Irrationalists Are Flayed! But Scientists Duck the Big Question: What’s Next?

The long-awaited and much ballyhooed conference, "The Flight from Science and Reason," unfolded last month in Manhattan. The sponsor was the New York Academy of Sciences.

The meeting grew out of the ground-breaking book Higher Superstition (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins) by biologist Paul R. Gross, Ph.D., and mathematician Norman Levitt, Ph.D. The two authors planned and chaired the three-day conference.

The main themes — of science, scientific medicine, rationality, and critical thinking under siege from the irrationalist Left — are well known to PROBE readers.

The hazardous reality of these attacks is clear to Gross and Levitt, and to the three dozen speakers they assembled to report on different manifestations of the irrationalist onslaught. This point also was understood and appreciated by many, but by no means all, of the 200 registrants.

For some participants the conference was a wake-up call. "This is the first time I've heard about this level of alarm in the scientific community," biology graduate student Jon. S. Swersey, of the State University of New York at Binghamton, declared.

Debate Asked

Other participants took umbrage at the speakers' counterattacks on academic multiculturalism and political fundamentalism. They demanded to know why the differences between science and its critics were not being openly debated before them.

Gross answered, testily, that for a dozen years or more he and his point of view, like that of other conference speakers, have been uninvited and unrepresented at meetings controlled by deconstructionists, Afro-centrists, feminist scientists, and exponents of other such irrational systems. This, Gross declared, was his — and his side's — meeting; he saw no reason to invite his antagonists. He described this position as "scientific realism."

"It's not the constructionists who need a venue," he angrily declared. "It's us! "We are the oppressed, folks" he said. "We have to find a voice!"

Added co-chairman Levitt, at a press conference: This is a "platform" for us to attack the "irrationality" of science's multiculturalist and deconstructionist foes.

As reported, expertly and accurately, by Malcolm W. Browne in the New York Times (June 6) "many scientists believe their backs are to the wall, and . . . [the] worried . . . participants in the meeting . . . resolved to start fighting back." Public trust in
Medical Rights Activists Decide to Regroup After a Sentimental 30th Reunion Dinner

In 1965, scores of young physicians and other health workers went south, under the aegis of the Medical Committee for Human Rights (MCHR). They provided services and support for southern black civil rights activists and northern students and others who came to join their equal rights crusade.

Last month, marking the 30th anniversary of these dramatic endeavors, MCHR veterans gathered at the New York Academy of Medicine, in Manhattan, for a reunion. They swapped stories. Held hands. And sang some of the old songs together.

The gathering was organized by psychiatrist Josephine Martin, M.D., of New York City, and several co-workers. The

Research Burning: MCHR has been fairly quiescent in the last decade, Martin said. But, she added, after a small organizational meeting the following morning:

"We're going to become alive again."

It was a "unanimous" decision, added family physician Robert Smith, M.D., an MCHR founder and the director of the Mississippi Family Health Center, in Jackson. "A lot has changed" in 30 years, much of it for the better, he added, by phone. But there are areas — including infant mortality, AIDS, violence, and access to care — that "still need additional emphasis."

Reorganizing Foreseen

The decision to reanimate MCHR is being pursued, the group's ad hoc chairman, internist John Hollomon, M.D., said by phone two weeks later.

"There certainly is a latent and important reservoir of interest in quality health care for all Americans," Hollomon, who directs the Manhattan's William Ryan Center, declared. "I think the idea of having large numbers of Americans without access to health care is abhorrent — and not in the country's best interests!"

He added:

"We are in the process of regrouping. Almost without exception, there has been an interest in going forward, to establish the moral high ground and provide leadership in the struggle."

Single-Payer Is Focus

The focus for MCHR and other activist organizations, some of whose leaders attended the Manhattan meeting, is the substitution of a single-payer health care system for the current — and, they say, cruel — approach, based on private insurance and HMOs. They say it leaves 40 million Americans without medical coverage.

A West Coast MCHR leader who attended the meeting, Sacramento, Cal. psychiatrist William Bronston, M.D., said continued on page 6

Follow-Up...

Research Burning: Science magazine has published a Pollyannaish special on "conduct," as distinct from misconduct, in science (June 23). Prominently featured is "Ken" Pimple, Ph.D., of Indiana University, whom the mag tags as an anthropologist, but who was identified to us as a "folklorist" when we called there to find out his specialty earlier this year.

