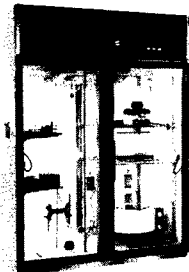


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## LETTERS

### Ethics Advisory Board

In the article "Ethical risks in biomedicine" (News and Comment, 17 Apr., p. 307), it is stated that "the work of the old Ethics Board has not yet found a secretary of HEW [Health, Education, and Welfare] or HHS [Health and Human Services] willing to endorse it. Califano ignored it."

As chairman of the Ethics Advisory Board under former HEW Secretary Joseph A. Califano, Jr., I would like to correct the record. First, I believe the Ethics Advisory Board experiment did falter because of disinterest at HEW-HHS and the Office of Management and Budget, but only after Secretary Califano left office. Second, Secretary Califano did not to my knowledge ever ignore the Board or its work. Indeed, I believe, as I think all members of the Board do, that Secretary Califano felt it was extremely important for an independent body like the Board to advise the Secretary on the complex and important ethical issues arising in federal health policies and programs. Moreover, Secretary Califano acted positively upon all recommendations which the Board made to him except for some about in vitro fertilization, which he published for public comment before taking action. Final action was prevented not by disinterest but by departure from office.

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### Citation in Astronomy

A certain systematic parochialism is too often found in scientific literature—in the United States as well as in other countries. In the science I know best—astronomy—many review articles published in the United States contain few or no references to papers written in languages other than English or to groups of authors working outside the United States. Has science, in this field, been developing only in the United States? No one really thinks so.

J. Lequeux, editor of *Astronomy and Astrophysics* (a journal that, about 20 years ago, resulted from the merging of many important Western European astronomy journals), has found (1) that, in 1978, the "impact factor" worldwide (derived from the Science Citation Index) was 9.91 for the *Annual Review of Astronomy and Astrophysics*; 2.71 for