30 May, these studies, "unprecedented in this country," will be conducted in cooperation with the state of Pennsylvania. As explained by HEW Secretary Joseph A. Califano, Jr., the ultimate purpose of the studies is to create a data base for a variety of future studies. The focus of these studies is to be the relationship between health histories, such as leukemia and birth defects, and the irradiation exposure caused by the accident.

The particular point I wish to emphasize is that the reliability of studies of the kind mentioned requires that they include not only the details of exposure to radiation, but also the exposures to noxious chemical pollutants as studied by the Food and Drug Administration. Quite a few of them are mutagenic and/or carcinogenic. Obviously, if any such pollutants were present in the ambient air in the localities studied, without being monitored and without being included in the analysis, then their health effects would be ascribed to radiation. Hence the sense of this letter: When studying health effects of irradiation, include chemical pollutants.

Another warning of a statistician is, Beware of "spurious correlations!" That is, when studying populations exposed and cases of leukemia and so forth, do not use "rates"; use actual numbers of people and numbers of leukemias counted (*2*).

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"Female Evanescence"

The most puzzling aspect of "Burt's missing ladies" (Letters, 8 June, p. 1035) is that their nonexistence went unnoticed by the relatively small and tightly knit research community of which they were ostensibly members. Surely Conway's colleagues in the psychology department at University College, London, could have been expected to comment when a paper published from their department was authored by someone unknown to them.

A possible explanation for this curious lack of response is that women scientists are very frequently overlooked by their colleagues, a recent case in point being the failure to nominate Candace Pert for a Lasker Award (*1*). As a psychologist of many talents, Burt undoubtedly recognized that the scientific community would not be at all disturbed by the evanescence of his female "collaborators" and that members of the psychology department at University College could safely be assumed to accept Conway as one of those invisible women to whom it was not necessary to pay attention.

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Energy: A Greater Risk?

The rather lengthy critique by Holdren, Smith, and Morris (Letters, 11 May, p. 564) of Inhaber's article "Risk with energy from conventional and nonconventional sources" (23 Feb., p. 718) deserves comment, not so much for what it says but for what it doesn't say. There is undoubtedly value in ranking comparative risks of producing energy from conventional and nonconventional sources, particularly from the standpoint of determining where efforts may be most usefully directed to reduce prevailing risk levels. However, in terms of the magnitude of today's energy problem and its threat to national interests, such assessments appear somewhat akin to rearranging deck chairs on the *Titanic* as she glides through North Atlantic waters.

With our heavy and increasing dependence on foreign petroleum supplies, the United States is in a precarious position. As we have seen, these supplies can be interrupted and prices can be escalated with serious consequences. The loss of Iranian production provides a graphic example of the risks inherent in excessive dependence on foreign energy supplies. The consequences of the loss of another several million barrels a day of foreign oil supplies, for whatever reasons one might wish to postulate, would be far more serious. Such an event, rather than inconveniencing drivers and disrupting holiday and vacation plans, could begin to undermine the fundamental stability of our economy and the well-being of our population. Employment levels, adequacy of fuel supplies for home heating, and agricultural production could each, for example, be affected. These developments, in turn,