Pimple, Science rhapsodically reports, is teaching scientists to teach other (presumably) younger scientists all about research ethics.

Our interest in Kenneth Pimple was stimulated by his deprecatory postings on the Sci-fraud bulletin board, where we have been lurking. Given Science's lionizing of his simplistic message — "that there may be no absolute right answers, but there certainly are wrong answers" in research ethics — we're reprinting here a piece of a Pimple Sci-fraud posting from the Feb. PROBE:

"I think that burning fraudulent scientific findings might be more effective than burning literature and other works of art . . . ."

Bill Moyers Redux: When journalist Bill Moyers produced his deceptive TV special "Healing and the Mind," with an accompanying, soon-to-be-best-selling book, we were virtually alone — along with James Watson, of the Double Helix — in calling it nonsense (PROBE, March, '93). Middle-brow commentators gushed at Moyers' insights.

He now has published a new TV-based tome, The Festival of Life (Doubleday). It's on poetry. This time, however, Moyers on is, what is for the literati, more familiar ground.

They are blasting the book.

Harvard poetry expert Helen Vendler, writing in the New York Times Book Review (June 18), said:

"Moyers' style of interviewing was formed by television, with its abhorrence of analytic talk. So each interview is relentlessly diverted from the discussion of poetry itself to human-interest topics, which usually produce statements of thoughtless banality."

We wish the Times and others who boosted Healing and the Mind into best-sellerdom had been comparably critical.

Page 2
Science Budgets Crudely Chopped, Clinton Aide Says

The President’s science advisor, John Gibbons, foresees “extraordinary changes” — for the worse — as a result of the severe budgetary restrictions now on the table in Congress.

“The world turns,” Gibbons sadly told civic and scientific leaders at a New York Academy of Sciences policy lunch last month. It’s turning away from research and science, he said — and decades may pass before it turns back in their favor.

All areas will suffer from the proposed 30% reduction in spending, Gibbons said, not just basic research. Frustrating collaborations between government and industry to develop new findings also are being destroyed.

Cuts Foreseen

His demeanor throughout his half-hour address was one of distress. Congress is using “garden shears,” he said, “not scissors and scalpel” in its budget cutting.

These are “the most drastic cuts to basic science that our generation has ever seen,” Gibbons declared. In the practical realm, Congress is destroying applied systems, including weather satellites and radar that “save lives” of American people.

In response to questions, Gibbons scotched hopes that industry will step into the breach. Some companies are helping, by placing public service ads urging Congress to continue supporting basic studies, he noted. But it’s “pie in the sky” to expect corporations, now under intense stockholder pressure for profits, to make major investments in basic science — much of which could not even be patented.

Explanation Is Offered

Asked why the new Congress is so refractory, Gibbons replied:

• Many members have never held public office.
• Most have never done scientific research.
• They don’t understand the role that public investments play in advancing the private sector.

Science itself is not blameless, Gibbons said. It has done a very poor job of making its case for support to the American people. Now, he said, it may be too late.

Leaders Defaulting; Scientists Must Act

Institutional leaders of biomedical science have bit a bitter bullet. They’ve accepted the reality that federal research funding is being cut, and will be cut more deeply in the years ahead. Or, perhaps it’s the other way around: Only administrators who can accept this reality are now being selected, in the Darwinian sense, for scientific leadership roles.

Either way, it’s bad news. The leaders’ acquiescence sends a clear message to the troops: The leaders lack faith in their ability to carry the battle for sustained spending, and the benefits that almost certainly will accrue from it, to the media, public, government — and Congress.

Many thoughtful scientists believe the only basis for level or increased spending would be greater public support. This in turn, they believe, requires improved public understanding of science. But, since they — we — all seem thus far to have failed this task, they fear they have lost the funding battle.

For the moment, maybe they have. But resurrection of federally-supported science, which has been one of America’s most valuable enterprises in the past half century, can’t and shouldn’t wait upon public approbation. Scientific spending — and progress — rarely have. Rather, the message needs to be carried by all scientists directly to the politicians whom they know or can reach, and to the power elite.

Where could — should — the money come from, since it can’t come from new taxes? A decade ago, the proposal to cut the military budget would have been seen as being soft on communism and the Soviets.

