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Health Statistics

Horacio Fabrega's article, "The need for an ethnomedical science" (19 Sept. 1975, p. 969) and the comments by Bergner et al. (Letters, 9 Jan., p. 26) were indeed timely. This year's AAAS annual meeting included a symposium, Health Status Indexes-Their Role in Tomorrow, which addressed the same issues. Information was presented about the current applications of health indicators, such as morbidity and mortality, within the social indicator framework. Discussion focused on the methodology of measuring positive aspects of health, with implications for developing health indexes for policy purposes.

Measures of health are now becoming sufficiently developed to assist in the decision-making process. Various research efforts during the last 50 years have produced significant literature published in a variety of respected professional journals on the development of measurable concepts of health and disease. Much of this research has been supported by the U.S. federal health establishment, as well as by the United Nations and the World Health Organization. To coordinate the dissemination of this information and to encourage communication and cooperation among health status researchers, the National Center for Health Statistics, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, has established the Clearinghouse on Health Indexes. The Clearinghouse prepares annotated bibliographies of current information related to health measurement and generates bibliographies on specific subjects. These services are available without charge.

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Climate Research

Among the host of warnings of environmental degradation now facing the public is the claim that disaster is in store if mankind fails to realize that his well-being depends on a stable global climate and that climatic change, either natural or manmade, is a real threat which must be attended to today.

As is true in the case of many environmental advocacy causes, some claims are gross exaggerations, thereby lending less credibility to the remainder. In addition, due in large measure to the degree of ignorance regarding the fundamentals of the nature of climatic variability and change, disagreements among climate experts concerning the plausibility of possible traumatic effects of climatic change have caused confusion on the part of the laypublic and within government circles, making it difficult to assess the true state of affairs.

However, these circumstances are hardly sufficient to account for the lack of federal funding of climate research in response, not just to the clamor of the doomsday prophets, but also to a series of highly authoritative and respectable reports (1), all of which have reiterated the need for a major increase in climate research activities. No doubt the demise last spring of the National Climate Program (2) can in part be ascribed to the nation's economic difficulties, but there is another more trenchant cause for the problem, specifically a failure to demonstrate to funders of such research the practical benefits that can result within a time frame of relevance to their mandate. For example, at its most ambitious, climate research would generate untold benefits if it could lead to a predictive capability; at present, however, this is more a hope than an expectation. Research funding with such an objective would be long-term, high-risk, and have a

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high payoff. A conservative program would emphasize the collection and analysis of more data on climate the world over. Such knowledge would be of interest to planners in climate-sensitive sectors of the economy, for example, in determining the magnitude of buffer stocks of food. This type of research is easy to justify in terms of short-term goals but has attracted little attention from the research community, presumably because of its relatively mundane scientific content. Finally, there remains the very real possibility of an eventual man-made disturbance of the world's climate through any one of a variety of mechanisms, most of which were reviewed in the Study of Man's Impact on Climate report (3). The Climatic Impact Assessment Program (4), based on one such possibility, was in fact funded but ended without gaining the advances needed to predict the climatic consequences of a reduced ozone layer-its stated objective. Other man-induced impacts have been judged potentially serious, but far off, and thus those investigating them have not been able to compete for restricted research funds.

Within the last few months, new information has come to light: there is now a demonstrable case of a man-made global climatic change whose magnitude depends on planning decisions made today but which cannot be quantitatively assessed because of our ignorance of the dynamics of the climate system. The increase in global atmospheric carbon dioxide since the start of this century is well documented and the first-order climatic response well known (the "greenhouse" effect). Best estimates suggest an increase in global mean temperature of perhaps 2°C, with a doubling of ambient CO₂ levels above their preindustrial value (5), but reliable estimates are far from possible at present, due, not only to a lack of understanding of atmospheric dynamics, but to a wide variety of feedback mechanisms within the climate system that need to be investigated and taken into account. The latter, it should be pointed out, can result in diminution or enhancement of the climatic response (6). Projections have also been made of expected levels of atmospheric CO₂ by extrapolation of presentday trends of industrial generation. The recent report by Broecker (7) estimates a 50 percent increase by the year 2020, a figure that agrees with that used by Häfele and Sassin in an important new study (8) made for the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA). They assume a fully fossil-fuel energy production system for the world well into the next century (that is, insignificant nuclear or other forms of energy production) and report a date of 2035 for a doubling of the ambient CO₂ level. They also assume a 3 percent

