Pro-Life Throws Down Gauntlet
To NIH on Human Embryology

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is trying to restart America's long-stalled research on human embryos. This work could provide significant help to infertile couples who are trying to become parents.

The pro-life movement, which successfully derailed research in this realm more than a dozen years ago, threatened to do so again, at an NIH advisory panel hearing here last month.

"Embryos cannot be the object of experimentation," declared Father Matthew Hodiger, a moral theologian, who represents Human Life International, of Gaithersburg, Md., which he said is the world's largest international pro-life organization.

"Very often," Hodiger said, "I find myself speaking for those who can't speak, for the unborn, and in this case for embryos. . . . Each . . . must be considered and respected as a person from the first moment of his or her conception . . . .

"Therefore, at no moment of its development can an embryo be the subject of tests that are not beneficial to it, or of experimentation leading to its mutation or destruction — for man's nature itself would then be mocked and wounded."

Bishops' Position Stated

Earlier, theologian Richard Doerflinger, a pro-life policy official for the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, in Washington, D.C., reminded the advisory panel and NIH officials and congressional aides at the meeting, in a hotel conference room here, that the pro-life movement and the Roman Catholic Church stopped federally-sponsored fetal research in the late 1970s, by generating thousands of protest letters. He said they were prepared to do so again:

"I can see a circumstance in which sustained campaigns of that kind could be produced by the results of what this panel does."

The theologians' perspective was sharply challenged by the panel's co-chairperson for science, cell biologist Brigid L.M. Hogan, Ph.D., of Vanderbilt University, in Nashville. Embryo research is a "rapidly moving field," she declared. "We have continued on page 4

Nature Imposes Strict Limits on Embryo Studies

One persisting fear of "test tube baby" research is that scientists will gestate human beings artificially in laboratory flasks. Motherless and unloved, so this myth goes, they will develop into unfeeling monsters or zombies.

The trouble is, this can't be done.

Cell biologist Brigid L.M. Hogan, Ph.D., of Vanderbilt, who is the NIH embryo panel's co-chairperson for science, explained here that carrying an embryo in a lab dish much beyond the early developmental stage called implatation — when it attaches itself and grows into the uterine wall, and becomes dependent on the mother for nutrients — is "very unlikely" to be done. "The technology would be tremendous," she said. "It would be so totally inefficient that I don't think anybody would want to do it."

Implantation occurs before gastrulation, which is the stage in which embryonic cells begin to align themselves along a midline that becomes the spinal column. Hence, during the earlier, pre-implantation stage, when experimental manipulation in vitro is feasible, the embryo has no feelings because it has no nervous system in which feeling might occur.

In short, pre-implant embryos can't suffer. Post-implant ones only can survive in a living uterus. Science can't create an artificial matrix that could serve in its stead.

© 1994, David Zimmerman, Inc.
Clinton Health Watch

Harkin Amendment Would Fund Science

We finally have found a piece of Democratic health reform legislation we can cheerfully support: an amendment by Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) to create a permanent Health Research Trust Fund to finance the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and related basic science institutions.

Harkin staffers said last month that he would introduce the amendment on February 28. Its aim is to provide an additional and permanently guaranteed $6 billion per year for basic science.

The source of this money would be a roughly $1-per-week ($60 per year) surcharge on each of the 100 million health insurance policies slated to be written annually under the Clinton Health Trust Fund.

Follow-Up...

Genes, violence, & race: Our attention was drawn to this issue last year by political scientist Ronald Walters, Ph.D., of Howard University, in Washington, D.C. He attacked federal initiatives to study violence, saying they were racist. He even opposed federal funding of a study on genetic aspects of violence that was conducted on white murderers, in Finnish prisons (PROBE, April ‘93).

We reported Walters’ view — which we disagree with — and described the research study. We revisited it last month, when it finally was published. We phoned Walters for comment, but missed him because Howard was closed by a snowstorm. We now have his comment:

Walters notes that he is not a geneticist. But, he says, the study's finding — that a gene which influences serotonin prompts some white criminals to attempt suicide — “is rather narrowly drawn, [which] suggests that it should not be overly generalized.”

