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Letters

Atmospheric DDT disputed

Douglas C. Ure ("DDT use persists worldwide," SN: 7/17/93, p.35) writes that he has "a bottle of Ortho ISOTOX purchased in 1988 that prominently lists DDT as an active ingredient." DDT has not been sold by Ortho since the ban in 1972, so his bottle must have been on the shelf for at least 16 years.

He also says, "DDT applied abroad, and its breakdown product DDE, are carried worldwide in the atmosphere and accumulate in the food chain." The incorrect report by Goldberg and his colleagues regarding DDT in the atmosphere was based on an estimate by Tarrant and Tatton (NATURE, vol. 219, p.725, 1968), who collected rainwater on the roof of a building in London and stated, "DDT in the London atmosphere has been shown to be associated with the particulate content." One of their samples contained two insects.

DDT saved millions of children in Third World countries from death by cerebral malaria. Probably, children in such countries are

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Cover: Ten years after realizing that cheetahs are no more genetically diverse than laboratory mice, scientists are still puzzling over whether inbreeding — or zoo life — hinders reproduction in these fast felines. (Photo by Jessie Cohen, National Zoological Park, Washington, D.C.)

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Science Service, which publishes SCIENCE NEWS, is a nonprofit corporation founded in 1921. It gratefully accepts tax-deductible contributions and bequests to assist its efforts to increase the public understanding of science, with special emphasis on young people. More recently, it has included in its mission increasing scientific literacy among members of underrepresented groups. Through its Youth Programs it administers the International Science and Engineering Fair, the Science Talent Search for the Westinghouse Science Scholarships, and publishes and distributes the *Directory of Student Science Training Programs for Precollege Students*.

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still being protected and still have DDT and DDE in their body fat.

Thomas H. Jukes
Professor of Biophysics
University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, Calif.

Physician proscribes antichill pills

As an academic involved with accidental hypothermia, I was fascinated by "Taking the chill out of hypothermia" (SN: 4/10/93, p.237).

As an emergency physician, mountain rescue leader, and outdoor public safety educator, however, I have experienced a nagging worry. Outdoor enthusiasts, an independent-minded lot, may start using unsafe medications to try to protect against hypothermia.

First, just a small bit over the therapeutic dose of the sympathomimetic drugs mentioned — caffeine, theophylline, and ephedrine — will cause toxicity. Toxic effects include hypertension, psychotic reactions, seizures, cardiac arrhythmias, and death.

Second, Vallerand's test situation, at least as

far as I can tell, is very different from real situations in that his subjects are not resting after strenuous exercise. If they were, the drugs might cause faster depletion of scarce glycogen resources. There is also the detrimental diuretic effect of caffeine for hypothermia patients, all of whom are dehydrated.

Using stimulants to prevent or treat hypothermia is an invitation to disaster. However, if there were some way to specifically increase fat metabolism without the side effects and toxicity of sympathomimetics, I'd like to hear about it.

Keith Conover
Clinical Assistant Professor
Division of Emergency Medicine
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pa.

CORRECTION

In "Novel buckyball blocks AIDS virus enzyme" (SN: 8/7/93, p.87), the journal *ANTIMICROBIAL AGENTS AND CHEMOTHERAPY* was incorrectly called the *JOURNAL OF ANTIMICROBIAL AGENTS AND CHEMOTHERAPY*.

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