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Letters

'Senseless torture'

I am not an animal rights advocate, and I applaud using animals to test drugs or products that may aid ill or otherwise needful humans, especially where that testing is dangerous to humans. But "Beating the MSG clock" (SN: 11/26/88, p.350) really turned my stomach.

The researchers already knew that large doses of MSG caused seizures that appear to be epileptic grand mal type. What good is served by subjecting more animals to further "study" aimed at determining if time of day makes a difference? Of the animals fed 7 a.m. doses that were proportionally 50 times greater than a human would ingest from a meal, 70 percent died from the convulsive seizures of epileptic grand mal trauma.

Those researchers are kidding themselves if they think their work advanced the welfare of mankind one iota. All they did was senselessly torture their valuable lab animals to

This Week

- 4 Microbial Census Hints at Biotech Hurdles
- 4 The baffling case of chronic fatigue
- 5 Publication bias: Looking for missing data
- 5 Eyeing the ingrained origins of DNA
- 6 Clouds clearing from climate predictions
- 6 Receptor gene found for brain protein
- 7 New polymers harvest light to do chemistry
- 7 Filamentary signs of a second supernova

Research Notes

- 13 Astronomy
- 13 Behavior

Articles

- 10 A 'Handy' Guide to Primate Evolution
- 15 NASA 1989: Suddenly It's 1986

Cover: Putting the Hubble Space Telescope into orbit is but one of six major space science projects scheduled by NASA for 1989, as the agency continues to grapple with the delay caused by the Challenger disaster. (Illustration: NASA)



Departments

- 2 Books
- 3 Letters

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death. Was this a legitimate investigation or one concocted only to keep a job at the expense of the rats' lives? Who would approve such a grant? What kind of politics must researchers play that creates this sort of travesty? And finally, why did you print this story without asking these questions?

Lyn Noeldner
Oregon, Wis.

'Somnolent jocks'

A study on college athletes ("Study takes measure of college athletes," SN: 12/3/88, p.357) must recognize that a vast gulf may exist between the course content for non-athletes and that for varsity-level athletes. Such courses as fly-tying, archery, handball and officiating are the visible examples, but the cancer goes much deeper. As an invited lecturer I have held forth for 100 minutes of an evening (thereby satisfying two one-hour

class meetings) before somnolent jocks, on the topics of "atomic energy" and "university research," in courses approved for the department of physical education by a weary faculty curriculum committee.

Any nationwide survey of college athletes must include some measure of progress toward a degree. Higher grades, lower grades, yes — but in what kinds of coursework? How many varsity-caliber football and basketball players ever graduate?

Karl E. Krill
DuPont, Wash.

Address communications to:
Editor, SCIENCE NEWS
1719 N St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20036

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JANUARY 7, 1989

3