Summarizing the finding, Walters adds:—

“[W]e are at all sure how this related to the broader question of the relationship of suicide to aggression toward others, and thus, to the question of the genetic link to violence toward others and crime, or to what other studies will discover.”

He continues:

“In any case, even where there is no race-specific finding of genetic influence on aggressivity, I have always maintained that my primary concern was not the question of a racial finding in the studies, but that, firstly, American studies appeared to be directed toward the inner city. And, second, there is the question of how the findings would be utilized to shape intervention strategies.

“The fact that there have been such human rights violations in [the] research process involving the search for the biological determinants of violence in this country leads to my continued concern both about the direction in which such studies are leading society, and the connection of such research to poverty and race.”

Funding Is Down

Harkin described his proposal in late January, at a sparsely attended public forum at the New York University (NYU) School of Medicine. The school’s researchers, who stand to gain significantly — in salaries, updated facilities, and operating expenses — from his proposal failed to turn out in large numbers. Scientists who did attend heard the Senator lament that funding for peer-approved NIH grant requests has fallen from about 60% of approved applications to as low as 20% at some NIH institutes. In other words, only one in five meritorious proposals is funded.

To rectify this, his plan will provide “a quantum leap up for funding for NIH and other basic research spending.”

This is a necessary amendment because, said Harkin, the Clintons’ bill is “quite deficient” in providing for basic medical research — particularly, research on the disease prevention advances that it hopes to achieve. Harkin predicted that without a new funding source its budgets will drop, or remain flat in the years ahead. “We’ll continue to dwindle, and go downhill in basic research,” he warned.

His proposal will add between 1.2 and 3 cents per health insurance dollar, Harkin estimated. Some of his congressional colleagues oppose it, he said, as a new tax. But Harkin said he thinks there will be wide public approval for the surcharge — if researchers help mobilize support.

Index Included
In This Issue
An index for Volume II, PROBE’s second full year of publication (12 issues) through the issue dated (October) November 1, 1993, is enclosed with this issue. Back issues of this volume, and also of Vol. I, are available by mail. Instructions for ordering them are on the Index.

We are very grateful to our colleague Lynne Lamberg, author of the forthcoming Bodyrhythms (New York: Morrow, summer 1994), for compiling this annual PROBE Index.

— D.R.Z.
As Pseudoscientific Tools of Hate

Some black intellectuals and activists, including doctors, psychologists, and historians, are propounding “scientific” theories to justify black racist attacks on Jews, Catholics, and other whites. Opposing them, two academics in Michigan, have been leading a lonely fight to deconstruct and debunk what both say is absolutely baseless “pseudoscience.”

These critics are physical anthropologist Bernard R. Ortiz de Montellano, Ph.D., at Wayne State University in Detroit, and historian Barry Mehler, at Ferris State University, in Big Rapids. The two theories they have scrutinized critically are Melaninism and Afrocentrism.

Melaninism holds that black people have more of the natural brown-black pigment melanin in their skins and brains, and hence are kinder, stronger, and smarter than white people — and also possess melanin-related paranormal powers that put them in close touch with the universe.

Whites Are Put Down

Afrocentrism holds that all civilization stems from black Africa and that the Egyptian pharaohs — in all their glory — were black. White people, who are inferior, are all descendants of albino mutants, whose characters came to match the cold, harsh northern climes to which they adapted.

These theories have been advanced by Minister Louis Farrakhan’s recently-demoted spokesman in the Nation of Islam, Khalid Abdul Muhammad — who is scheduled to speak at Trenton College, in New Jersey, on Feb. 28 — and by the Black Studies chairman at City College of New York, Leonard Jeffries, Ph.D. Other proponents, according to Ortiz de Montellano, are psychiatrists Frances Cress Welsing, M.D., of Washington, D.C., and Richard King, M.D., of San Francisco State University, and two San Francisco psychologists Wade Nobles, Ph.D., and Neferkare Stewart.

