

# science news<sup>®</sup> to the editor

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Incorporating Science News Letter

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**COVER:** A handful of species, including man, have been fertilized in the "test tube." Rats, mice and rabbits made in the lab have also been implanted in mothers and carried to birth. See p. 124. (Photo: Two lab-fertilized rabbit eggs moving from two-cell to four-cell stage. Courtesy Benjamin Brackett/Fertility and Sterility)

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## Causes of aggression

In "Aggression: A way of life for the Qolla" (SN: 2/3/73, p. 76) Ralph Bolton suggests that his studies of the incidence of hypoglycemia among the volatile Qolla Indians may have implications for groups living outside the Andes. He names, in particular, "American ghettos and other poverty areas where there are high levels of stress." Is Bolton suggesting that ghetto life tends to trigger problems with glucose homeostasis, or is he blaming the victim for reacting to social injustice? In the same issue, on page 73, Halsey Marsden reviews John B. Calhoun's classic study of the effects of overcrowding on a laboratory mouse population. When the population density reached the point that "there were no more social roles to fill, healthy young mice attempted to enter the system and were frustrated by the lack of social opportunities. They turned to aggression, conflict and perversion."

Admittedly mice are not people, but the problems of sorting out the environmental versus the physiological causes of aggressive behavior are underlined. A wealth of studies have shown that non-white citizens in our society are deprived of the opportunities to fulfill even a modicum of personal and economic development, that these restraints are built into our social system at many points, and are reinforced by the attitudes and expectations of the culture. Are we then to seek physiological shortcomings for the legitimate anger felt by discriminated groups? Is not aggressive behavior also evinced by those who perpetrate the discrimination? By those who make war, plunder the earth, engage in the variety of "hustles" prevalent in every human endeavor?

I would suggest that in any population chosen for hypoglycemia research the investigator note variations in socioeconomic factors which might constitute alternative explanations for the aggressive behavior.

*Sharron Whitten*  
New York, N.Y.

In reading Robert Trotter's article on the Qolla I was hit by a thought; could the aggressive behavior caused (or at least closely correlated with) hypoglycemia be a natural adaptation of the organism man? In other words, is this chemical change, which may cause aggressiveness, a natural adaptation of human beings to survive when the going gets rough?

If research is conducted in ghetto areas and this correlation between aggressiveness and hypoglycemia is further supported, the above theory may have to be considered.

*Eric Moore*  
Houghton, Mich.

## Abuse of scientific data

The abuse of anthropological data by unworthy rulers (SN: 12/9/72, p. 374), like laser-guided weaponry, cloud warfare, micropathogens, and nuclear devices, shows that scientists have been evicted from the ivory tower by their government. It seems that what can be done, good, bad, or trivial, is done. Because it can be done.

The pattern of abuse runs the gamut of academia. Economists' data are amorally considered in the light of knowledge of human behavior or how to maintain high consumption levels and create make-work jobs by means of gold stars and backpats (Skinner's behavioristic psychology). Ecosystems are studied (SN: 12/9/72, p. 373) by the International Biological Program (IBP) but anything understood can then be manipulated (and usually is).

Despite this piecemeal procurement of scientific workers nothing effective is done to prevent this abuse. The economists, anthropologists, psychologists, biologists, etc., are kept effectively isolated by "departmental" lines or territories (boxes). Doomed specialists are unable to see a whole view of their planet or themselves and therefore impotent.

During the past two years I have collaborated with the U.S. IBP Tundra Biome Program, being the high-altitude insect expert. My requests to discuss the possible misuse of our information have been ignored. My 1972 grant was nearly taken away, just three weeks before the start of the field season. Last summer I nearly gave in, but this thought came to me on a talus slope and I nearly had a fall. When responsible hands can look after my precious information-in-numbers, the computers will get it. Until then the IBP will be fed with my feelings.

*Ron Schmoller*  
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