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This Week

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Cover: Clothing of the future may not just *look* smart. By merging garments and eyeglasses with brainy electronics, scientists are creating always-on-duty cyberassistants for workers and other folks on the go. A big question is, Will such creations ever become fashionable? **Page 330** (Fashion drawings by Ricardo Prado, Maria Ella Carrera, and Josefina Batres)

Letters

Vitamin overdose

In the research described in "Vitamin C lowers stress hormone in rats" (SN: 9/4/99, p. 158), laboratory rats were given a daily dose of 200 milligrams of vitamin C. The researcher notes that this would be a high dose in people, "several grams a day." If his rats weighed a pound and the typical human weighs 150 pounds, then the equivalent human dose would be 30 grams. This is 500 times the recommended daily allowance. I believe that at these levels vitamin C is already known to be toxic in humans. So the main information from the study would be that at toxic levels, vitamin C does other things besides cause kidney stones. I don't mean to criticize this particular researcher because this type of report is common in SCIENCE NEWS. This report seems to me to be an example of innumeracy.

Bernard J. Leikind
San Diego, Calif.

According to researcher P. Samuel Campbell, dose extrapolations across species can be misleading: "The comparable effective dose in humans probably would be much lower than indicated by this extrapolation, since the rat has a very high metabolism. Indeed, I know of two reports that indicate 1 to 3 grams of vitamin C daily in humans moderately decrease basal cortisol levels." —Ed.

War tale

"Rarest of the rare" (SN: 9/4/99, p. 153) reminded me of when I was a 20-year-old infantryman in South Vietnam in 1969. Our area of operation was from Binh Hoa to Cam My and from the Saigon River Delta to Vo Dat. We encountered many animals in the jungle, including one we never saw. In size, its droppings were between those of a cow and a small elephant. The animal was elusive, nocturnal, and moved quickly without disturbing the vegetation to any great extent. I will now always wonder if we weren't in the company of a few doomed Javan rhinos.

John F. McBride
Seattle, Wash.

Bedtime stories

I generally become drowsy shortly after dusk and alert by dawn—all without sedative, alarm clock, or caffeine. A few weeks ago, I read in the newspaper that this "syndrome" is a "disorder" caused by a single gene. I reasoned that only a society preoccupied with late-night entertainment would consider my sleep pattern a disorder. How refreshing to read "Slumber's unexplored landscape" (SN: 9/25/99, p. 205) and find out I'm not so abnormal after all.

Edna Weigel
Sierra Vista, Ariz.

After I had my first child, I had a separate bed for him in a separate room. Much to my surprise, he definitely didn't like that. After I started sleeping with him, he settled down, and we had no sleep problems. Ever since, I have been a firm believer in the "family bed." I have since had another child. Both are now separated from mother and healthy. One family therapist I worked with briefly told me how she got her 2-year-old to sleep in his own bed: She let him scream for hours by himself in his room. I refused to do that because I felt that we are the only culture that forces this on children. Your article supports my thesis.

Andrea Borning
Seattle, Wash.