energy growth rate for the world with an ultimate leveling off at 5 kilowatts per capita using 1974 U.N. population projection figures. The crucial new consideration introduced in the IIASA study is the juxtaposition of this fact with an assessment of our ability to massively deploy a new energy production technology. It points out that the "market penetration time" (that is, the time for a new energy production system to gain a 50 percent share of the total market, starting from a 1 percent level) is 60 years in the case of the United States and longer for the rest of the world. Moreover, this number appears to be an indigenous property of the economic forces that drive the market system and is difficult, if not impossible, to reduce materially. Thus, it so happens that the market penetration time just matches our current best estimate of the CO₂ doubling time, and if planning decisions for avoidance of possible CO₂ climatic impacts are to be effective, the time to make them appears to be now.

It the nation's energy planners take their public charge seriously, it is evident from these fundamental considerations that they should be pressing for assured predictions of the climatic consequences of their decisions on energy production deployment, as error could be disastrous. Understanding climatic change is a truly massive task; social responsibility dictates that we get on with the job diligently and expeditiously.

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Synthetic Rubber in World War II

It is ironic that in the bicentennial year of our Declaration of Independence, one of the major national issues is concern about our dependence on foreign nations for some of our vital resources. However, the idea of a foreign cartel setting the world price for a crucial world commodity is not new. Southeast Asia is particularly well suited to the growth of rubber trees on plantations. This fact made that part of the world even more important to the rubber industry than the Persian Gulf is to today's oil industry, and the owners of the rubber plantations were not slow to take advantage of that.

In 1922, Great Britain felt secure enough in its command of the rubber supply to set in motion a cartel program called the Stevenson Plan. They succeeded in quadrupling the price of raw rubber within 4 years. Incidentally, the "Sheik Yamani" of the Stevenson Plan was Britain's Foreign Secretary, a rising young politician named Winston Churchill. In 1934, the Dutch joined the British in a second rubber cartel. Between them, they were able to control prices and dominate world markets. This situation persisted right up until the beginning of World War II. Indeed, only tentative steps were taken to alleviate our dependence during the first 6 months after Pearl Harbor.

In short, it certainly was not due to the foresight of the American people or their leaders that we managed to pull off the amazing feat of going from complete dependence on foreign rubber supplies to virtually complete rubber independence in three short years. How did we manage it?

There were two unusually lucky circumstances. First, some imaginative people had been attracted to the emerging field of polymer science in spite of the rather dim prospect of anything forthcoming that would be practical on a large scale. Second, the Germans had had the lack of foresight to export to the United States a lot of technological know-how in the chemical field. However, the synthetic rubber program involved much more than luck. At least one aspect of the program carries a lesson which is applicable today.

America's "rubber crisis" of 1942 underlined an important point about technology and human nature. That is, it is easier to meet a problem through the large-scale use of technology than to get people to make a major change in their style of living. Let me explain how the rubber program illustrates this.

After Malaya and Indonesia fell to the Japanese in 1942, the reality of the nation's rubber shortage began to dawn on our national policy-makers. Two obvious courses of action presented themselves. One was to step up the effort to find a "technological fix"-that is, to greatly accelerate the synthetic rubber program. The other was the idea of "resource conservation"-that is, to drastically curb civilian uses of rubber and collect scrap rubber to meet our needs.

At first, the idea of conservation got the main attention. The papers were filled with the exploits of people like Abner Peel of Rahway, New Jersey, who figured out a way of patching and recycling ladies' girdles.

But conservation was a disappointment. Much less scrap rubber was collected than had been expected, and problems of storage and transportation prevented even that from being used. The problem was not lack of patriotism or public willingness. Rather, it was the simple impossibility of totally turning around the ingrained habits of a society in a short time.

Fortunately, the technological fix solution was a bit more successful. Indeed, the success of the synthetic rubber program was fantastic by any standard. In 1940 not a single pound of general-purpose synthetic rubber was produced in the United States. By 1944, the annual production was over 670,000 tons.

