

tion of drug treatments, where clear knowledge of the ingredients of the treatment are usually available beforehand.

One of the important features of the National Institute of Mental Health program is that it starts with two psychological treatments of depression that are more explicitly specified than most. Yet embedded in these specifications are approximately 20 hours of interaction between two persons in which there is great room for variations according to specific characteristics of patient and therapist and the surrounding circumstances. Not only that, but the treatments constitute a roughly sequenced package of therapist interventions, such as tasks, explanations, and inferences. Prior research has encouraged the belief that these interventions provide positive treatment effects and justify the ambitious follow-up program. It is important to emphasize that this program includes plans to search for evidence that all the explicit components of the treatment are important to the changes sought and that inadvertent accompaniments are not major factors.

From all the controversy over the effectiveness of psychotherapy, it should be clear that, even given that the evidence is positive, the effects are not great or certain. This tells us that whatever knowledge we have is very crude and inexact. Our treatment packages may contain actions that prove to be useless rituals or, even worse, rituals that block or undo the very effects we seek. Research designs should be directed beyond the goal of evaluation of any treatment package toward the kind of understanding that can provide a basis for increasing the power, certainty, and safety of psychotherapeutic treatments. The dangers in the analogy to chemotherapies are that it fosters unrealistic public expectations and inappropriate research questions and designs.

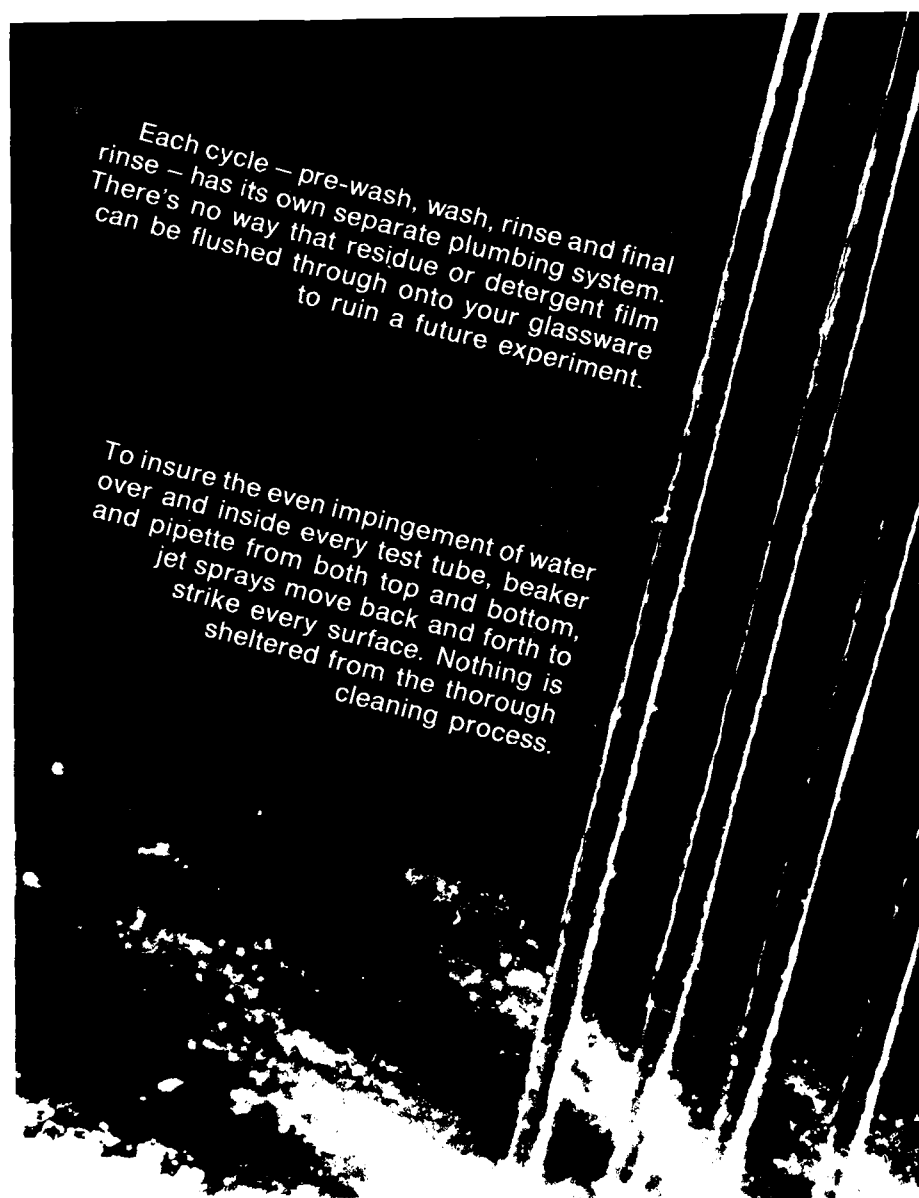
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Correction

In an article titled "How safe is Bendectin?" (31 Oct. 1980, p. 518), it was incorrectly reported that William McBride of Sydney, Australia, was paid \$5000 a day to testify as an expert witness in a court case involving allegations that Bendectin caused birth defects in a Florida child named David Mekdeci. McBride was not paid for certain testimony. Rather, he was compensated for time away from his Australian practice at a rate of approximately \$1116 a day so that he could appear as an expert witness on behalf of the Mekdeci family. He was also reimbursed for his travel expenses to and from Australia. *Science* regrets the error.

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