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the type of cost-benefit analysis required by federal regulations, is the area where the most new ideas are needed, and several people offered tentative modes for assessing such research ethically. Alexander Capron of Harvard Law School, for example, suggested a handful of strategies for achieving the goals of informed consent in cases where strict application of the requirement is unfeasible. These included giving subjects detailed debriefings at the end of a project and allowing them veto power over the findings, and consultations with peers of the group to be studied. These were not substitutes for informed consent, he said, but strategies for "making things right." Cassell pointed out that cost-benefit equations are impossible in field research, where the variables are legion and uncontrollable, and long-term consequences of a project cannot be foreseen. She proposed instead that field researchers be guided by the principle of treating people as ends rather than means—an idea that contains the obligation to do as much good to subjects as possible, to be open and honest, and to share any benefits with them.

Anthropologist Murray Wax of Washington University said that neither Kant nor consequentialism was applicable to anthropological relationships. He proposed development of an ethical model based on reciprocity. "Good fieldwork," he said, "is when a worker enters into a host's system of exchange and reciprocity." In other words, one does not impose one's cultural values but more or less adopts the ethical standards of the hosts. MacIntyre agreed that going with the other culture offered part of the answer, but within certain absolutist prohibitions. One would not, to pose a facetious example, bow to a host's demand that a human sacrifice be made before the beginning of each day's work.

Although consequentialist arguments still hold sway, those concerned with ethics are increasingly climbing aboard the deontological bandwagon. There is now almost universal condemnation of certain types of research, a common example being studies of "helping behavior," in which a person is sent into the subway to fall down and froth at the mouth to see what the bystanders will do. The benefits of such research are now commonly regarded as insufficient to justify manipulating unconsenting bystanders.

Another type of research now regarded as untenable is exemplified by psychologists' infiltration of millennial cults and passing themselves off as true

believers in order to gain inside information. This is now considered an unacceptable betrayal of the subjects' trust. In another type of project, conducted a decade ago by psychologist Philip Zimbardo at Stanford University, students were randomly assigned to be "prisoners" and "guards" in an experiment about prison life. The "prisoners" were picked up without warning by real police and taken to a "jail" in the basement of the Stanford psychology building, where they were met by the "guards." The role-playing became so brutally in earnest that the investigator had to call off the game shortly after it began. This project, as well as involving a measure of deceit, held the risk of psychological and physical damage to the subjects, as well as involuntary self-knowledge.

Some moral hard-liners believe a strong case can be made for outlawing all deception in social science research. This would be a drastic step, since estimates show that 19 to 44 percent of social psychological research relies on some degree of deception. Federal regulations do not say anything about the permissibility of deception; however, the detailed strictures about circumstances requiring informed consent implicitly allow for deception in experiments involving negligible risk to the subjects.

Revised regulations, based in large part on the same recommendations as the current ones, were published in the *Federal Register* on 14 August and are still in the public comment period. The degree to which they put crimps on research still depends on how rigidly they are interpreted by institutional review boards (IRB's), and there is considerable unease among some social scientists and even humanists that more and more types of research will be sucked into IRB purview. Thus some people fear that survey research and even historical and biographical research will be subjected to IRB review even when the possibility of risk to subjects under investigation is remote.

The theoretical discussions at the recent ethics meeting are part of a relatively new phase in the ongoing controversy over research. They are still too tentative to be distilled into a set of principles that would differentiate standards for social research from those for biomedical research. But at least the discussions are becoming disentangled from the strong political currents that have caused sharp and sometimes bitter divisions of opinion over the past decade, as participants grope for deeper principles that will withstand the rapid changes of the time.—CONSTANCE HOLDEN

## Headache for Bristol-Myers

If a recent Federal Trade Commission judge's ruling holds, Bristol-Myers Co. will no longer be able to claim that Bufferin works faster than aspirin or characterize Excedrin as "the extra-strength pain reliever." Nor will advertisements be able to include any mention of aspirin without admitting that the primary ingredient of the two drugs is aspirin. Any claims of comparative effectiveness will have to include a disclaimer, such as "Bufferin has not been proven to be a faster pain reliever than aspirin." The order also bars the company from claiming fewer side effects (namely stomach upset) from the drugs in the absence of an "adequate and well-controlled study" and prohibits it from insinuating that they contain any special or unique product.

Bristol-Myers is appealing the decision to the full commission. The ruling culminated the second of three trials resulting from a combined action brought by the FTC in 1973 against three major manufacturers of over-the-counter analgesics. Last year the same judge directed a similar ruling (now under appeal) at American Home Products, makers of Anacin (which contains "more of the ingredient doctors recommend most"—again, aspirin) and Arthritis Pain Formula. Next on the docket is a case against Sterling Drug Co., makers of Bayer aspirin and the aspirin-based pain relievers Cope, Vanquish, and Midol.

The stakes are high in these cases, as over-the-counter analgesics generate revenue approaching \$1 billion a year. Each trial has lasted about a year, with the Bristol-Myers people submitting 13,000 pages of testimony. The effectiveness of the drugs for relief of headaches is difficult to ascertain because people treat their headaches at home and controlled clinical trials are practically nonexistent.