What can this story teach us? The synthetic rubber program showed that a joint university-government-industry effort can be an effective method of meeting a national need that is just too big and too risky to ask a single industrial firm to undertake. The program also showed that we should not let important efforts be impeded by artificial distinctions between "pure" and "applied" research. Planning, research, and development are all necessary components of a total technical effort.-ARTHUR M. BUECHE, Vice President for Research and Development, General Electric Research and Development Center, Schenectady, New York 12301

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3 August. (R. J. Weir, discussion leader): C. Peraino, "Drug-induced enhancement of hepatic tumorigenesis"; W. G. Flamm, "Metabolism of procarcinogens by rodent liver extracts." (J. Campbell, discussion leader): R. A. Squire, "Evaluation of neoplastic response in mouse and rat livers."

4 August. (H. C. Grice, discussion leader): J. M. Rice, "Relevance to safety evaluation protocols of rodent response to carcinogens during fetal and neonatal life"; J. M. Spyker, "Functional evaluation of developmental disorders." (R. A. Scala, discussion leader): R. Willes, "The eral/water interface"; R. Zana, "Influence significance of alterations in physiology and behavior as indicators of a toxic response."

5 August. (G. Levinskas, discussion leader): D. Salsburg, "The statistical power of life-time studies in rodents to detect drug carcinogenicity in the presence of pharmacological activity"; C. J. Kodoski, "Safety factor considerations in toxicological evaluations." (A. M. Wolven, discussion leader): (Speaker and subject to be announced).

6 August. (J. F. Borzelleca, discussion leader): J. Beare-Rogers, "Dietary effects on Brassica oils."

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Ingegerd Hellström, chairman; D. Stewart Sell, vice chairman.

19 July. Genetic aspects of the immune response, with particular emphasis on the response to tumor antigens (chairman to be announced): Frank Lilly; David Gasser, discussant. Natural immunity to tumor antigens (Mary Fink, chairman): Robert Nowinski; Theodore Pincus, Ronald Herberman. discussants.

20 July. Molecular nature of tumor antigens (chairman to be announced): Jack Strominger; Stanley Nathenson, R. Reisfeld, Gary David, discussants. Embryonic antigens in tumors (Stewart Sell, chairman): R. Baldwin; M. Edidin and M. Hanna, discussants.

21 July. In vitro sensitization to tumor antigens (J.-C. Cerottini, chairman): Michael Feldman; (discussants to be announced). Nature of effector and suppressor cells in tumor immunity systems, and their mechanisms of action (Avion Mitchison, chairman): Melvin Cohn; Max Cooper, R. Gershon, Darcy Wilson, discussants.

22 July. Evidence for immunity to human tumor antigens (B. Bloom, chairman): Karl Erik Hellström; Mitsuo Takasugi,

Evan Hersh, Eero Saksels, discussants. Workshops: H. Winn, "Immune response to animal tumors"; Bernard Amos, "Immune response to human tumors."

23 July. Macrophages in tumor immunity (Anthony Allison, chairman): Peter Alexander; Steve Russel, discussant.

Water and Aqueous Solutions,

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Frank H. Stillinger, chairman; Robert H. Wood, vice chairman.

2 August. P. F. Low, "Water at the minof water on kinetics of micellization"; W. Kauzmann, "Pressure effects on water and the validity of theories of water behavior"; P. Delahay, "Photoelectron spectroscopy of liquids and solutions"; R. D. Birkoff, "Collective electronic oscillations in water and other liquids"; P. L. M. Plummer, 'Nucleation of water and ice.'

3 August. D. Chandler, "RISM theories for liquid water"; P. A. Kollman, "Theoretical studies of noncovalent interactions involving water"; A. Ben-Naim, "Present status of theory and experiment concerning hydrophobic interaction"; W. P. Jencks, "Polar and nonpolar interactions in aqueous solutions"; J. E. Desnoyers, "Thermodynamics of electrolyte-nonelectrolyte interactions"; R. Battino, "Solubility of gases in water.

4 August. P. von Hippel, "Water structure, the Hofmeister series of ions, and bipolymer conformation"; F. Franks, Small-molecule pair and triplet interactions in dilute solution"; I. D. Kuntz, "Kinetics of water motion in biological systems"; C. J. Montrose, "Depolarized Rayleigh light scattering and relaxation dynamics in water"; D. F. Evans, "Selective transport of ions across membranes"; J. Jonas, "Experimental studies of the dynamic structure of compressed water."

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