

in 300 women at term whose labors were induced with infusions of  $\text{PGE}_2$ ,  $\text{PGF}_{2\alpha}$ , and oxytocin. The failures with each group were 4, 33, and 44, respectively. Karim then startled the audience by announcing excellent results in inducing labor with the use of relatively large amounts of oral prostaglandins. This route of administration was previously thought to be ineffective. The amount of oral prostaglandins necessary to produce therapeutic abortions, however, was found to be poorly tolerated, and his group, therefore, used the vaginal route. A series of successful abortions in 45 women was presented with vaginal applications of  $\text{PGE}_2$  (20 mg) or  $\text{PGF}_{2\alpha}$  (50 mg) every 2½ hours until abortion took place. The vaginal-tablet method was also used to bring about menses in 11 of 12 women who were 2 to 7 days past their expected menstrual date.

The Yale report concerned the induction of labor in 42 women in a double-blind study with  $\text{PGE}_2$ ,  $\text{PGF}_{2\alpha}$ , and oxytocin. The results of the study were encouraging but far less spectacular than the results of others. It was emphasized that clinical efficacy trials must be carefully controlled, and several types of discrepancies in other series were pointed out. A need for a objective appraisal of results was stressed.

By popular demand, an extra afternoon session was added as a question and answer forum which served to clarify some issues and to allow more investigators to present some results. It was agreed that the definition of "success" in the clinical abortion studies was being used rather loosely, making comparison between various reports difficult.

The meeting was extremely productive and should do much to stimulate research on this important topic throughout the world. Certainly the possibility has been raised that prostaglandins may be a method of self-administered fertility control with an effect limited to the corpus luteum. However, Raymond L. Vande Wiele, co-chairman of the session on reproduction, rightfully raised a note of caution, urging quality in research rather than quantity, with a close look in the near future at side effects.

GERALD G. ANDERSON  
LEON SPEROFF

*Department of Obstetrics and  
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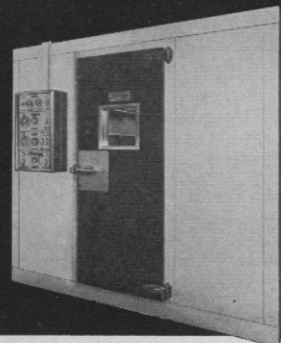
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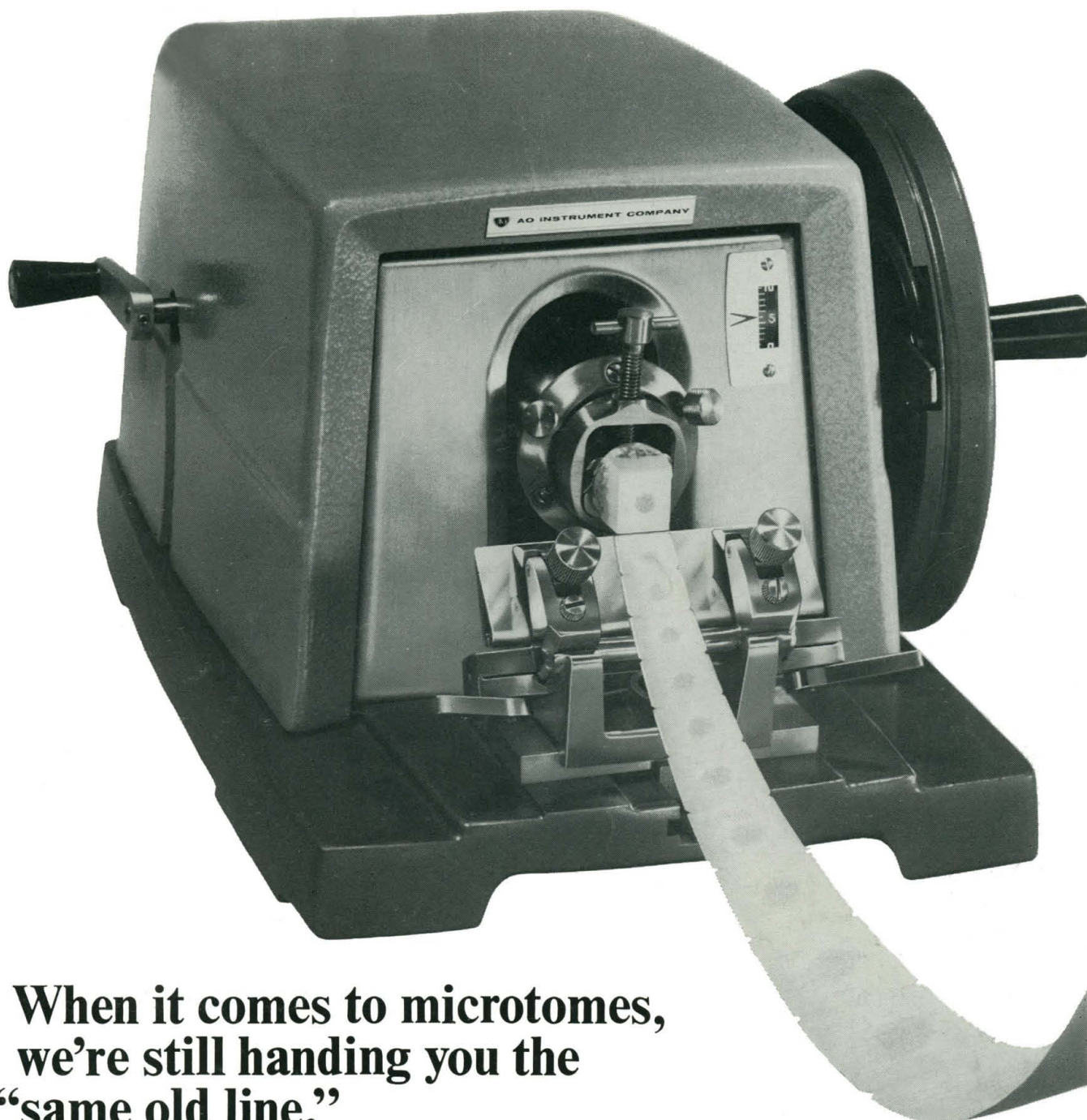
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