

expert consultation by one or more of the Editorial Staff and the opinion of one or more out-of-office consultants."

The first item concerns wide publicity to The Journal's "refusal" to publish a "white paper" on fixed combinations of antimicrobials. This office did not receive a completed draft of a publishable copy of this document and no letter was prepared by this office taking any action. Any statement to the contrary is hearsay only. Decisions reached after editorial review according to current procedures, whether accept, reject, or revise, are given in writing.

The second item concerns the discussion in the *Medical Tribune and Medical News*, Monday, June 23, 1969, entitled "Unpublished Paper Center of Rumors." The report referring to this office is correct except for one statement and one impression. The manuscript was not "turned down" if this term means "rejection," and any mystery regarding ultimate fate is nothing more than a respect of confidence afforded all manuscripts submitted until a final decision has been reached and, if acceptable for publication until the manuscript is published.

This manuscript, originally entitled "Prevalence Rates of Uterine Cervical Carcinoma and Carcinoma in Situ from Women Using the Diaphragm and Contraceptive Oral Steroids," was processed through channels of in-office and out-of-office review, with serious deficiencies noted by the out-of-office consultants. These referred specifically to the implication by name that carcinoma had developed following recommended use of the steroid. Equally important were the criticisms regarding the programming of the study and the selection of controls. These were brought to the attention of the authors, who in turn "revised" the manuscript. Again, in keeping with the current policy, the revision was returned to the consultants, who noted that it failed to incorporate substantial phases of the critical review.

At this stage of the appraisal and because of the importance of the subject, three pathologists were asked to review the pathological data and a biostatistician was asked to review the programming, consultants who had not been called upon previously. Equally critical comments were returned and, in the interest of sound medical publishing, I didn't consider the "revised" manuscript as acceptable for publication in *JAMA* without well-documented qualification. The authors were given the choice of either making fairly extensive revisions to satisfy the new group of consultants (and biostatistician) or else publishing the manuscript as revised, accompanied by abstracts of the consultants' reviews, since their opinions differed significantly from the conclusions stated by the authors.

The authors requested return of the manuscript. This was done with a letter of transmittal explaining the suggested procedure for publication. As of this date the authors have neither acknowledged this letter nor have they accepted the suggestions.

The charge that the drug industry, especially the makers of oral contraceptives, had "put pressure on this Journal to withhold the manuscript" is completely false. At no time has there been any communication, written or unwritten, from any representative of the drug industry or group concerning this manuscript in the study, except as noted above, to wit, physicians and biostatisticians, who were representatives only of research or educational institutions.

J.H.T.