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Letters

On tests and tolerance

Since the Scholastic Aptitude Tests are composed by intelligent professional people they have an unavoidable bias in favor of the children of intelligent professional people. Thus it appears to me that the data presented in "The left hand of math and verbal talent" (SN: 4/27/85, p. 263) lead to the conclusion that intelligent professional people have more left-handed, myopic, allergic children than do other parents. This seems a simpler explanation than the conclusion implied in the article.

As a possible explanation, I would proffer that intelligent professional people may be more likely to tolerate left-handedness in a toddler, more likely to detect early myopia and reinforce it by getting glasses for the preschooler, and more likely to identify and reinforce allergies.

Robert E. McDaniel
Las Cruces, N.M.

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Cover: Sunlight filters through the remains of this Greek temple's roof, but centuries ago, Greek architects designed buildings that took advantage of solar light and heat in more subtle ways. Today, sophisticated new technologies, from "smart" windows to "living" walls, allow buildings to capture and use sunlight even more effectively. (Photo: I. Peterson)



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Contraceptive misconceptions

J. Silberner's discussion of the high risk of infertility associated with the use of intrauterine devices ("IUD-infertility link," SN: 4/13/85, p. 229) should lead many of the estimated 2.2 million users to reconsider their choice. If more of these women realized that IUDs function by causing spontaneous abortions of embryos, many more would reject the IUD as a choice. Unfortunately, J. Silberner refers to the IUD as a "contraceptive choice" rather than as a method of postconception birth control involving destruction of an embryo. This misunderstanding is all too common in society.

Rick Bellows
Westfield, Mass.

Most researchers believe that IUDs work by preventing implantation of the fertilized egg, which occurs six or seven days after conception. According to Taber's Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary, the embryo stage comprises the second

through eighth weeks following fertilization. Thus, while IUDs are indeed a postconception, rather than contraceptive, form of birth control, they do not cause spontaneous abortion of embryos per se.
—J. Silberner

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