But they’re gone. We won. The military budget, nevertheless, still is close to $260 billion a year. The amount needed to relieve the biomedical research famine is about $10 billion per year.

Some elitists among scientific leaders say that much current research is third rate, and won’t be missed. Greater care should be taken, they say, to select and pay only for the best.

Progress Unpredictable

History shows, however, that scientific discovery still is serendipitous. It was remarked, for example, at a recent science policy meeting at the New York Academy of Sciences that research showing that duodenal ulcers is an infectious disease — caused by a microorganism that responds to common antibiotics — would not win federal funding today. Yet it is a major medical advance.

Similarly, we vividly recall that even in the mid-60s, the heyday of NIH research funding, proposals for a preventive vaccine against Rh disease in newborns (erythroblastosis fetalis) initially found no favor in Bethesda. Some money, fortunately, was found in the New York City budget — a source that since has dried up.

Yet, the Rh vaccine has turned out to be one of the neatest, cleanest “magic bullets” in the last half century of clinical research. Hundreds of thousands of infants have been saved from sickness and death; millions of families have been relieved of the specter of repeated tragic births.

Researchers rarely can predict in advance where it all will come out. They need financial support, in advance, from government — the people’s representative. The American public almost surely will benefit from their discoveries.
Scientists Failing to Defend Themselves Against Delegitimation, Conferees Told

We can't do justice here to the complexity of a dense, three-day academic conference. Texts were not provided to reporters covering the "Flight from Science and Reason" meeting. We have since seen some of them. Some speakers' 25-page papers are more forceful and coherent than the far briefer excerpts they presented orally.

Fortunately, the proceedings will soon be published by the New York Academy of Sciences; we will tell readers when they become available. Meanwhile, here are a few of the highlights:

**Scientists Called 'Timid'**

Most scientists and their professional societies have displayed "timidity and ineffectiveness" in combating anti-rationalists' attacks on their legitimacy. Harvard science historian Gerald Holton, Ph.D., issued this charge, ridiculing the "feebleness" of his colleagues' efforts to "understand the attacks, and oppose them."

In Holton's view, the "romantic rebellion" that has swept the West in recent decades is "part of an evolutionary mechanism by which cultures are formed." As such, he said, it can't be condemned. Science's weak response, rather, is his concern.

Science played a major role in winning World War II and preserving western democracy, Holton recalled. So one might expect it to fare well in the years since. The paradox, he said, is that it has not.

At some prestigious colleges, the Harvard historian noted, only 2 of 32 full-semester required courses are in math and science — about 6% of the collegians' educational experience.

 nihilism, science is gone."

**Politics Enter Picture**

Earlier in this century, Gilkey noted, fundamentalism was apolitical. It claimed absolute authority over its adherents. But it left others alone.

What is new and alarming today, he said, is that fundamentalism has been politicized. Now it claims to represent "normal America," which it plans to remake into a Christian nation.

This intrusive and exclusionist agenda is embodied as "Creation Science." It also is manifest in the linking of conservative politics and economics to "real" Christianity, and in current militarism and nationalism. This theocratic agenda is implicit in the current upsurge of racism and sexism.

The First Amendment, Gilkey said, is now Americans' one bulwark against this fundamentalist onslaught.

"When reason is expropriated," Gilkey declared, "then its role as a constructive and creative force in society is destroyed. This, he reiterated, is more dangerous even than the current forms of cultural anti-science."

When the assumptions of liberal culture are eroded, Gilkey warned, theocracy reigns.

**Theologian . . .**

*continued from page 1*

reason] is gone, science is gone."

**Liberalism Linked to Science**

"Liberalism and science are both products of the Enlightenment," University of Chicago political scientist Simon Jackman, Ph.D., reminded the conferees. "Perhaps even more strongly," he added, "taken together, liberalism and science define what it is we refer to as 'the Enlightenment.'"

Jackman was willing to concede that the deconstructionists are correct in saying that science and liberalism are "socially constructed" — and hence are relativistic.

This is not, however, a fatal flaw, as some of science's defenders fear, Jackman said. The reason is that these disciplines are deeply rooted in public opinion. This changes through time, but only slowly. When measured objectively, public understanding has some more or less durable elements.

Liberalism is resilient to changes in public opinion, Jackman said. So may be science. Scientists can learn from liberalism's experience that the concession that one's thinking, broadly speaking, is a social construction need not be a lethal challenge.