In a detailed biochemical and genetic analysis of their theories in the 1993 Yearbook of Physical Anthropology (vol. 36, pages 33-58), Ortiz de Montellano shows, from the scientific literature, that blacks and whites have the same amount of melanin in their brains, and that brain melanin concentrations are wholly independent of skin color. He also shows that a related substance, human melatonin, which also figures heavily in the melanists’ claims, has no demonstrable physiologic function and no relationship to skin color; if anything, he notes, whites have more melatonin than blacks.

White Racists Cited

Ortiz de Montellano says that “none of the . . . melanists has done or is doing actual laboratory research on melanin.” Instead, they obtain their information by tying together bits out of the medical literature and diverse other texts on Egypt and the New Age, some of which, ironically, were written by virulent white racists. He says that the two theories are not science, not even bad science, but non-science:

“Their lack of validity is clear.”

But they are extremely dangerous, he added, because under the cover of “multiculturalism,” Afrocentric texts have been inserted into grade school curricula in Washington, D.C., Detroit, Atlanta, Portland and other school systems. He says:

“Minorities are presently under-represented in science, and the situation can only be made worse by teaching pseudoscience instead of science, and by fostering a credulous acceptance of unsupported statements, rather than developing critical thinking.”

Myth Is ‘Brilliant’

Historian Mehler, who started out studying white racism, has refocused his efforts on the burgeoning — and he believes highly dangerous — black racism and antisemitism. He concurs with Ortiz de Montellano that Afrocentric science has no credibility: “none whatsoever.” He says, too, that melanism is “brilliant” when seen as a counter myth to the white racism that has for centuries been based — unscientifically and unjustly — on black skin color. But, Mehler adds:

“It’s black supremacy to try to deal with black inferiority issues by projecting a counter myth of black superiority.”

Mehler, who has been attacking Abdul Muhammad since he spoke at Ferris State several years ago, is annoyed that it was not until the Anti-Defamation League recently published the Nation of Islam spokesman’s Kean College, N.J., speech as a full page ad in the New York Times that academics and others have rallied to challenge his doctrine of hate.

“Academics are very timid people!” Mehler complained in a recent phone interview.

“The argument I’ve heard is that melanism and black racism boosts self-esteem — and if they do, it’s good.” Mehler disagrees. He said black racism harms both sides, but it harms blacks most of all.

“It makes success in academic life more difficult,” he said.

Ortiz de Montellano concludes: “These theories, with their corollaries of a ‘plot to destroy black men,’” will “contribute to widening the gap between the races in this country.”

Science Sells

“Minister Farrakhan’s arguments are religious or philosophical, but melanists claim to be scientific. This is an important distinction, because science is the secular religion of the 20th century. In our society, scientific explanations have more epistemological credibility. This is why people . . . cloak their wares in pseudoscientific verbiage.”

— Ortiz de Montellano, in Yearbook of Physical Anthropology (1993)

March 1, 1994
Ethical questions raised:

Infertility Patients Say They Would Give Their Extra Embryos to Basic Research

The major opposition to research and clinical treatment using human embryos continues to come from the Catholic church, based on its institutional view that a human embryo, like a human fetus, is a person. But significant ethical concerns also have been raised by Catholics and many others that are separate and distinct from the Church's blanket condemnation.

An animal rights activists might say that experiments on embryonic mice, rats, and monkeys are unethical. But most other people consider humans unique — and worthy of greater respect and ethical concern than other species. So they might sanction experiments on rat embryos that they would not permit on human ones.

The NIH Human Embryo Research Panel is trying to decide what is — and what is not — ethically acceptable experimentation on human embryos: where to draw the line.

Social Context Stressed

Panelist Dorothy Nelkin, a sociologist at New York University, in Manhattan, said that the guidelines, which she hopes will be "imbedded" in "a social and political context," must address three concerns: the source of the embryos; the purpose of the experiment; and the procedures that would be used.

One question panelists raised was: Would you want your embryo to be used for research — meaning that it then would be discarded?

