

Behind the News

THE PILL

A Succinct Report on Oral Contraceptives

By LEN KRAUSS

Man's attempts to "find a better way" have resulted in the opening of a wholly new vista in the field of contraceptives: the pill. Since the first oral contraceptive was given clearance by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration on May 6, 1960, more than a million women have been taking the little pink pills with excellent results although the pill has been greeted with acrimony in some circles.

As Dr. Alan F. Guttmacher, obstetrician and gynecologist at New York's Mt. Sinai Hospital and author of the book "Birth Control," said, "Its failure rate is virtually zero. We can say this, I believe, about no other method of contraception except perhaps chaining the husband in the woodshed."

Opinion Poll

This week 363 University women whose average age was 20.2 were asked for their opinions on the following questions.*

1. Would birth control pills, in your opinion, cause an increase in premarital sexual relations if the pills were to become as available as aspirin?

2. Would you personally be affected?

3. If and when you marry, would you use some form of an artificial (pills or other devices) contraceptive?

The results (in percentages) were:

	Yes	No
Q1.	78.1	21.9
Q2.	15.4	84.6
Q3.	67.2	32.8

The ludicrous difference between the yes answers in Q1 and Q2 was expected. It is just another indication that many individuals attribute certain things to their contemporaries and colleagues which they themselves say they would not do. If it is fully realized, nevertheless, that the respondents were given no opportunity to make actual comments on these questions and certainly some would have liked to qualify their answers. However, "Mademoiselle" magazine, of January 1961, contained an article in which some of the comments, from the two-hundred women polled, were printed. These comments bear out the opinion given on Q2.

In answering Q3, the University women polled did not give significantly differing answers from respondents in similar surveys done elsewhere.

How the Pills Work

When the pills are taken as directed, ovulation is suppressed and hence the normal release of one egg a month does occur. A hormone, produced by the body during pregnancy and about the fourteenth day of the menstrual cycle, called progesterone, prevents ovulation. The pill, which is made of a steroid chemical, is a synthetic drug molecularly similar to progesterone; it acts in the same manner as the naturally produced hormone.

Twenty pills a month are required and a month's supply costs approximately \$3.50. A physician is the only person who, at this stage of marketing, can prescribe the pills. His schedule must be followed exactly. In addition, one out of five users has a little nausea which necessitates a physician's advice and perhaps the use of antacid pills for a short time. The remaining four show excellent results with no side effects. No woman, who has

followed her physician's regimen for the use of the oral contraceptives, has become pregnant in any of the large scale tests. Two pills are now on the market; they are Enovid and Norlutate and are manufactured by G. D. Searle & Co., and Parke, Davis & Co., respectively. A third pill, called Ortho-Novum, is awaiting Food and Drug Administration approval; the others are approved.

Reversibility

The effectiveness of the pills has been proved in field tests, the maximum of which was six years, conducted in Puerto Rico, Haiti, Los Angeles, San Antonio, in New York at the Margaret Sanger Research Bureau and other locations. There were no cases in which, when the use of the pill was discontinued, ovulation did not resume within a month or so. There was even some evidence to show that some women became more fertile after using the pills.

How About Cancer?

No. As a matter of fact, the Puerto Rican tests showed less incidence of cervical cancer; this has led the American Cancer Society in 1961 to contribute \$58,000 to a long-term study to determine whether the pills might be useful in curbing cancer.

In the Future

The All-India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health is studying a garden pea under the direction of Dr. S. N. Sanyal. A chemical from the pea has been reported as an effective contraceptive when taken only twice a month.

Dr. Albert Tyler, professor of embryology at the California Institute of Technology in Los Angeles, is working on contraceptive vaccine. His work is being supported by the U.S. Public Health Service. Dr. Tyler is also looking into the possibility of a pill for men.

Dr. Carl G. Heller of the University of Oregon Medical School is also conducting research on an oral contraceptive for men.

