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**COVER:** A worker in Mkwaja ranch in Tanzania holds a plastic vial filled with a day's catch of tsetse. They are a small part of a tsetse trap involving the release of thousands of sterile male tsetse on a 100-square-mile test site. The sample in the worker's hand will be analyzed to see how well the sterile males are infiltrating the wild population. Success of the test could signal the opening of vast areas of African grassland for grazing, agriculture and human settlement. See page 108. (Photo: Kay Chermush/AID)

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# LETTERS

## Vitamin C and SIDS

The series on SIDS (SN: 4/15/78, p. 234; 5/6/78, p. 297) was well done and highly informative, but regrettably it did not include information on what is quite possibly the most important and promising work in the field. Dr. Archie Kalokerinos and his colleague, Dr. Glenn Dettman, of Australia, have established what appears to be an extremely strong link between SIDS and ascorbic acid deficiency. In his book, *Every Second Child*, Kalokerinos reports his efforts over an eight-year period to discover the cause of the 50 percent infant mortality rate among the aborigines in the Collarenebri region of Australia. He eventually discovered that dying children could literally be brought back from the brink of the grave with an injection of vitamin C. Recent reports show *no* cases of infant death in that region, over a period of 10 years, as compared to the hundreds of deaths reported yearly before Kalokerinos began his work.

The link between botulism and SIDS, presented in Part II of your series, is of particular interest. In his book, *The Healing Factor: Vitamin C*, Irwin Stone cites ten studies showing the remarkable effectiveness of vitamin C in inactivating bacterial toxins.

The point is that a shortage of vitamin C may be the critically important predisposing factor in SIDS, and looking for the germ or virus involved is merely a search for one of many potentially precipitating events. It is more constructive to consider diseases, including SIDS, as a setback for the body's usually formidable defenses than as a victory for the attacking microbes. Medicine has generally taken the opposite view, and it has proven to be a faulty strategy. It is far better to fireproof a structure than to spend a great deal of time and effort trying to decide whether the fire was started by a match or a cigarette.

Of special interest is Dr. Kalokerinos's observation that routine public health inoculations of the near-scorbutic aborigine children resulted in a marked upsurge in death and sickness. With this in mind, I tried a year ago to interest the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, which was supposedly interested in solving the mystery of the Legionnaire and swine flu deaths, in investigating the possibility that the victims had become highly susceptible as a result of near scurvy. The more important question is, after all, not, "What specific microbe infected the victims?" but rather, "what factor permitted many of those exposed to stay well while others

died?" I suggested asking the survivors and the relatives of those who succumbed a question or two on citrus juice or vitamin C tablet ingestion, to permit comparison of the vitamin C intake of those stricken with that of a control group similarly exposed but not affected. No luck. I finally concluded that the CDC is too committed to its current dogma to entertain any different ideas. My last letter from CDC states, in effect, that the study I suggested was unnecessary since they had already administered a behavioral questionnaire (albeit no questions related to vitamin C). The only behavioral difference they could find, the CDC reported, was that the victims were more often smokers. That was supposed to show me how ill-advised my proposed inquiry would have been. Extraordinary! Apparently, the CDC is not aware that there are at least 30 published studies showing marked destruction of vitamin C by smoking!

Bernard Rimland, Ph.D.  
San Diego, Calif.

## We've got rhythm

Broad new vistas await on the horizon of computer science (SN:7/1/78, p. 4). I have requested, for use in my computer related classes this fall, a complete set of trap drums. They should enable me to keep abreast of this apparently new area of computer "algorhythms." (The way budgets get cut, I'm really hoping for a tambourine or a triangle.) The implications for far-reaching changes in computer science education are staggering — next, combos, and eventually full symphony orchestras, and perhaps quartets for seminars.

Seriously, none of the Oxford English Dictionary, Webster's, or the 20 or so computer science dictionaries in our library contains anything other than "algorism" or "algorithm" (with the latter listed only as an "erroneous refashioning of algorism" until the 1972 Supplement of Oxford).

But, it should be an "entertaining" Fall Semester.

Charles R. Deeter  
Ft. Worth, Tex

## Correction:

In his sleep-related research, Daniel F. Kripke (SN: 7/1/78, p. 11) found that about 75 percent of deaths associated with long or short sleep occurred in subjects over 65. Increases in heart disease, stroke, cancer and suicide mortality have all been correlated with patterns of extremely long or short nightly sleep.

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