This question was asked of two witnesses, a man and a woman; each is part of an infertile couple that has sought a child through in vitro fertilization (IVF). They thus can be assumed to place a high personal value, as well as a monetary one, on any embryos that were conceived in vitro, but then turned not to be needed, once a pregnancy had been achieved and carried to term.

The man, Rick Sellers, said he and his wife would "enthusiastically" contribute their extra embryos to basic research.

The woman, Mrs. Jolene Hall Slotter, reported, with considerable emotion, that IVF had worked, and that she now was pregnant:

"I have frozen embryos [at the IVF facility]. I would assume that my husband and I will try to have a second child, and most likely we'll have to go that route [again, using these embryos]. We decided that if something should happen to either one of us, and we do not . . . do that, [then] those embryos are slated to be given for research."

Pro-Life . . .

continued from page 1

a profound duty to see if this kind of information can be used for human good."

She and other panelists and consultants explained that benefit, in terms of basic knowledge and medical advances, can be predicted with greater surety in this field than in many others. One reason is the progress that has been made abroad during the U.S. moratorium. Also, much has been learned from experiments in mice and other animals that may be readily transferable to humans.

What is more, veterinarians have already tested several promising methods for "assisted reproduction" in cattle and other large mammals that could be tailored for humans if the panel and NIH give them a go-ahead.

The panel is made up of medical, scientific, ethical, and legal experts; it is headed by political scientist Steven Muller, Ph.D., a past president of Johns Hopkins University, in Baltimore. The panel was charged by NIH's new director, Harold Varmus, M.D., with advising the agency as to which type of experiments are acceptable for federal funding; which need further study; and which are not acceptable. He also requested guidelines for conducting the acceptable studies.

Pro-life supporters made their earlier attacks specifically to prevent research on IVF — which they still oppose. The pro-life movement and the Catholic Church are the major institutional opponents of research on human embryos and fetuses, in what is widely seen as a second front in their battle against legalized abortion.

The Clinton administration successfully nullified the road-blocking regulations in legislation last year.

Deadline Is Short

The new NIH panel, which must recommend research guidelines by early summer, is the next step toward new funding. Meanwhile, NIH officials said, researchers already have submitted three dozen grant applications for these studies.

Varmus and other NIH officials stressed that these studies only could be conducted under strict ethical purview, based on the panel's forthcoming guidelines. But they also made it abundantly clear that they think the American people support this work, and they are determined to go forward. NIH officials said that the research has a better chance to go forward this time continued on next page

Embryo's Time Line

Day 1: Conception. Roughly 24 hours from sperm's entry into ovum to conceptus's division into two cells.

Days 2-3: 2-cell blastomere redivides to 16 or 32 cells.

Days 4-7: Embryo reorganizes around a central cavity, attaches itself to uterine wall.

Days 8-14: Embryo puts out placenta, which burrows into uterine wall, completing implantation.

Day 15: So-called "primitive streak" that will become spinal cord appears.

— adapted from NIH panel resource material

Page 4
Foreign Countries, Now Ahead of U.S., Provide Models for Embryo Regulations

Research abroad on in vitro fertilization (IVF) and other research and clinical uses of human embryos has advanced far beyond that in the U.S., where scientists have been hamstrung by a 14-year moratorium on federal funding (See story, p. 1).

The more advanced nations already have confronted and dealt with the thorny ethical questions that this use of human material entails. So their decisions are available, as models for the NIH’s new Human Embryo Research Panel.

A cross-cultural analysis of policies and policy-making on embryo research was presented to the panel by attorney Lori B. Andrews, J.D., of the Kent-Chicago College of Law, in Chicago. She and a colleague surveyed nine European countries plus Canada and Australia — and discovered a great diversity of legal do’s and don’ts. But the countries’ rule-making procedures were very similar.

“All 11 countries undertook a preliminary review of the ethical and legal issues raised by new reproductive technologies before drafting or enacting legislation,” Andrews reported. “In each country, legislative response was preceded by a study or report issued by an existing or newly created national commission, government agency, and/or other interest group.”

