

LSC

WORKSHOP #6

How to count gammas without a gamma counter

^{125}I -labeled samples of cAMP, cGMP, or proteins can be counted with precision and accuracy in a liquid scintillation counter. The counts obtained are from secondary emissions at rates about 75% of those by direct counting in a gamma counter. The procedures take a little more work, but a lot less gamma counter.

We have documented this technique in our LSC Applications Laboratory, not only in counting cAMP and cGMP, but in simultaneous counting of two isotopes; namely, ^{125}I -labeled binding proteins with ^3H -, ^{35}S -, or ^{14}C -labeled substrates. Send for the reports, LSC Application Notes #13, #24, and #25, by Dr. Yutaka Kobayashi.

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LETTERS

A Poet's "Education"

The highly asymmetric notion of "education" embodied in the Harvard Core Curriculum (News and Comment, 8 Dec. 1978, p. 1063) perpetuates a historical accident. The humanists were the first to define "education" long ago; and, not surprisingly, they defined themselves as the model of what ought to be. We are all still imbued with that old idea. We think it terrible if a person studies chemistry/math/physics and learns nothing of the humanistic side of the world. But no one looks askance if a person spends 4 years in history/literature/poetry and remains ignorant of the physical world.

A science school such as Caltech requires its students to spend one-quarter of their time in the humanities: that's what it means to be "learned" after all. But is there a humanities department, anywhere, that believes it is important for people to comprehend the issues behind recombinant DNA research, or the trade-offs between nuclear and fossil fuels?

Despite the increasing importance of science in our society, most people remain ignorant of even its simplest concepts. For such "educated" people, the world operates as though by magic; they are at the mercy of any random failure of a device or any dishonest technician. And we, in turn, are all at their mercy when they are asked to make policy decisions involving scientific matters.

Those who will not understand science become, instead, its prisoners. Such people can feel smug in their cultural knowledge until the pilot light in the furnace goes out or until they are asked to use, or not use, a particular chemical compound, because of tests they cannot understand, performed according to the principles of a scientific methodology whose purpose they do not comprehend.

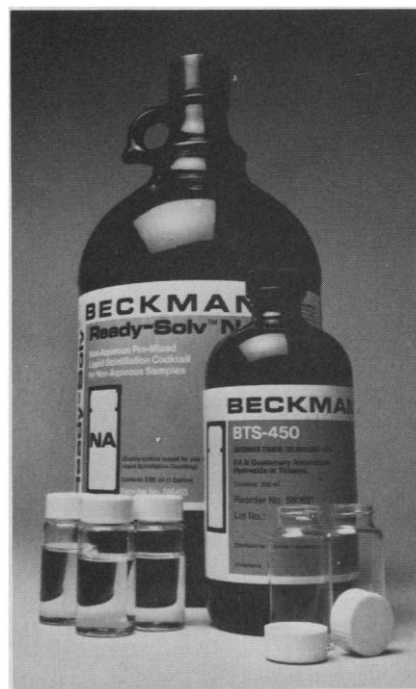
Has our "educated" poet really been liberated from the suffering of Chemistry I or merely been made the slave of a cancer quack?

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Occupational Cancer Risk

In his article of 10 November 1978 (News and Comment, p. 602) Thomas H. Maugh II summarizes various industry-generated criticisms of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare



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