**Ban Charlatanism!**

In earlier times, before the 1960s, mysticism, anti-intellectualism, and intellectual deceit were kept out of Universities. Now, they're in. But epistemologist Mario Bunge, Ph.D., of McGill University, in Montreal, wants to expel them.

*continued on page 6*
PROBE Opinion:

Time for Politics; Leadership Needed

We don’t like politics. PROBE is nonpartisan.
On some issues, like intellectual and scientific freedom, we find ourselves allied with the Right. On others, like the availability of quality health care, we agree with the Left. We’re always against political correctness. But:

- Science is in disastrous shape, and the forces that should speak for it — such as the American Association for the Advancement of Science — have their heads in the clouds. (See stories, pp. 1, 3, 4-5).
- Medicine is similarly besieged, as insurance companies and HMOs gobble up the one industry — health care — that has remained profitable through the past decade’s upheavals. (See stories, pp. 2-3.)

The effect of this grab on doctors, patients, and the doctor-patient relationship is clearly disastrous. Congress’ gesture, of trying to prohibit hospitals from discharging new mothers and their babies by nightfall, overlooks a myriad of other cost-cutting scams.

Finally, America’s world supremacy has been based on scientific and technological triumphs, as well as on nuclear might. So, to destroy this infrastructure, as the youngish Republican Congress now is doing, is not merely shooting oneself in the foot. It’s shooting oneself in the head.

Thoughtful and caring citizens, in other words, have no choice now but to become engaged, or re-engaged in a struggle to preserve and extend America’s modernity and its commitment to its citizens’ well-being. Research and health care professionals have an added obligation: Their jobs, careers, and ideals are at stake.

We know a little bit about political tactics. But political strategy is not our metier. We don’t know what — if anything — can be done to reverse current trends. But we do know that the effort must be made.

Leadership therefore is the critical issue today. Science, medicine, and their constituencies — which is all of us — need leaders. Smart ones. Honest ones. Committed ones.

These leaders undoubtedly know, or suspect they know, who they are. They need to step forward.

Their is not an easy or pleasant obligation. But when people have their backs to the wall, the willingness to step forward and resist is the highest civic virtue.

— David R. Zimmerman

Irrationalists . . .

continued from page 1

Science is at stake, Browne reported. Democracy, which similarly depends on reason, also is threatened, he quoted participants as saying.

Next Steps in Doubt

Speakers and audience participants repeatedly asked, but did not answer the question: What is to be done? Specifically: Should their counterattack be purely intellectual? Or should it be political, as well?

The conference unfortunately was not structured to resolve, or indeed even to broadly debate this critical issue. By the time an opportunity finally arose, at the end of the third long, hot day, most participants were exhausted; many had left. So the issue remains unresolved. (We’ll report highlights of this discussion in August.)

Biologist Gross (somewhat to our surprise) set a non-political course in his keynote comments.

“’This is not a political meeting,’” he declared.

Rather, he explained, the conference was devoted to examining the broadest possible range of current irrationalism. This goal was successfully fulfilled, with reports from language, the social sciences, mathematics, and philosophy, as well as from science.

The widely-spread irrationalism, Gross said, is “troublesome, perhaps dangerous” to all disciplines “that depend on the skillful application of reason.”

Aims Described

Explaining his non-political stance several weeks later, in an interview in his office, at the University of Virginia, in Charlottesville, Gross explained:

The conference’s focus was the status of reason in higher education. While this attack now is coming from the Left, the speakers came from a gratifyingly wide range of the political spectrum from Left to Right.

Contrary to what some Left-wing critics have charged, Gross said, he and his associates are not part of some Right-wing conspiracy. Their aim is to be strictly nonpartisan.

Nevertheless, Gross explained, politics obviously enters into any discussion of cultural styles in institutions, including universities. So, sooner or later it must become part of researchers and scholars’ reaction to their irrationalist foes.
Scientists . . .
continued from page 4

He proposes academic truth squads, and a charter of intellectual academic rights and duties as tools with which to do so.
The test, Bunge said, is that anything, however unorthodox, can and should be studied in schools, provided it can be studied
and described on the basis of reason or experience.

"Every academic has the right and the duty to question anything that interests him, provided he does it in a rational
manner," Bunge said.

