

contraceptives by children accounts for almost as many deaths as aspirin does. This information is attributed to the Food and Drug Administration.

The September-October 1968 bulletin from the National Clearinghouse for Poison Control Centers does not even place oral contraceptives in a separate listing as it does aspirin. In 1967 aspirin accounted for 23 percent of the accidental ingestions in children under 5, while hormones accounted for only 1.9 percent. In 1966 there were 92 deaths in children under 5 from aspirin and salicylate ingestion while the total for all drugs was 155.

The other argument against such a statement is that the amount of active hormone, progesterone and estrogen, in oral contraceptives is relatively small in comparison to the amount that would be required to cause an adverse pharmacological reaction in a small child. . . .

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Brinkman is correct. The Poison Control Center of the Public Health Service says the latest figures, for 1967, show that there were an estimated 800 reported ingestions of oral contraceptives that year, but no deaths. I was incorrectly informed by a former FDA official who apparently received the information from the Poison Control Center of the St. Louis Children's Hospital. It is believed that the error occurred at the source when ingestions were equated with accidental poisonings.

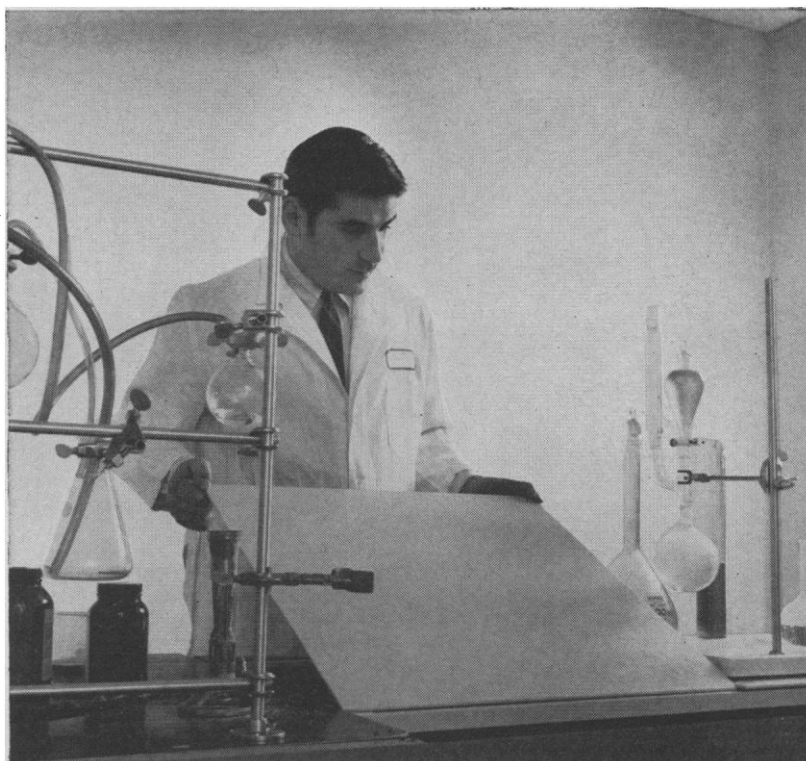
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Science

### Extinction by DDT

Although one cannot help but notice the similarities between the disasters associated with the use of DDT in Wisconsin (7 Feb., p. 548) and the Santa Barbara oil spillage, there is one important difference. The loss of bird and marine life at Santa Barbara, while tragic, does not appear to threaten any one species with extinction as does the continued use of DDT. In both cases, however, conservationists' warnings have gone unheeded.

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