group of scientists, both as regards discipline and professional affiliation, can become involved in risk assessment, which can then be isolated from some of the pressures of special interests.

Whereas the occurrence of a Three Mile Island syndrome in the highly developed field of nuclear technology may appear surprising to some, analogous phenomena are almost taken for granted by economists and political scientists. In their struggle, they appear to be more concerned with the theory and practice of decision-making under conditions of uncertainty than with actually trying to reduce the uncertainty that influences their decisions. At a given time, it may not be possible to remove *all* existing uncertainty, but a minimization of it can always be attempted and a corresponding technological solution outlined. The accuracy and objectivity with which the risk assessment of a complex technology can be carried out ought to be emphasized in the political process of its evaluation.

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Dysmenorrhea Treatment

The Research News article "Dysmenorrhea: basic research leads to a rational therapy" (13 July, p. 175) seems to describe precisely the type of approach to health problems that we all seek but seldom find. The enthusiasm for such a rare occurrence may have, however, led to an overly optimistic and potentially dangerous conclusion. If indeed dysmenorrhea is caused by overproduction of prostaglandins E and $F_{2\alpha}$, perhaps, before putting 30 to 50 percent of women of childbearing age on the rational therapy to depress their synthesis, we should consider two points. The most important is that it is possible that such a widespread "biochemical abnormality" may have a functional role that we do not yet understand. A related point is that the article appears to advocate additional drug therapy for a very large segment of the population. Experience should have taught us by now that simple solutions, especially when applied on a large scale, are likely to lead to unexpected and unpleasant consequences even when the solution is based on rational and elegant research.

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