

It results from the fierce competition that currently exists in the applicant pool, along with the emphasis on grade-point averages in science as a criterion for acceptance at most medical schools. The biggest danger from excessive competition is that it may create a student who is unlikely to become a humane and considerate physician.

The tensions of medical school admissions are exacerbated because most medical schools have no firm notification date and accept students on a "rolling admissions" basis. Three roommates and I applied for medical school last fall. One roommate, from Wisconsin, was accepted by his state school in September and knew during his entire senior year that he would be attending medical school the following year. The two of us from Massachusetts, including myself, were accepted in February. The fourth roommate, from Ohio, spent an agonizing year

waiting for an acceptance until Ohio State notified him favorably in late May.

Premedical students are confronted with state preference, heavy reliance on science grades, the immense cost of applying, and a tension and sense of competition with classmates that can be excruciating. The challenge to medical educators is to eliminate many inequities in the present system and to define more clearly the type of student that should attend the various types of medical schools.

Of all the suggestions made for improving the current unsatisfactory situation, the plea most often heard is for more seats in medical schools. Medical school deans generally agree that the most economical way of creating more seats is usually by expanding current enrollments rather than by starting new medical schools. O'Doherty from Georgetown said, "Before a new medical school starts to contribute to

the physician pool, there is a gap of probably 8 to 10 years." Harvard's Miller noted that more than 3300 foreign medical school graduates are being allowed into the United States annually. He said that, if one assumes an American medical education is superior to a foreign medical education, then U.S. medical schools should increase their enrollment by at least 3300.

Another improvement in the admissions process would be to reduce or eliminate state preference. The federal government currently provides medical schools with grant support. Some federal muscle should be flexed to ensure that students across the nation have an equal chance of getting into any American medical school.

Willard Dalrymple, premedical adviser at Princeton, cautioned at a meeting of admissions officers against the automatic grade-point cutoff, which he said encourages students "to seek the easiest academic paths" and "teaches people false values."

As Rosenberg suggests, the interview should be used more restrictively, and medical schools should publish detailed statistics on the types of students they are accepting. The mechanics of medical school admissions would be further improved by establishing one date for notifying all applicants. Swanson of the AAMC said he hopes within the next 2 years to get medical schools to agree on a standard notification date in order "to reduce student anxiety."

The heavy flow of well-qualified people into the health field is a great resource that medical, educational, and government planners should utilize to the fullest. The challenge is to establish a more equitable system of medical school admissions, which means evolving a set of more relevant criteria by which to choose students. Medical schools should weigh more heavily applicants' motivation for applying to medical school and their personal attributes, such as compassion and general intelligence, instead of relying almost solely on grade-point averages. Policy-makers should also make room for those rejected by offering and publicizing other rewarding and meaningful options within the field of health care delivery.—SAMUEL Z. GOLDBABER

*Samuel Z. Goldhaber was a news intern at Science in the summer of 1970. He graduated from Harvard College this June and will be entering Harvard Medical School in September.*

## Lear Leaves Saturday Review

John Lear, the science editor of *Saturday Review*, resigned on 1 June to become vice president for communications of Bauer Engineering, a Chicago-based firm involved in environmental management.

For the last 16 years at *Saturday Review*, and previously at *Collier's Magazine*, Lear crusaded for various causes, including adequate government regulation of the drug industry and greater public understanding of the effects of thermonuclear war. Lear holds four major journalism awards and a number of other prizes.

Lear's departure signals the end of an era for *Saturday Review*, which was sold by McCall Publishing Company last year at a reported price of \$5.5 million. The magazine, which has a circulation of 790,000 had previously been "in the vicinity of" breaking even financially. The purchasers were Nicholas Charney and John J. Veronis, the team which built up *Psychology Today* and then sold it to *Boise Cascade* 2 years ago at a price of approximately \$21 million.

Instead of the monthly "Science and Humanities Supplement," one entire issue per month of the magazine will be devoted to science, says the new chief science editor, Alfred Meyer, who was brought in by Charney from the editorship of *Natural History*. "We are going to be drastically different from the old *Saturday Review*," says Meyer. "We are going to see science as an evolutionary adaptation." The budget for this project: \$700,000 for the first year.

Lear says he was offered a post as a senior editor of the new, transformed magazine, but resigned because he liked the Bauer offer and because "I couldn't see where the new owners were going. In the past we had a great sense of social conscience in what we did. If these people had it, I didn't see it." These new owners say that the average age of the editors (Lear is 62) has been cut from 58 to 35; but among the notables of the last decade who are no longer on the masthead are one-time owner and editor Norman Cousins, poetry editor John Ciardi, art editor Katherine Kuh, and contributing editors Hollis Alpert and Goodman Ace.—D.S.