LETTERS

The Feingold Diet

In her article "Food additives and hyperactivity" (Research News, 3 Feb., p. 516), Gina Bari Kolata infers that C. Keith Connors and his associates at the University of Pittsburgh studied the effect of the Feingold diet on a group of hyperactive children. She says Connors "has some evidence that the behavior of a small fraction of hyperactive children might improve with the diet. He finds that the behavior of most children, however, is not affected by it."

The Pittsburgh group did not conduct a study of the full Feingold diet. They did study the effects of artificial food dyes and artificial flavors on children. The Feingold diet eliminates artificial colors, artificial flavors, the additives BHA and BHT, and a number of natural salicylates (varying according to the sensitivity of the child). Feingold also recommends, in general, a diet that is high in protein and low in carbohydrates.

While members of the Feingold Association of the United States are gratified by the work of Connors and his associates, and even more so by the research of Herbert Levitan of the University of Maryland, we do not agree that a study of the effect of food dyes and flavors is synonymous with a test of the Feingold diet.

Parents of hyperactive children aren't waiting for the scientific imprimatur to be affixed to the diet 20 years from now. The Feingold Association, founded less than 3 years ago, now has about 20,000 families on the diet. They help each other through more than 100 local organizations. Our children are on the diet because it works.

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Retrolental Fibroplasia Study

A News and Comment article in *Science* (16 Dec. 1977, p. 1127) relays the opinion that the 1953–1954 Cooperative Study of Retrolental Fibroplasia is an example of a premature termination of a randomized controlled clinical trial. However, it should be made clear that the decision to end this study at the end of 1 year was made *before* the trial began and not as a result of findings during the trial.

The cooperative study was one of the first large-scale randomized clinical trials conducted in the United States. The details of the rather involved experimental design used in that study are spelled out in the published report (*1*). An unfortunate defect in the design of the trial limited the evidence concerning mortality.

The mischief caused by misconceptions concerning the clinical trial is felt in our courts of law. Conscientious physicians are being sued because they prescribed oxygen on the basis of the evidence available before the results of the cooperative study were announced (September 1954).

The resistance caused by a combination of social, political, and ethical forces, noted in the *Science* article, played a definite role in blocking further randomized clinical trials that might have answered the many unresolved questions about retrolental fibroplasia remaining at the end of the 1953–1954 trial. They are unresolved today.

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References

1. V. E. Kinsey, *AMA Arch. Ophthamol.* **56**, 481 (1956).

NIH Grant Investigations: A Reply

The 25 November 1977 issue of *Science* contains an article entitled "Research management scandals provoke queries in Washington" (News and Comment, p. 804). One section, in which situations investigated by the Division of Management Survey and Review (DMSR) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) are discussed, is headed by a paragraph stating, "Like any police file, many DMSR reports . . . make for chilling reading." Several excerpts from the file are reported, including the following:

> Another case involved two researchers at Brandeis University who got a grant from the National Institute of General Medical Sciences. Afterwards, DMSR alleged, the researchers departed for Israel, and apparently took with them some $6000 worth of equipment bought with NIGMS funds. The DMSR recommended that the cost of the equipment and part of their salaries be repaid to the government.

It is generally known by the biological community that my wife Raquel Rotman Sussman and I are the two researchers from Brandeis that left for Israel. We