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Letters

Fighting for funding

Having been involved in the field of anxiety treatment for over 20 years, I feel that a few points were missed in "Panel urges treatment for panic disorder" (SN: 10/5/91, p.214). In the last few years there has been no disagreement in the field about the effectiveness of both medication and cognitive-behavioral therapy. But in reading your article, one could not tell that from the presentations made to the panel: Each side fought with the other and questioned the other's results.

I was taken aback until I realized that they were fighting over research money that will flow from the National Institutes of Health. A number of people quoted in your story described the panel's report as "judicious." Apparently, this word was picked because the panel did not make any usable decisions and no one in the field wanted to hurt their chances of obtaining grant money. There is no question that cognitive-behavioral therapy is effective and without the side effects of medication — yet the panel took the view that there were not

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Cover: The discovery nearly a decade ago of a new class of crystalline materials known as quasicrystals focused the attention of physicists and mathematicians on nonperiodic geometric patterns. The same patterns have also inspired new designs in art and architecture, as shown in this model of a quasicrystal dome. (Model and photograph: Tony Robbin)



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enough data to prove this.

The major problem is that physicians do not take the time to use this approach, finding it much easier just to prescribe a pill. Drug companies spend a lot of money educating the doctor on the effectiveness of their medications. The problems of medication use are not presented except in fine print. There is no one who would make a lot of money selling cognitive-behavioral therapy, so the medical profession stays ignorant of its effectiveness.

How does one have to go about getting money for research when the drug companies dominate the control of research dollars in this country?

Eugene A. Fee
Editor, ANXIETY NEWS LETTER
Valley Forge, Pa.

Oedipal objections

I object to psychiatrist E. James Lieberman's statement, "The moral of the [Oedipus] drama is that honest, loving family ties are the best defense against dire prophecy and the greatest security in an uncertain world" ("Oedipus

Wrecked," SN: 10/19/91, p.248).

Like most literature, this drama has many interpretations. The mainstream view of the play is that Oedipus' attempt to avoid his fate and his drive for the truth cause the doom he seeks to escape. In addition, the play displays the classical motif of the dangers of evaluating your life before it ends.

Also, the name of Sophocles' masterpiece is (in transliteration) Oedipus Tyrranos, not Oedipus Rex. Rex is the Latin word for king. Sophocles, of course, wrote in Greek, not Latin.

Bruce Jurin
Bayside, N.Y.

Awakened?

As a man in his 70s, I was "awakened" by Bruce Bower's "Darwin's Minds" (SN: 10/12/91, p.232). I enjoyed reading, "... but even a man in his 70s retains the ability to father children, if his wife can wake him up."

Humor in a scientific article? How nice. It helps me keep awake.

O. Roy Frankenfield
Feasterville, Pa.

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