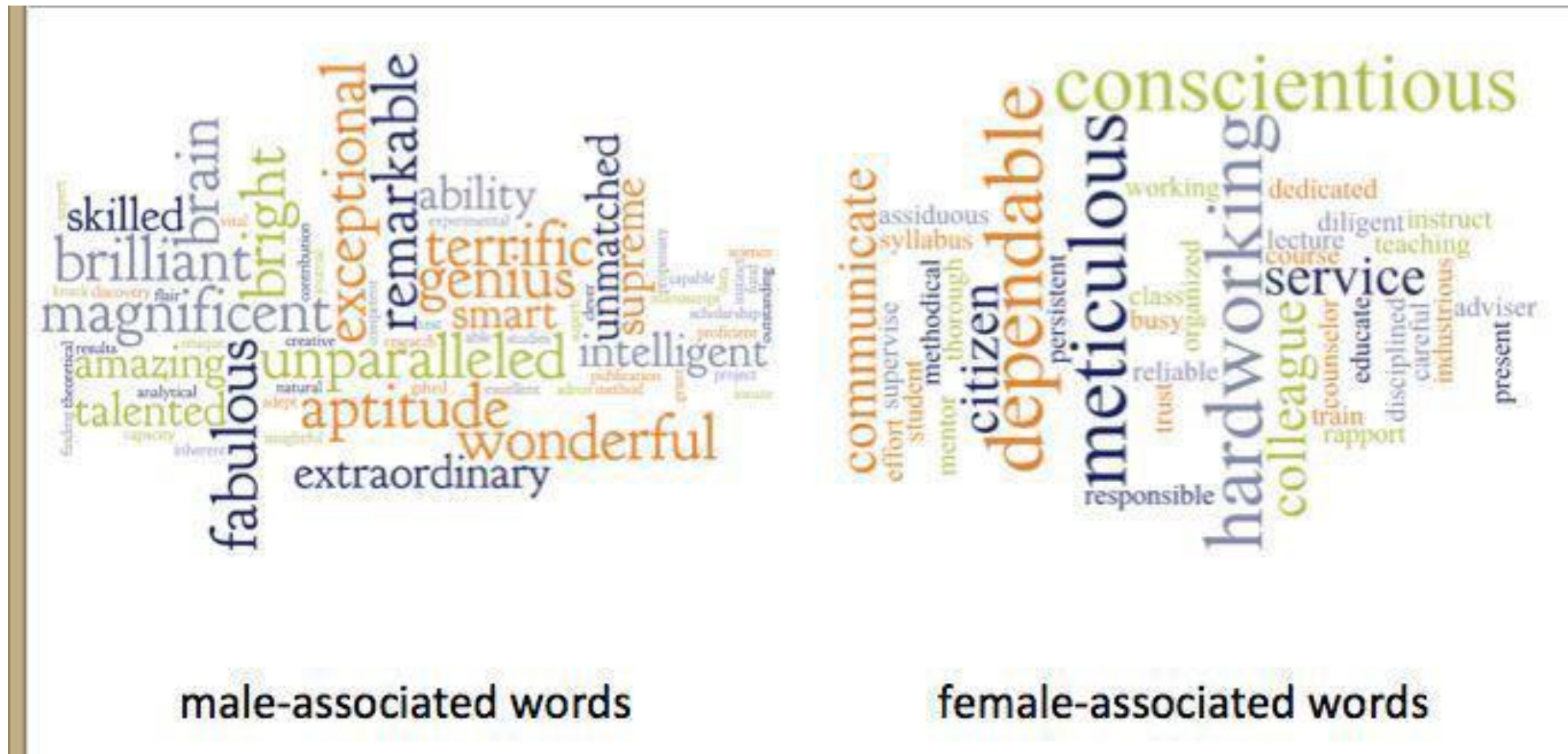
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- In the Moss-Racusin et al. study, identical CVs with female and male names for a laboratory technician job were sent to 127 scientists. The results showed:
  - A significantly better assessment of the competencies of the CVs with male names than female names
  - Higher salaries were offered to the male CVs
  - Both male and female scientists assessed the male candidates as better!

