

The last subject discussed in our report was the possible effects of oral contraceptives on babies conceived after a woman stops medication. Although there is as yet no evidence that oral contraceptives have deleterious effect in human offspring, we believe that this is a topic which deserves careful scrutiny.

I wish to conclude this portion of my testimony by reading the conclusion of our task force: "Oral contraceptives are an important and effective means of fertility regulation and family planning. For certain women they are undoubtedly the most effective method currently available. Nevertheless, it is evident that preparations now in use have a multitude of effects in many organ systems. Although it is not yet possible to draw definite conclusions about their effect on the health of women and infants, the use of these agents warrants close observation and surveillance. Effects of special concern include alterations in carbohydrate metabolism, the character and distribution of lipids, liver function, protein metabolism, and the development of hypertension as well as alterations in endocrine function."

(At this point in the proceedings the hearing was disrupted by a group of women in the audience.)

(A recess was taken.)

Senator NELSON. We will resume the hearings.

I suppose I would have to say that was the most interesting interlude we have had here for some time.

As everybody knows, all the testimony in the record is printed, and it is a public record, so that for anybody who wants to read anything that was said in any testimony in these hearings, the record will be available. The press and the other media are all here, so it is a public meeting.

Doctor, go ahead, you may proceed.

Dr. CORFMAN. The second portion of my testimony has to do with the research on this subject underway at the National Institutes of Health.

Senator McINTYRE. What page are you on?

Dr. CORFMAN. Page 8. Incidentally, some of the questions placed by the people who interrupted our hearings were quite important.

NIH has supported research for years in fields directly and indirectly related to oral contraceptives. Several decades ago NIH research helped to lay foundations for our as yet incomplete understanding of human reproductive processes.

Senator NELSON. Just a moment, what page are you on?

Dr. CORFMAN. Page 8, first paragraph.

In the 1950's NIH scientists did some of the first work on inhibiting ovulation in experimental animals with synthetic progestogens. Dr. Hertz was one of the scientists who did this work.

The importance of such fundamental work cannot be over emphasized. This applies particularly to the issues under discussion at these hearings. Our ignorance concerning fundamental biologic processes has been identified repeatedly here and in other such inquiries. We need much more information before we can make sound judgments about the significance of the multitude of effects which have been and continue to be observed.