

tives cannot be construed to be any less dangerous than the old high-dose orals in respect to thromboembolic phenomena. This is to be expected since what are euphemistically termed "side effects" are in reality "direct effects," as characteristic of the oral steroids as contraceptive effects.

2. Under *Blood Platelets*, Bolton reports that, unlike natural estrogens, the synthetic estrogens used in The Pill produce a "pattern of platelet behavior (which) resembles that of patients with arterial disease or multiple sclerosis." The effect is mediated through an abnormal enzyme produced by the synthetic estrogens. This finding helps elucidate the multiple mechanism which accounts for the increased incidence of thrombosis in women on The Pill reported by the English (CF 7:178-80 Spring 1968). It further exposes the illusion of protagonists of The Pill and the fantasy of pharmaceutical advertising that The Pill is a natural and physiologic form of contraception. Others have been critical of this claim (CF 7:89 Winter 1968).

3. Under *Carcinoma-in-Situ*, Mintz' report of the unpublicized meeting of the American Cancer Society at which secrecy was imposed on a finding linking The Pill with precancerous uterine cervical changes is most disturbing. Secrecy in such matters is completely foreign to medical tradition. The suspicions and findings of clinical medicine belong to the patient and to the prescribing physician responsible for the therapeutic decision. When, under the guise of social engineering, population control or alleged prudence, knowledge is withheld which pre-eminently belongs to the medical profession and public, physician and patient rights are transgressed. Unfortunately, suppression of knowledge associating The Pill with cancer is more prevalent than this isolated report indicates. In certain elite circles it is common knowledge (which until published cannot be substantiated) that one of the major hospitals in the East is observing a sixfold increase of precancerous cervical changes in women on The Pill. One also hears that grant money has been withdrawn from a study at an Eastern medical school which uncovered breast cancer in monkeys on The Pill. Additionally, one gynecologist has informed me that he has recently seen an increased incidence of cervical cancer in girls in their early twenties who are on The Pill, a phenomenon uncommon to his experience of approximately 3,000 cases of cervical cancer. Furthermore, it is public knowledge that one oral contraceptive was kept off the market because of breast cancer produced in dogs.

In an age in which preventive medicine has high priority, it is distressing to have women exploited as guinea pigs in order to establish absolute certitude of the causal relationship of The Pill to cancer and other complications. Though it must be admitted women make superb guinea pigs—they don't cost anything, feed themselves, clean their own 'cages,' pay for their own Pills and remunerate the clinical observer—the letter and spirit of the Kefauver Bill was to the contrary: that safety be established before, not after, placing the drugs on the market.

4. Under *Depression*, Nilssen, in a prospective psychiatric and psychologic investigation of postpartum women on The Pill and not on The Pill, reports a "significantly higher frequency of psychiatric symptoms" in Pill users. This confirms an earlier prospective study on depression (CF 7:171 Spring 1968). If medicine's goal is high-level wellness, using a contraceptive that causes depression in up to 1 out of 4 women is hardly a contribution in that direction, nor can it be much of a contribution to domestic bliss.

5. The findings under *Diabetes Mellitus* are equally disturbing. Spellacy, for instance, reports that "77% (of women on) the combination type (of oral contraceptives) have abnormal glucose tolerance curves" after being placed on The Pill.

Assuming there are 5 million women in the reproductive years on combination oral contraceptives, close to 4 million are undergoing a detectable alteration of carbohydrate metabolism in the prime of their life. This pathologic condition is potential to many serious late complications such as stroke, coronary infarction, gangrene and cataracts. Vaginitis Candida, communicable to husbands, has already been established as an immediate complication (Supra, *Vaginitis*; also CF 7:87 Winter 1968).

Four million human guinea pigs at no charge is an attractive gift to physicians doing clinical research. One would be happier, however, if these physicians displayed more of a public health conscience and raised their voices against a mass experiment proceeding more from ignorance than from knowledge.