Academics must tolerate, even encourage all searches for truth, however eccentric, Bunge said, as long as they are based
in "reason or experience." But, he stressed, the counterculture and counterfeit culture should not be tolerated.

Duality Is Undeniable

"We are magical beings in a scientific age." As such,

Irrationalists . . .
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The opposing view, that the problem is directly political, and that political action is needed, now, was affirmed by conservative philosopher Barry Gross, Ph.D., of City College of New York (CUNY). He proposed an "organized, clever, coherent opposition" to the anti-science movement.

Speaking from the Left, sociologist Bogdan Denitch, Ph.D., also from CUNY, stated a stronger, and even more political case: Pat Buchanan and Pat Robertson are "the real dangers," Denitch declared, not post-modernism.

They must be resisted, Denitch said.

Medical . . .
continued from page 2

later by phone: The current health care crisis is inseparable from the broader hazard of uncaring, profit-oriented change
that is sweeping the U.S. under the new Republican Congress.

Americans have never been more challenged in their civil rights, or in their social right to quality, affordable health care, Bronston said.

He questioned whether MCHR is as yet committed and able to shoulder these tasks. The lead healthcare organization in this realm now, he explained, is Physicians for a National Health Program, headed by Chicago internist Quentin D. Young, M.D.

Ban Is Sought

What needs to be done, Young said in a phone interview, is to outlaw for-profit, publicly traded health care companies. They should be replaced by the much fairer, and profitless single-payer system.

An alliance of doctors, patients and decent politicians is needed to "turn back the tide," Young insisted. "More than any of the other tumultuous shifts in the nation, based on the

Right-wing ascendancy, this is the most threatening," Young said.

The first task, in psychiatrist Bronston's view, is to convene an emergency meeting of 60 to 80 top leaders of the health advocacy movement. At this summit, he said, a self-conscious, confident leadership should be formed. Its job, he said, should be to create alliances with mass organizations — including churches, school systems, women's groups, and civic and neighborhood groups — that are similarly committed to quality-of-life issues and social justice.

Looking Back

"Operation Head Start's Nursery program (here in) Mississippi . . . is [having] tremendous impact . . . in the communities. In spite of much organized and disorganized opposition from elements of the large white community [in Mayersville, Rolling Fork, and Issaquena county], the program has been nourished and is supported at the grassroots level. This is an example of realistic self-help at the local community level, with only the most limited direction and aid from outside. . . ."

— J. Martin, M.D., Robert Schwartz, Ph.D.,
to MCHR, July 15, 1965

Caveat emptor! — D.R.Z.

"Flights from reason take off in our day as frequently as planes from O'Hare."
— Theologian L. Gilkey, at "Flight from Science & Reason" conference, May 31

"Creationists are frequent flyers in the flight from reason."
— Educator Eugenie C. Scott, National Center for Science Education, El Cerrito, Calif.,
at the conference.
Homeopathic Drug Is Unlikely to Curb Itchy Vaginal ‘Yeast’

Vagisil®

This drug name may not mean much to men. But women may recognize it as the brand name for a line of over-the-counter (OTC) vaginal drug products sold to relieve itching, burning, and malodor.

We learned about Vagisil — which is made and sold by Combe, Inc., of White Plains, N.Y. — while writing the standard reference book, Zimmerman's Complete Guide to Nonprescription Drugs (Gale, 1992). Otherwise, we, too, would be clueless about it. Most Vagisil and Combe products meet, or are close to meeting the clear-cut Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requirements for scientifically proven safety and effectiveness. FDA, on Congress' orders, is imposing these consumer protection standards on all OTC, or non-prescription, drug products.

One such Combe product is Gynecom 10, a 1% hydrocortisone cream for external feminine itching and a variety of other symptoms, including poison ivy. Another is Vagisil Anti-Itch Creme, which contains benzocaine and resorcinol; Combe recommends it for relief of vaginal itching and irritation.

New Product Launched

What women may not have been prepared for is a new product: Vagisil Yeast Control suppositories for the relief of internal “yeast” infections. Combe introduced this product last year, packaged in blue, green, and yellow — colors also found on the anti-itch creme packaging. But there is a significant difference between them:

The new Vagisil has not been shown scientifically to be either safe or effective. It may not be. If it does work at all, this may be because more than 99.999% of Vagisil Yeast Control suppositories, according to the label, consists of an “inactive ingredient,” polyethylene glycol. This substance has been shown to be safe and effective for soothing delicate tissues elsewhere in the body, and so also may do so in the vagina.

