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Letters

TD: Nutritional alternative?

"New report offers antipsychotic guidelines" (SN: 5/11/91, p.293) discusses the need for therapies to prevent or treat the tardive dyskinesia (TD) that can develop during antipsychotic-drug treatment. But it makes no mention of the role for nutritional supplementation in the prevention and treatment of drug-induced TD.

The uncontrolled movements associated with TD may be a result of oxidative damage of certain neuroleptic and antipsychotic drugs at the nerve endings. In a crossover placebo study of 15 patients with TD who were given 1,200 IU of alpha-tocopherol (a known membrane antioxidant) for two weeks, the supplemented group experienced a 43 percent reduction in scores on an abnormal-involuntary-movement test. Control subjects' scores did not change significantly.

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Cover: Is there a bird in this picture? The paleontologist who found *Protoavis* five years ago has declared it the oldest known bird, and his claim could significantly alter theories about the development of early birds. But first, the fossil must pass the scrutiny of other researchers, many of whom question whether this animal was a bird at all. (Photo: Mark Mamawal/Texas Tech University)

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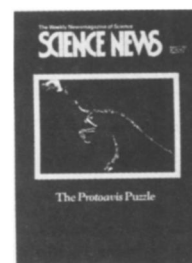
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Clinical studies have also shown that adding niacin (1,500 to 3,000 mg/day) and manganese (30 to 60 mg/day), combined with slightly above-physiologic levels of a zinc supplement, dramatically decreases or eliminates the development of TD. In one epidemiologic study of 58,000 patients receiving neuroleptic or antipsychotic medication, virtually no cases of TD were found in the nearly 12,000 patients who had concomitantly received this nutrient therapy.

One would hope that the American Psychiatric Association task force would examine such apparently safe and effective alternatives for these patients.

Alexander G. Schauss
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The APA task force report cites recent claims that

alpha-tocopherol (vitamin E) effectively treats tardive dyskinesia, but concludes that "the general clinical value of these agents needs to be established with large-scale, long-term studies."

— B. Bower

CORRECTION

"Hot time for polymer magnet" (SN: 7/6/91, p. 15) describes a compound as showing magnetic properties "from 1.4 to 350 kelvins (2.6° F to 170° F)." The Fahrenheit conversion should have read "—460° F to 170° F."

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Please limit letters to 250 words.
All letters subject to editing.

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