Public Views Sought

The public was consulted directly in some countries. Switzerland, for example, held a referendum, and eventually passed a constitutional amendment “restricting” the uses of “assisted procreative technologies.” Other nations used comparable policy-building methods, but ended up with more liberal policies.

Surprisingly, Spain, a Catholic country, has no restrictions on fetal research. But Norway, which is Protestant, forbids it. England and Canada are liberal in allowing this research; Australia, which is culturally similar, is not.

Among the 11 surveyed nations, Andrews and her co-investigator, Nanette Elster report:

• 4 countries permit twinning, the division of an early embryo into two parts, that will develop into two separate, genetically-identical individuals. This is the method that created an uproar when a preliminary experiment was described on Page one of the New York Times last year (PROBE, Jan.).

• 6 countries permit genetic diagnosis of an embryo prior to implantation in the woman in order to screen out those carrying a severe inherited trait, such as Tay-Sachs disease.

• 10 countries allow experimental in vitro fertilization methods; Norway does not.
• all except Switzerland permit frozen preservation of embryos.
• 5 of the 11 appear to permit basic scientific research on human embryos, meaning that the embryo would subsequently be destroyed.

Some countries ban cloning of human embryos, the creation of human-animal hybrids, and the placement of human embryos into nonhuman surrogate mothers.

Analyst Andrews attributes the diversity in national rules to the climate of opinion in a country when the rules were proposed. “It is the factor of community acceptance which gives rise to the difference in approaches,” she told the NIH panelists. “Diverse ethical, philosophical, social, and religious views have been considered by the various nations, and accommodated to develop the most effective, workable policy.”

Charge That Embryologists Seek Ape Surrogate Moms Is Called Monkey Business

In a written statement to the NIH panel, pro-life spokesman Richard Doerflinger castigated researchers who “can seriously consider gestating human embryos in ‘alternate’ sites such as ‘surrogate men’ and ‘nonhuman primates.’”

The advocate he cited was Princeton University molecular biologist Lee M. Silver, Ph.D., who testified before a subcommittee of the House Committee on Government Operations, on July 14, 1988.

In the congressional transcript of his statement, Silver describes several areas of reproductive technology that “could occur,” among them “the possibility of alternate sites for gestation, including surrogate men and nonhuman primates.” Silver notes that these are “speculative” ideas, and says that gestating an embryo in a man is not presently feasible because of complications from the growth of placental tissue in his abdominal wall. Of the second, animal surrogate, he says: “[T]his is one technology that I hope is never used.”

Silver warned the legislators that “it is important to protect children-to-be from the dangers that could result from the practices of the new reproductive technologies.”

Nowhere in this testimony does Silver “seriously consider” using the surrogate methods, or cite anyone who has, as Doerflinger alleged last month.

In a phone interview Silver said he had been asked to brief Congress on “theoretical” possibilities for embryo research. “I never meant to imply that anyone is thinking about doing this,” he added.

He said Doerflinger’s use of his words was a “falsehood.”

March 1, 1994
‘Scientific Misconduct’ Reaches a Turning Point

The debacle of the Office of Research Integrity (ORI) dropping its long, noisy case against AIDS researcher Robert Gallo has prompted significant rethinking of the crusade against scientific misconduct. The articles here suggest some of these new directions. — D.R.Z.

**Explanation Provided**

What the leadership was trying to say, she explained, is that "there seems to be a great deal of confusion in the government about what constitutes charges of misconduct." Specifically, she said, the "poor" performance of the Public Health Service's Office of Research Integrity in these cases has blurred the "categories of behavior that are appropriate for governmental investigation, and the standards of evidence that should be used in supporting charges of misconduct."

The Academy's 1992 report, she noted, defined scientific misconduct narrowly as "falsification, fabrication and plagiarism." But "other" bad behaviors were relegated to a lower category of wrongdoing — misdemeanors so to speak — that should be handled by the scientific community, not the courts or the government. In the federal government's current working definition, however, the "other" misdeeds are treated at the highest level, as misconduct.

