

to the editor

Early 'malpractice' codes

Concerning your article "Revenge on bumbling physicians" (SN: 4/8/72, p. 232): Penalties for failures or infliction of harm by physicians were first codified in "The Code of Hammurabi," near 1750 B.C. but were of more ancient origin. Hippocrates, whose lineal professional descendants we strive to be did not live until some 13 or 14 centuries later, ca. 460-377 B.C., the date in much doubt. I do not recall that Hippocrates discussed malpractice litigation. His model was a way of life for physicians and his "Aphorisms" were clinical.

J. G. Olson, M.D.
Ogden, Utah

Compounds in meteorites

I speak for all the authors (Messrs. Zubovic, Chandler and Clarke), as well as for myself, when I tell you how delighted we were with your article "Did the seeds of life come from space?" (SN: 4/8/72, p. 231). It was accurate, interesting, and made exciting reading, even for my non-scientific family. Miss Purrett was a delight to talk to when she called me about our work and we thank both her and you for the excellence of your presentation.

I have been a reader of SCIENCE NEWS for about 11 years and have been very grateful for the journal as a source of background information in those areas with which I am unfamiliar.


Irving A. Breger
U.S. Geological Survey
Washington, D.C.

Pounds and kilos

Relative to "Congress measures metrication bills" (SN: 3/18/72, p. 182) manufacturers of scales for people to weigh themselves in the United States should put both pounds and kilos on the dial to lead the layman into that phase of the metric system.

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