

LETTERS

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products. Each drug advertisement in medical journals claims superior results. Competition is fierce.

The most recent peddling medium for drugs is the program for continuing medical education foisted on physicians by state licensing boards on the premise that better medical care will result. Drug manufacturers are making hay by offering an array of films, programs, and tapes giving "CME credit," but which are basically sales gimmicks. Most of these "educational" films are made by cooperative medical school faculty members and are accepted by physicians as scientific and objective. The "science" of marketing apparently has reached its peak of development in the selling of drugs to my sophisticated, educated, gullible colleagues. As physicians swallow more pharmaceutical company propaganda, patients swallow more pills.

Propaganda + physician + patient + prescription = profit is a highly successful formula.

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Nuclear Risk

In support of Richard L. Meehan's editorial "Nuclear safety: Is scientific literacy the answer?" (11 May, p. 571), I should like to ask, Where are the crowds of protesters clamoring to close down O'Hare airport? Or the jet aircraft manufacturers? Where are the banners and slogans to shut down the automakers of Detroit? . . . the cigarette factories of the South? It's interesting that the actual statistics of 273 killed in one jet crash, 300 or more highway fatalities in one weekend, and uncounted, documented deaths from emphysema and heart problems have not caused more than a slight ripple in public opinion.

In spite of all the outcry, the nuclear generating industry record is *no* fatalities after 20 years of operation. From the Three Mile Island incident the government and independent experts have estimated the possible increase in cancer mortality resulting from radiation releases to be 3 to 4 per 100,000 individuals compared to an expected 4000 to 5000 cancer deaths in the same population from other causes (1).

Nuclear safety—yes, no argument, it must be examined, maintained, and worried about. However, the hysteria of much of the media and the American

public about *possible* nuclear risks should be tempered by the realization of the *demonstrated* greater risks we daily accept. Why do we accept some risks and reject others? I don't know, but, when the people in the loud antinuclear groups and lobbies stop smoking and traveling in airplanes and cars, then perhaps I will have more respect for their position on the risks affecting my life.

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Continuation Methods

The article "Continuation methods: new ways to solve equations" (Research News, May 4, p. 488) was an extremely effective presentation of new and difficult mathematical ideas to a general audience. Gina Bari Kolata stresses the new continuation methods; it can be pointed out that the older "simplicial" methods mentioned there are in fact actually competitive and useful in solving hard problems, and both approaches are still evolving. The basic idea of continuation has a certain simplicity shown in the article which may be more readily communicated to many scientists. In any case, continuation can be thought of as an alternative way of explaining and implementing some of the ideas of Scarf and Eaves though their work uses simplicial methods for implementation.

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I enjoyed reading Kolata's article but believe she is not justified in asserting that the older simplicial methods of Scarf and Eaves are much more difficult to implement than the newer differentiable continuation methods. It seems to me that both methods need further study and computational experience.

One problem is to see how machine algorithms can be developed which unify the simplicial and differentiable approaches. Perhaps an even more important problem is to make a study of the "complexity" of these methods; that is, find a theory of speed of computation for path following algorithms.

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BOOKS RECEIVED

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The Handbook of Cancer Immunology. Harold Waters, Ed. Garland STPM Press, New York, 1978. Five volumes, illus. Vol. 1, Basic Cancer-Related Immunology. viii, 344 pp. Vol. 2, Cellular Escape from Immune Destruction. viii, 276 pp. Vol. 3, Immune Status in Cancer Treatment and Prognosis—Part A. viii, 434 pp. Vol. 4, Immune Status in Cancer Treatment and Prognosis—Part B. viii, 336 pp. Vol. 5, Immunotherapy. viii, 478 pp. Each volume, \$37.50; the set, \$165.

Lung Cancer. Progress in Therapeutic Research. Papers from a conference, May 1977. Franco M. Muggia and Marcel Rozenzweig, Eds. Raven, New York, 1978. xxvi, 614 pp., illus. \$45. Progress in Cancer Research and Therapy, vol. 11.

A Manpower Policy for Primary Health Care. Report of a Study. National Academy of Sciences, Washington, D.C., 1978. xiv, 106 pp. Paper, \$6.25. IOM Publication 78-02.

Marine Mining of the Continental Shelf. Legal, Technical and Environmental Considerations. Michael S. Baram, David Rice, and William Lee. Ballinger (Lippincott), Cambridge, Mass., 1978. xxii, 302 pp., illus. \$22.50.

New Processes of Waste Water Treatment and Recovery. Papers from a symposium, Sept. 1977. G. Mattock, Ed. Published for the Society of Chemical Industry by Horwood, Chichester, England, 1978 (U.S. distributor, Halsted [Wiley], New York). 416 pp., illus. \$60.

Observer's Handbook 1979. John R. Percy, Ed. Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, Toronto, 1978. 140 pp., illus. Paper, C\$4.

Progress in Learning Disabilities. Vol. 4. Helmer R. Myklebust, Ed. Grune and Stratton, New York, 1978. x, 262 pp. \$19.50.

Psychological Development. A Life-Span Approach. Paul Henry Mussen, John Jane-way Conger, Jerome Kagan, and James Geiwitz. Harper and Row, New York, 1978. x, 502 pp., illus. \$14.95.

Radiometric Calibration. Theory and Methods. Clair L. Wyatt. Academic Press, New York, 1978. xiv, 200 pp., illus. \$21.

Sensory Integration. R. Bruce Masterton, Ed. Plenum, New York, 1978. xvi, 580 pp., illus. \$39.50. Handbook of Behavioral Neurobiology, vol. 1.

Severe and Mild Depression. The Psychotherapeutic Approach. Silvano Arieti and Jules Bemporad. Basic, New York, 1979. x, 454 pp. \$20.

Transport in Australia. Papers from a meeting, Feb. 1978. R. B. Potts, Ed. Australian Academy of Science, Canberra City, 1978. iv, 160 pp., illus. Paper, A\$3.95. Forum Report No. 12.

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