gress we have been making in our laboratory work. . . . He has taken laboratory space from us, has transferred our neurophysiology equipment to another group. . . ." Later in the letter to Maddox, which concerned pending publication of a paper on fraud, they repeated themselves. "For almost two years we have worked almost exclusively on this report and have done almost no laboratory work." That, in fact, is why Roth reduced their laboratory resources.

In memoranda to NIH director James B. Wyngaarden, one dated 10 September 1985 and another 30 April 1986, they said, "As you know, it is our intention to return to our usual laboratory work as soon as we can." They have not yet done so.

Item 5. Stewart and Feder's letter of correction to *Science* permits the reader to judge the extent to which they believe that it is "generally appropriate to ignore minor errors."—BARBARA J. CULLITON

Revival of the Ethics Advisory Board

A window of opportunity has opened, and biomedical and behavioral researchers are well advised to take advantage of it. The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) announced in July plans to revive its Ethics Advisory Board (EAB), a body that ceased to exist in 1980. The EAB will advise DHHS on the ethical acceptability of the conduct and funding of certain proposals for research involving human subjects. Comments on the EAB's proposed charter (*1*) must be received by 14 November 1988. Among the issues now open for discussion is the board's membership. The draft charter calls for at least one third, but not more than half, of the 21 members to be scientists, physicians, and other health professionals. The balance of the members would be drawn from law, ethics, and the general public.

Research with human subjects falling under the EAB's purview may include that with demented patients, children, prisoners, AIDS patients, fetuses, and human sperm and eggs. In the case of human sperm and eggs, the prolonged absence of an EAB has stifled research in human in vitro fertilization (IVF). Such a board is required by federal regulation to advise DHHS as to the ethical acceptability of such research before grants can be funded. Investigators have not been submitting proposals involving human IVF because of a widespread awareness of the de facto ban on such research. The chilling effect of this moratorium on IVF research is such that the National Institutes of Health estimate they might receive more than 100 grant applications related to human IVF if the EAB existed.

Revival of the EAB should not be taken as a green light for the funding of biomedical and behavioral research that raises ethically sensitive issues. Rather, it represents installation by the DHHS of a functioning traffic signal on a road that has long stood unused. Researchers, through their timely comments on the draft charter of the EAB, can help to calibrate that traffice signal. In addition, it is incumbent on biomedical and behavioral researchers to begin submitting research proposals that may have previously been withheld. In the Reagan Administration's waning days, the DHHS has laid out a plan to consider funding some of the most ethically—and politically—sensitive areas of research in all of science and medicine. Biomedical and behavioral researchers are challenged to respond.

GARY B. ELLIS
Biological Applications Program,
Office of Technology Assessment,
U.S. Congress,
Washington, DC 20510–8025

REFERENCES

1. *Fed. Reg.* **53**, 35232 (12 September 1988).

Research at USAMRIID

I am writing to object to the use of terms such as "biowarfare research," in particular, in William Booth's article "Post Office nixes germs by mail" (News & Comment, 1 July, p. 15). This appears to be part of a continuing trend that misrepresents the nature of biological research by the Department of Defense and the U.S. Army.

Since the early 1970s, the Army has conducted research at the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID) that is "research for defensive purposes only, such as to improve techniques of immunization and medical therapy" (*1*). Hence, these programs are accurately referred to as "biological defense research programs."

Although the difference between the phrases may seem trivial, it dramatically affects the way a reader perceives the purpose of the programs. Phrases such as "implements of biological warfare" conjure up images of biological weapons development. This is simply not what goes on at USAMRIID. A major portion of our work deals with development of vaccines that are not only of significance to the military, but also have relevance and application in the civilian sector. It is the policy of USAMRIID that research is unclassified and is routinely presented and published in peer-reviewed, scientific journals. In addition, we have an open policy of collaboration with scientists in academia and industry around the world. An example of this collaborative effort was noted in John Walsh's article about the Rift Valley Fever outbreak in Senegal (News & Comment, 10 June, p. 1397).

I comment particularly because of the use of the word "biowarriors" in the article of 1 July. I am a cell biologist doing postdoctoral research, not a "biowarrior." This term is inappropriate and derogatory. It implies that anyone (regardless of whether they are associated with a government or civilian institute) studying highly infectious organisms has only warfare in mind. As with any biological system, there are a number of reasons scientists study these infectious organisms. We should not close our minds to the wealth of information contained in these systems because of such a misunderstanding.

JEANNE M. NOVAK
Staff Scientist, Captain,
Airborne Disease Division,
U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases,
Fort Detrick, MD 21701-5011

REFERENCES

1. *National Security Decision 35* (National Archives Record Group 273, Washington, DC, 25 November 1969).

"La Niña" or "El Viejo"?

Richard A. Kerr's use of the term "La Niña" (Research News, 26 Aug., p. 1037) for the anti–El Niño phenomenon is unfortunate. The term "La Niña," coined by George Philander of Princeton University is sexist because it implies that girls are the opposite of boys, when they are really two versions of the same thing. It also implies that girls are cold while boys are warm (perhaps they are at Princeton). More important, as far as we know, Christ did not have a sister. In my review of El Niño North (*1*), I used the term "El Viejo" (the old man) for the cold water phenomenon because of its association with Old Man Winter.

Then again perhaps they should be called Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

JOHN L. BUTLER
Southwest Fisheries Center,
National Marine Fisheries Service,
Post Office Box 271,
La Jolla, CA 92038, and
Scripps Institution of Oceanography,
La Jolla, CA 92037

REFERENCES

1. J. L. Buter, *Trans. Am. Fish. Soc.* **115**, 784 (1986).