Chalk added: "We're saying that the process the government has established at present does not seem to be achieving the goals for which it was established. And, we're saying that the community of scientists that will be governed by this has to develop an apparatus that can be understood by all those who have to live within it."

**Cheating Is Science's Business, But**

Do we approve of scientific misconduct?

**Probe opinion**

PROBE, from its inception, has criticized the drive for "scientific integrity." We've said it's politicized, unjust, and inept. We have insisted that its procedures — which have been short on legal due process — could not stand judicial scrutiny. So, we have been pleased, and not at all surprised, that the bellwether case against AIDS virologist Robert Gallo, M.D., was hastily dropped the moment before it was to be exposed to judicial review.

Does this mean that we approve or applaud bad science and cheating?

Not at all! In fact, we once spent the better part of five years researching and writing a book on a case of scientific misconduct (*Rh, The Intimate History of a Disease and Its Conquest. New York: Macmillan, 1973*). The issue there, as in the conflict between Gallo and the French AIDS researchers, was: Who deserves credit for a major medical discovery — in that case the Rh vaccine — and, hence, a shot at the Nobel gold.

We discovered in Rh, and we think the same finding applies to the discovery of the AIDS virus, that major credit was — is — due to both of the competing research teams. Both teams have won the right to science's and society's highest acclaim.

The Nobel prize and other prestigious scientific awards are important but usually uncited factors in the research integrity debate: These prizes embody science's value judgments about scientific research and the researchers who do it. Some scientists pooh-pooh the prizes' importance. Our sense of it, from continued on next page
**Is Doing Science Like Making Sausage?**

Radiologist Paul J. Friedman, M.D., is a leading proponent of research integrity. He is the medical dean for academic affairs at the University of California, San Diego, and was a member of the committee on the responsible conduct of research of the Institute of Medicine, an arm of the National Academy of Sciences. He was an advisor to the Public Health Service on the predecessor agency to its Office of Research Integrity (ORI). Friedman participated in the American Association for the Advancement of Science’s practicum on misconduct last autumn, (PROBE, Dec.). We asked him for a status report on research integrity in light of ORI’s embarrassing failure in the Popovic and Gallo cases.

**Friedman:** This movement is not monolithic. It consists of those seeking evidence of wrongdoing, those anxious to monitor standards of behavior, and those more interested in training the next generation of scientists to higher standards.

The abandonment of the Gallo case obviously will affect these groups differently. The one that I have the most hope for — the last — will not be adversely affected.

**PROBE:** You have said there is genuine need to stimulate honesty in research. Do you see a way to achieve this without the current threat of federal disciplinary action by ORI?

**Friedman:** The change in perception of the need for ethical standards in research would have come about gradually without federal pressure. But it was certainly accelerated because of Congress and, later, ORI.

**PROBE:** Should intent be part of the definition of scientific misconduct?

**Friedman:** Yes, for the same reason that it is in criminal law. There are many grades of culpability for a given bad situation, and a lot depends on what was in the mind of the perpetrator.

**PROBE:** How can intent be proved?

**Friedman:** It can be proved in scientific misconduct the same way it is in criminal law: A jury of peers (the investigative committee) decides what was in the mind of the accused, based on testimony and the facts of the situation. It is as simple and as difficult as that, but it is not impossible.

**PROBE:** You once proposed a “sunset mechanism” to phase ORI out. How should this be done — and what should be left after its passing?

**Friedman:** It would work the same way other sunset mechanisms do. If I understand matters correctly, the sponsoring agency has to justify the existence of a program by showing its accomplishments and the further need for the program. This gets worked over by the higher level administrators, and, if applicable, is reviewed by the administration and congressional budget people.

**PROBE:** While ORI has been severely set back in the cases it has brought, Congress now mandates its existence. What, if anything, do you think its role should be?

**Friedman:** ORI has the mandate to back up universities — and that includes stiffening their spines — when they deal with allegations of misconduct, and draw conclusions about these allegations. ORI is also mandated to support and sponsor educational efforts to improve responsible conduct of research.