Experts at congressional hearings over the years have expressed outrage at the way drug companies gull the public into believing that their analgesics, which cost about twice as much as plain aspirin, have special pain-relieving powers. The charge of false advertising is difficult to nail down because of the sneaky wording of the ads. Bufferin, for example, is

claimed to "go to work twice as fast as aspirin." This statement implies that it tackles headache pain faster. In fact, although Bufferin reaches the bloodstream faster, there is no clinical evidence that it is faster at producing analgesia. Another very sneaky claim is that "doctors specify Bufferin most" over other "leading brands." This was literally true because doctors usually specify aspirin, not a brand name. (Since the suit was brought, the brand name doctors have been specifying most is the nonaspirin analgesic Tylenol.) Another misleading claim for Bufferin and Excedrin has been that "hospital studies" show them to be superior to aspirin. Not mentioned is the fact that the studies related to postpartum pain, which has not been shown to be correlated with relief of headache pain, and their results have in any case been equivocal.

Many of the over-the-counter analgesic formulations are a matter of juggling in the dark, as Georgetown University pharmacologist William Beaver explains. All the drugs in question contain various combinations drawn from a handful of ingredients: aspirin, caffeine, acetaminophen (the active ingredient of Tylenol), salicylamide (an unproven analgesic), and the buffering agents aluminum glycinate and magnesium carbonate. Bufferin has aspirin and buffering agents to speed absorption; Excedrin has aspirin, caffeine, acetaminophen, and salicylamide; Excedrin PM substitutes antihistamine for caffeine; Anacin is just a big aspirin (six grains instead of five) with some caffeine; Arthritis Pain Formula is like a "big Bufferin" (says Beaver); arthritis-strength Bufferin is like 1½ Bufferins; Cope is like Anacin with antihistamine and buffering agents added; Vanquish is like Excedrin except with buffering agents instead of salicylamide; Midol (for menstrual pain) is like Anacin with an alleged antispasmodic added.

Beaver points out that there are all kinds of theoretical reasons why the various combinations might be more efficacious than aspirin—caffeine, for example, may help potentiate analgesia—but there are no studies to prove the superiority of any combinations. Says Beaver, "I have seen no evidence that there is anything you could get over the counter that is superior to either plain aspirin or acetaminophen."

## Rattlesnake Defender to Keep His Job

After a week-long ruckus featuring nationwide publicity, howls from environmentalists, and stern rumblings from members of Congress, the Department of the Interior has reinstated 29-year-old herpetologist C. Kenneth Dodd. Dodd was fired after incurring the wrath of Interior Secretary Cecil D. Andrus by protesting the inclusion on the menu, in Andrus's favorite French restaurant, of a dish featuring a potentially endangered rattlesnake.

Dodd is employed in the Office of Endangered Species of the Fish and Wildlife Service. What he did, in an act he later admitted may have been "overzealous," was to write the proprietor of Dominique's restaurant in Washington after he learned from a local television show that the restaurant was serving eastern timber rattlesnake. The snake, although not on the endangered species list, is protected by the state of Pennsylvania and any commercial traffic in it is illegal. Dodd, writing on Interior letterhead, noted that the snake was "rapidly approaching extinction" and requested "respectfully" that it be removed from the menu. This proprietor Dominique D'Ermo promptly did, substituting for it a nonendangered Texas rattler.

That might have been the end of it had not Andrus read of the letter in the *Washington Star's* gossip column. He promptly apologized to D'Ermo and told him to disregard Dodd's letter. Soon afterward Dodd received a notice of proposed termination signed by Fish and Wildlife director Lynn C. Greenwalt. The letter accused him of writing "unauthorized correspondence" which has "jeopardized endangered species legislation" and compromised any potential law enforcement investigation. "As a direct result of your letter," it went on, "a serious matter was presented in the newspaper as trivial and frivolous to the public. Your action has jeopardized our efforts to maintain a viable, continuing endangered species program."

Dodd pressed himself stunned and bewildered at the severity of this move. "It's the damndest thing I've ever seen," he said. Andrus was meanwhile being pelted by letters from environmental groups and pro-

fessional associations, among others, protesting the firing. Dodd was getting calls around the clock from reporters and appeared on several network news programs. Representative Pat Schroeder (D-Colo.), chairman of the House civil service subcommittee, an-

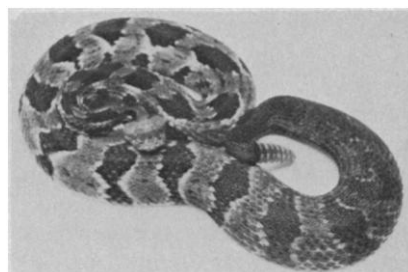


Photo by S. B. Hedges

*Timber rattler (Crotalus horridus)*

nounced the intention to hold hearings to see if civil service procedures had been violated. Representative John D. Dingell (D-Mich.), one of the original authors of the Endangered Species Act, requested that the House fish and wildlife subcommittee hold hearings. He also wrote Andrus demanding a detailed explanation of the circumstances of Dodd's proposed termination. "It smacks of the highest and most outrageous arrogance," he declared. If Andrus failed to produce the desired information there would be "blood and guts, hair and hide over the wall," added Dingell, an ardent sportsman.

The weekend after the incident Andrus was quoted as predicting that the furor would blow over in a few days, as saying "I hate rattlesnakes," and as finding the idea of protecting them "humorous"—all of which fueled the righteous outpourings in support of Dodd.

The matter has probably caused more embarrassment to Andrus than Dodd's letter ever could have to the endangered species program. The fuss comes at a time when the Endangered Species Act is up for renegotiation in Congress after having been dealt a blow by legislation to exempt the proposed Tellico Dam, made famous by the snail darter, from its provisions. Despite Dodd's reinstatement the episode can hardly benefit the Endangered Species Office, which already operates under tremendous political pressure. Says one environmentalist, "It is difficult enough to render candid biological advice without the fear of arbitrary reprisals."

**Constance Holden**