The new Vagisil also is different from the older ones in this important respect: It is a homeopathic product. Based on the non-scientific homeopathic treatment principle that a little bit of a damaging or dangerous substance "tolerizes" the body against larger amounts of a similar substance, Vagisil Yeast Control suppositories are claimed to contain 0,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000% dilutions of each of three funguses, including Candida albicans, that are known to cause “yeast” infections.

Exemption Is Questioned

Combe can sell this product legally under an obscure proviso of the federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act that exempts homeopathic products from the safety and efficacy require-

ments for all other OTC and prescription drug products. (A group of quack-busters has asked FDA to end this exemption; the agency is studying their petition [PROBE, Oct. '94].)

Combe claims on the package that the Vagisil suppositories are "a new and natural way to stop the itching and burning caused by yeast infections" [emphasis in the original]. The product is "prepared homeopathically, [which] means it actually helps your body to help rid itself of the itching and burning fast . . . with gentle, all-natural remedies."

Based on FDA's standards for non-homeopathic OTC drugs, this is non-science. And nonsense.

As far as the company has any scientific studies to back its claim that the product relieves "yeast" symptoms, Combe public relations director, Anne York, said earlier this year: "There are none." She added: "I think that because it's a homeopathic product we don't have clinicals." York said that in test marketing, Combe had not found consumers to be confused between the Vagisil drug and Vagisil homeopathic products.

Demand Is Cited

"We feel that products like Vagisil Yeast Control, which rely on the principles of homeopathy, will continue to gain shelf space in mass retail outlets," York said, in an earlier phone conversation. "American consumers demand more alternatives to traditional health care, want to take more control, and become more pro-active about their own health."

Combe promotes the product in a news release headlined "Homeopathy Goes Mainstream — A New Yeast Control Remedy to Go with the Trend."

The FDA apparently was not aware of the new product until an agency official walked through his family room one day late last year, where his teenage daughter and friends were watching TV. A Vagisil Yeast Control commercial flashed onto the screen. Aren't you working on this kind of product? the daughter asked her father, Michael Kennedy, who is policy director of FDA's OTC drug division.

Kennedy, in a telephone interview, said FDA has since had "some discussions" about the product with Combe representa-

Warning Issued

Pharmacist standards setters recommended recently that homeopathic products that have not met FDA requirements for safety and efficacy — meaning all, or almost all of them — should not be recognized as "a standard of practice" by state boards of pharmacy.

The warning was issued by the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP); these boards license pharmacists in each state. The "Warning Regarding Homeopathy" was approved at its annual meeting, in Dallas.

The resolution was introduced by medicinal chemist John Block, Ph.D., of Oregon State University, in Corvallis. "I fully appreciate the fact that homeopathic remedies are legal," he said. "But that doesn't say that [they] are efficacious. There's a big difference between selling something and making claims that have not been proven by proper clinical trials."

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Vagisil...

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ivives. He declined to go into specifics. An agency spokesman, Brad Stone, said late last year, from Washington, that FDA was concerned about the homeopathic status of the product, and whether there might be "a potential for too much confusion" between the Vagisil products. "We're looking into it," he said.

Recently, a consumer safety officer in the agency's Non-traditional Drug Compliance Branch, Edward Miracco, said, by phone, from Rockville, Md., that he "was not overly concerned" about the homeopathic product, and is "not dealing with the issue" of confusion between the two Vagisil products.

An FDA spokeswoman, Ivy Kupec, confirmed early in June that because of the agency's lack of regulatory authority over homeopathics, and the absence of an "imminent" health threat, "we're not getting involved."

# # #

The launch of this unproven product is an affront to women's self-care efforts. First, because the product will not, and in fact does not even claim to cure the infection — which thus will almost certainly recur. Second, in recent years FDA has switched two safe and effective antifungals that will quickly cure yeast infections — clotrimazole and miconazole nitrate — from prescription (Rx) to nonprescription (OTC) status. Several other yeast-killers, including at least one new one, are available by prescription. These drugs usually stop the itching and burning — which can be maddeningly intense — within a day.

Peddling a "natural" homeopathic product that is unlikely to provide comparable relief thus is a disservice to women. — D.R.Z.

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