A University of Washington study found that children believe the stereotype that math is for boys and not for girls, which could help explain why so few women pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and math. The study used self-report measures and was able to distinguish between whether girls know about the math gender stereotype but are not affected by it, and whether they applied it to themselves so that it affected their identity, interests, and actions. The researchers used a computer-based categorization test to assess how children link math with gender. The researchers report that as early as the second grade, boys associated math with their own gender while girls associated the subject with boys as well. In the self-concept test, girls identified themselves with math less than boys did. "Our results show that cultural stereotypes about math are absorbed strikingly early in development, prior to ages at which there are gender differences in math achievement," says study co-author Andrew Meltzoff. He says efforts targeting girls' self-concepts for math might be helpful as early as elementary school. "Perhaps if we can depict math as being equally for boys and girls, we can help broaden the interests and aspirations of all our children," Meltzoff says.
http://www.futurity.org/society-culture/girls-subtracted-from-math-equation/