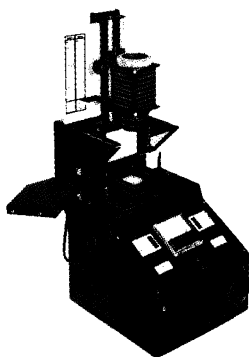


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was sentenced to 6 months in the camp prison, where conditions are even worse.

During his 20 months of imprisonment he has not been allowed visitors. For two months I received no letters; then I finally received a letter dated 22 June in which he said, "I am alive. My only pleasures are the letters. . . . My only hope lies in the grace of God."

His jailors are doing all in their power to undermine the health of my husband. At age 52, he faces 5½ years more of imprisonment and 5 years exile.

I appeal to you, his scientific colleagues, to save my husband by raising your voices. Keep striving to better his situation.

Inna Begun's is but one still, silent voice calling for humane treatment for her husband. More voices are needed to persuade Soviet authorities to ease their long-standing oppression of this man. We urge you to join with us in championing his cause.

MARK KAC

JOEL L. LEBOWITZ

PAUL H. PLOTZ

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## A Manual Twitch

We note with interest the report by Evert Lagerweij *et al.* (14 Sept., p. 1172) suggesting that use of a twitch to grasp the upper lip of a horse increases the horse's tolerance of pain. We have for several years been conducting research among the Turkana tribe of northwest Kenya and have observed what may be another example of this "variant of acupuncture."

The Turkana are nomadic pastoralists who derive a substantial portion of their diet from blood drawn from their herd animals. Camels (*Camelus dromedarius*) are bled by tightening a thong around the neck and puncturing the distended jugular vein with several twists of a chisel-like metal blade. The bleeding stops when the thong is released. Inducing a fully grown camel to sit still for such an operation would seem to be a formidable task, but Turkana of both sexes routinely bring camels to their knees (literally) by grasping both lips firmly, one with each hand. The beasts do bellow, but are otherwise surprisingly passive during what is surely a painful procedure. This manual twitch is also employed during branding. The Turkana also bleed their cattle, but do not employ the same technique.

We have no physiological evidence to demonstrate that grasping the camels' lips causes analgesia and sedation, but it may well be that the potential to respond

to "acupressure" on the lip is present in mammals other than horses. It is clear that this restraining technique has been discovered by African herders as well as by Western farmers.

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## Prenatal Learning

Gina Kolata's article "Studying learning in the womb" (Research News, 20 July, p. 302) recalls to my mind the famous legend from the great Indian epic *The Mahabharatha*. Lord Krishna, the legend says, was teaching the great Pandava warrior Arjuna how to enter the *Padmavyuha*, a military formation perfected by the Kauravas, with whom the Pandavas were at war. Arjuna's wife Subhadra, who was in an advanced state of pregnancy, was also present. As Krishna proceeded with his instructions, Arjuna answered with a "Hmm." After some time Krishna realized that the acknowledging answer was not coming from Arjuna, who had dozed off, but from the womb of Subhadra. Krishna, who was reluctant to impart this knowledge to anyone other than his favorite Arjuna, suddenly stopped talking. Years later during the Mahabharatha War, a young Abhimanyu, the son of Arjuna and Subhadra, could break into the *Padmavyuha* with ease by drawing on his knowledge acquired during his prenatal stage. But since he had been denied the knowledge of how to get out of the *Padmavyuha*, Abhimanyu fell fighting inside the formation.

All of which makes one wonder whether all "modern" research is all that modern!

KAMALA RAMACHANDRAN

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and Information Directorate,  
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**Erratum:** In the report "A candidate magnetic sense organ in the yellowfin tuna, *Thunnus albacares*" by M. M. Walker *et al.* (18 May, p. 751), the standard error given on page 752 (3rd column, first full paragraph) for the sizes of the magnetite particles was instead the standard deviation. Use of the term "standard error" implies a far greater variance in the sizes of the particles than actually existed and could lead to the conclusion that the published electron micrograph is not typical but presents a biased sample of the particles.