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Editorial

Abstract

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EDITORIAL

Above all it demands public opinion. The population explosion, if not so much a question of space lack as of grotesque insufficiency, must be cured by those who prompted it. We demand quality not quantity of human life; alas the antibiotic era and public health propagation have brought them both.

Of course contraception brings problems. Ethically it is more acceptable to provide for every life born than to put a brake on conception and birth. But when time is running out and inefficiency proves as much a part of life as love, this philosophy becomes repugnant. We have tampered with death in a big way; it is no different to have birth control.

This is old hat. Yet world opinion (this is where the medical man comes in) must side supportively for planned contraception. Mercifully the stage is past when differentially coloured "safe period" beads were sent out to Asians, many of whom were colour blind from

malnutrition. Intrauterine devices hold out much hope, and scope. Even the sacred cows of India may be suitably fitted, so great has been their increase in numbers.

A large family satisfies an otherwise unresolved for creativity in poverty-stricken parents. This provides a real socio-psychological problem. So does the fear in some men that virility is in doubt where offspring are scanty on the ground. What is forgotten is that in regions where populations may be decimated by famines or epidemics there is a significant natural tendency for the birth rate to rise. This takes a generation or two to subside when environmental parameters modify. And another fact for sober consideration: Britain's population is almost 55 millions; by 1980 it may be 65 millions. To be truly self supporting on the world food market our population would have to be in the region of 40 millions. We are contributing to world hunger in no uncertain measure.

The Society's much-trumpeted change in environment has brought with it a healthy change in attitude and in image. Release from the stigma of sexual apartheid and similar anachronisms has dispelled for ever the "magic circle" image of the Society. In its place has grown a Society modern, vigorous and above all more palatable to the average medical student.

Appropriately at this time comes a new look for this the Society's Journal. Cover and for-

mat have been redesigned and content has been expanded to include extracts from private business such as case presentations and accounts of undergraduate research done in this medical school.

These and other changes in the Journal have been made possible by the constant advice and encouragement of Sir John Bruce and the assistant editor of the College of Surgeons Journal, Miss Hannah Harkins, to whom our grateful thanks are due.