# Words used in recommendation letters



# Conclusions?

- Significant bias is still out there
- Both men and women are part of the problem
- This is something that we as individuals can try to be aware of and counteract.

# What causes the leaky pipeline?

Most common reasons proposed are:

- Low uptake due to inherent sexism of society deterring girls from science and technology?
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- What is the evidence and **which** can we do something about?

# An example from Bristol University, UK

- Bristol Students Union published a report on the exploration of **experiences** of women academic staff and students at Bristol University. The shocking results were published in the national press:



<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/students-tell-stem-sexism-bristol>

# Survey findings from Bristol University, UK

A survey of **female** staff and students revealed:

- 80% of [female] staff had at some point felt **uncomfortable in their place of work** due to their gender and 64% had experienced **sexist comments**.
- 53% of [female] students and 75% of [female] staff felt that they had to **prove themselves to be as capable** as their male peers.
- 88% of [female] staff believed it was **difficult to balance and academic career with bringing up a family**.

# Quotes

“One response to our survey suggested that **fear of ridicule** was not unfounded, with a student reporting that a **‘male lecturer** said a female student’s response to a question was **“women’s logic”** ...to indicate she’d misunderstood’.”

“One postgraduate explained that ‘if I do poorly on something it will be **‘of course you did poorly on it, you’re a girl’** but ... **when I do really well I get nasty comments about doing sexual favours, for example sleeping with the TA.** Like most of the time it would have been a joke but I just don’t find it funny.”

# More quotes

"Members of staff were **not always supportive of women going for promotion**. She explained that a junior female colleague had been discouraged by a male professor from applying for a fellowship and been told that her career 'had been damaged by maternity leave'. The staff member went on to win the fellowship."

"one student commented '**when the subject of feminism ... comes up, it is often followed with dismissive comments, grunts and sometimes insulting remarks.**'"



# So what can we do?

- Focus on what we can change!
- We are a scientific, pan-European community, so can do something unique
- Institutions and universities are beginning to focus on gender equality, but scientific conferences and meetings generally do not address this issue at all.
- We have a chance to share good practice across universities and countries and suggest good practice for future COST actions and conferences.

# Action points from Florence meeting

- Ensure that at least one woman presents a talk at each meeting
- Perform a survey of members about their home institutions, including numbers of men, women at each level.
- Hold further gender focussed meetings as part of the COST action

# Additional action points for COST NQO

- Initial survey about experiences and attitudes
- Monitor gender balance in attendance at meetings
- Consider the gender aspect of mentorship for ESRs.

# Discussion sessions during WP meetings

I would like to run a series of 1-1.5hr discussion sessions on chosen topics that involve more/all men as well as women in discussions.

- Divide into two groups on gender, discuss topic.
- Come together to discuss outcomes.
- Discuss concrete practice that could improve the situation

At the end of COST, I would like to produce guidelines for better practice.

While focussing on advice and action points for all COST members, I would like to focus on **enabling** senior men to take a more active and positive leadership role in the scientific community.

# Discussion topics

Some ideas for thought-provoking, fun, interesting topics that affect everyone, eg recent news topics or specific issues:

- **Mentorship.** How do junior men climb the ladder? Do mentors select their mentees? Do mentees seek out the right mentors? Are there reasons why few senior men mentor young women?
  - Can we come up with some guidance of how to do this well and equally for all?
- **Parenthood:** Differences between levels of support for mothers and fathers in different countries in Europe. How can this be improved elsewhere?
  - What simple things can science leaders do to support parents, within the confines of the tough world of academia?
- **Sexual harassment:** Recent controversy around sacking of Geoffrey Marcy for serial sexual harassment and how this was handled in the media. What would you have done?
  - Can we come up with ground rules of how to deal swiftly, effectively and sensitively to allegations of sexual harassment.
- **Please send me more ideas for discussion topics!**

# Survey

- An initial survey on attitudes and experiences.
- Only 10 questions
- I will send out the survey after the meeting – my aim is to get 75% response from all COST action members.
- I will send reminder emails to everyone until I get a reasonable response rate!
- Responses are anonymous and you can only do it once from one device.