That’s all fine!

It just has to be done with real-world perspective, and understanding of how science is done. It is not appropriate or effective to manipulate the definitions of what is being regulated, in order to make it easier to convict people in court. Let’s not criminalize research!

Maybe doing science is like making sausage meat:

You have to keep it clean — but not sterilize it to death!

---

**Crime Belongs to the Law**

Interviewing hundreds of them, is that the Nobel prize has the same inspirational — and also normative — influence on scientists that the Olympic gold medal does for athletes.

These prizes also prompt cheating. But for the Nobel judges, as for Olympic ones, cheating and poor sportsmanship are potential disqualifiers. So, beyond their ordinary obligation to truthfulness, scientists have strong reason to play by the rules.

But, it is argued, misconduct is common, especially in the lower echelons, where scientists can’t aspire to Nobel glory. And this is becoming more common. So what is to be done?

The method set up by Congress uses the federal government’s threat of defunding individual researchers and their institutions as a club. It directs institutions that receive federal money to provide local policing, with ORI, as, roughly, the FBI.

Medical schools, most of which are part of major universi-
Cheating... continued from previous page

sent to jail. No science court is needed to punish them.

Are they a menace? In part. But the idea that one or even a handful of fraudulent “discoveries” will change medical practice if published in reputable journals is far fetched. For drugs, for example, it may take hundreds, even thousands of studies, from diverse specialists, before a new agent is approved. FDA examines this work meticulously before saying Go!

In short, we think the risks of scientific misconduct have been vastly overstated, often by scientific administrators who believe that a holier-than-thou profile will placate Congress, and so keep the grants flowing. This is an unrealistic standard, particularly for this corrupt age, and only invites further re-
crimination when the scientific community is unable to meet it.

We hope that the National Academy of Sciences and other leadership groups are able to instill a greater respect for fair and appropriate procedures in upcoming young scientists. We hope, too, that this topic is removed from the political realm.

Varmus: Indict Crooks, Not Jerks

“I don’t agree that we should be considering deviations from normal behavior as objects of persecution or prosecution. . . . To me, scientific misconduct is really clear: It’s fraud, it’s plagiarism, falsification, fabrication. ‘We might be safer in sending all this to the courts, being clear that the distinction between jerks and crooks is a very important one. . . . I don’t want to take a jerk to court. I’ll take a crook to court.” — Harold Varmus to D.C. Science Writers Assn., Feb. 9

---

AMERICAN SURGEONS have come out in favor of the single-payer health plan. The American College of Surgeons points out that government already sets doctors’ fees, through Medicare and Medicaid schedules. So government might just as well pay the bills — from taxes — cutting out the costly middlemen: the insurers. Patients’ choice of doctors and their joint choice of treatments would be preserved.

The American Medical Association (AMA), as usual, has its head in the sand, favoring an insurance-based plan that is more conservative than the President’s. If other medical specialty groups were to follow the surgeons, and not AMA, they just might trigger a wave of public opinion for single-payer.

This plan “will save the most money,” says Sen. Tom Harkin (D) of Iowa. But, he adds, “I don’t think the country is ready for single-payer!”

Maybe he — and the Clintons — are wrong.

THE ECUMENICAL SPIRIT has touched the American Psychiatric Association: It has added a new category of mental condition to the forthcoming edition of its catalogue of mental states, called the DSM-IV.

“This category can be used when the [patient’s] focus of attention is a religious or spiritual problem,” such as a “loss or questioning of faith,” the diagnostic and statistical manual declared.

Freud, who viewed religious beliefs as illusion, must be turning over in his grave! Quipped one psychiatrist whom we know:

“So the voices [St.] Joan heard really were God!!

RESEARCH ON SEX and reproduction raises tough questions for scientists to solve (See Page I). One such puzzle, says veterinarian Wendell Niemann, of New York University, is why 50,000 sperm are required in order for one of them to find and fertilize one egg. The answer, according to Niemann:

“Guys simply won’t ask directions!”