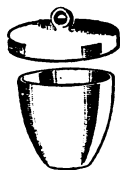


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FROM BRITAIN

## Radio-therapy simulator

A simulator on which can be planned a complete course of radio-therapy treatment has been developed by Fairey Engineering Ltd.

It is claimed it will duplicate all the movements involved in setting up major cobalt and other high energy treatment units, so that the treatment plan for each patient can be pre-determined. This will reduce the time the patient has to remain under the cobalt source and will allow a higher ratio of patients to be treated.

The simulator is of particularly rigid construction to minimize deflection, ensuring that accurate readings are obtained when the patient is finally placed under the isotopic source.

## Smoking and fetal damage

A disturbing relationship between smoking and a mother's blood pressure in pregnancy emerges from a survey made by C. S. Russell, head of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Sheffield University. He estimates that about four babies in every 1,000 pregnancies die as a result of the mother's smoking.

"The mothers with an overall blood pressure of 150/100 or more, who also smoked regularly, had an unsuccessful (abortion, still-birth, or neo-natal death) pregnancy outcome rate of 31 percent, compared with a rate of 14 percent for non-smokers in the same blood pressure group," Prof. Russell found.

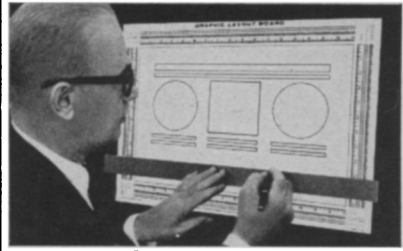
"The harmful effect may be simple poisoning, possibly by carbon monoxide, and this hypothesis is supported by the finding that the surviving babies of the smokers appeared to have a growth deficiency to make up," he says. "Certainly the rates of weight gain and rate of head circumference gain in the weeks immediately after birth were significantly higher in the babies born to smokers than in the babies born to non-smokers."

"It is quite certain that smoking reduces the weight of the baby," says Prof. Russell. "It is not too difficult to imagine that smoking, by lowering baby weight, could endanger life." He puts the lethal factor at about four per 1,000 pregnancies.

Smoking also increases the risk of premature delivery between the 28th and 36th weeks of pregnancy for those women who had some vaginal bleeding in early pregnancy, he finds.

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