Current News

Thrombophlebitis, a blood-clot condition, was mentioned last week as possibly being connected with the use of Enovid. As a result, the Food and Drug Administration and the manufacturer are investigating the pills. Twenty-eight, of more than a million women using the pills, are known to have developed thrombophlebitis; six of them died. At this time, there exists absolutely no evidence that a causal relationship exists. Dr. Celso-Ramon Garcia, one of the developers of Enovid, stated, "You add all the cases in England and the United States and it still doesn't come close to the lower limit of the natural incidence of the disease." The lower limit is one case per thousand women, he said.

Dr. Edwin J. De Costa, a Chicago gynecologist who reviewed Enovid results in last month's Journal of the American Medical Association, said, "There is no indication that Enovid predisposes one to thrombophlebitis." Dr. Gregory Pincus, director of the Worcester Foundation for Experimental Biology where Enovid was developed, stated, "There has not been one single case of pathology, not a contra-indication in the one million patients observed on the drug."

(*Interviewers: Arlene Levin, Eleanor Walte, Sandy Whiteley, Marcia Flinsler, Marcy Panebianco, Paula Zimmerman, Phyllis Gurbarg, Ann Matt, Linda Colwell.)

Campus Beat

Examinations May Bring Madcap Action

Dear Students:

No one likes to bring sad tidings, but if you've checked your calendar lately, you see that this term is rapidly becoming history. Once again we must endure all the high tensions and madcap doings that accompany final examinations.

The word "finals" unfortunately produces nothing but stark terror in the minds of many students. The only advice I can give these people is that more than a little study now goes a long way toward making examinations less nerve wracking.

Yet it is ironic that during finals some students pretend they have more time than they really do. The HUB stays more crowded for more hours, and some people who haven't seen a movie in weeks head for the theatres downtown. All this activity is in the interest of "relaxation," they say. People may pull bizarre stunts and be excused because it is finals time.

Perhaps this University might be a better place if a bit of the atmosphere which surrounds attempts to escape insanity during final examinations were injected into everyone early in the term. A little of the post-term paper glee might serve student relationships well throughout the entire year, not just during the fading weeks of each term. A measure of understanding reaps great bounty.

Prof Wayne

Meyer to Study Lubricants

Wolfgang E. Meyer, professor of mechanical engineering, will serve on a special assignment with the California Research Corporation, Richmond, Cal., until August 31. He will do research in the field of multi-grade lubricants.

New College Diner

Downtown Between the Movies

Have you been to

DEAN'S WALK-IN

yet?

If not . . .

LOOK

Hamburgers

15c

Thick Shakes

20c

French Fries

10c

Corner of Pugh & Beaver

Student Leaders to Hear Walker, Bernreuter Talks

President Eric A. Walker and Robert G. Bernreuter, special assistant to the president for student affairs, will both speak at the Student Encampment program this fall, Linda Petry, chairman, said yesterday.

EVERYTHING is completely planned for the Undergraduate Student Government program, which will be held Sept. 12-14 at Mont Alto campus, Miss Petry said. Bernreuter will give the welcoming address, and the President will speak at the evaluation meeting the last day of the encampment, she said.

The officers of the encampment are Paul McPherson, business manager; Elizabeth Horn, secretary; and Dean Wharton, president. The five workshop chairmen are Albert Cartwright, Four-Term Plan chairman; Roger Schwartz and Mary Sue Hersey, Judicial co-chairmen; David Wasson and Fred Good, Off-Campus Problems; Allison Woodall, On-Campus Problems; and Michael Dzvoni, USG.

The 90 student campus leaders who will attend the session will spend as much as 10 hours of one day discussing plans and problems in the workshops. Each workshop will have about 14

students participating in it. A total of 30 faculty members will also attend the encampment, Miss Petry said.

The over-all purpose of the conference is to provide student organizations with ideas for specific programs that should be undertaken next year. Projects for USG are primarily the concern of the conference, Miss Petry said. Another reason for the conference is to promote faculty-student relations in the informal meetings of student encampment, she added.

The 90 students attending the conference were selected by the encampment committee and USG officers from applications they received. George L. Donovan, coordinator of student activities, selected interested faculty members, whose experience at previous encampment programs will enable them to give helpful suggestions during the sessions, she explained.

USG WANTS to enlarge its program to include more worthwhile projects, and it expects to get ideas for some new projects at the National Student Association Congress Aug. 19-30 at Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, Dean Wharton, USG president said yesterday.



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