

CONTRACEPTION

ANNOUNCEMENT

PROJECTED SURVEY OF KNOWLEDGE, RESEARCH AND FUNDING IN REPRODUCTIVE BIOLOGY AND CONTRACEPTIVE DEVELOPMENT

Roy O. Greep, Ph.D.

Director, Review Project
Ford Foundation

Out of cognizance and concern relative to the mounting population problem, the Ford Foundation has contributed large sums over the past dozen years to the study of reproduction and the development of possible new means of controlling human fertility. Substantial progress has been made but the job is by no means finished - it has, in fact, only begun. The threat of an intolerable expansion of the human population remains essentially undiminished. The time has come to ask what plans human society is making to meet this uncontrolled multiplication of the world's inhabitants. To that end the Foundation has asked for an inventory of where we stand in terms of (1) gains in understanding the complex physiological, biochemical and behavioral aspects of reproduction, (2) what financial and human resources are being brought to bear on the problem of bringing human fertility within tolerable limits, and (3) what are the realistic prospects in the critical decade ahead of capitalizing on these gains and providing new, safer and more acceptable means of limiting births. In brief, the dimensions of the problem are known but the requirements for solution are not. An assessment of the current situation and future prospects may constitute a beginning and point the way to averting the catastrophe that all agree is inevitable if the present rate of growth of the world's population is allowed to continue unabated.

For the conduct of this study a central headquarters has been established in Boston with a world-wide network of collaborators and consultants and an international advisory body. Membership on the Advisory Committee includes representatives from governments, universities, foundations, the pharmaceutical industry, international development agencies and family planning groups. Dr. Roy O. Greep is directing the project with the assistance of two noted experts in basic and clinical research on reproduction, Drs. Don W. Fawcett and Kenneth J. Ryan. Coordinating the compilation of data and assisting in the preparation of reports is Dr. Marjorie A. Koblinsky who has a background of training in molecular biology and experience in the developing world.

The survey will assess the present state of knowledge of reproductive biology and contraceptive development and identify areas in

CONTRACEPTION

need of greater exploitation as seen by experts actively working in the many special areas of this field. From them considered opinions will also be obtained as to what funding strategies have been, or are likely to be, most effective in advancing this field of research. Another major thrust of the survey will seek information concerning the funding of such research by the public and private sectors in terms of past trends, current level and future prospects. A host of national or geographical representatives have been engaged to gather this information. Dr. Gordon W. Duncan will head the assessment of the economic and scientific contributions of the pharmaceutical industry and Dr. Ernst Knobil will canvas the scientific community as to how best to strengthen the investigative effort, promote the continuum from basic to applied research and provide the necessary trained manpower.

Although the primary audience for the reports on these findings will be the Ford Foundation, others who may be interested will include policy makers, medical educators, influential citizens, other donor agencies throughout the world and the lay public whose attitudes and opinions are the ultimate determinants of public policy.

The compilation and organization of the data base, interpretation of findings and drafting of reports are expected to require up to two years of effort. The Review was initiated on July 1, 1973 and an interim report will be prepared during the summer of 1974. Although the final comprehensive report will not be available until sometime during the summer of 1975, position papers, compilations of data, and scientific essays will be issued at earlier dates.

The motivating force behind this major study is the accumulating evidence that financial support of research in this area has reached a peak and appears to be dwindling. This may be a consequence of (1) an overriding concern with other social and economic problems such as the energy crisis, pollution, and delivery of health care, (2) declining birth rates in developed nations (but representing less than 20% of the world's population) and, (3) an increase in total food production (but no increase on a per capita basis). The illusion is that the pressure of more immediate biosocial problems supersedes the need to control human fertility. The facts are otherwise.

The comments, views and opinions by readers of CONTRACEPTION concerning any or all aspects of this survey will be welcome and helpful in drafting recommendations and guidelines for building on present progress in the understanding of reproductive phenomena and stabilization of the global populace on a level commensurate with quality living and human dignity.

ANNOUNCEMENT

MASTERS DEGREE PROGRAM IN
FAMILY PLANNING COUNSELING AND SEX EDUCATION

The Division of Family Study
Department of Psychiatry
University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Harold I. Lief, M.D., Director, proposes to initiate a Masters Degree Program in Comprehensive Family Planning Counseling and Sex Education, on or about September 9, 1974. (An application for federal funding to support this program is now pending.)

In order to be considered for this Masters Degree Program, applicants must possess a college degree and demonstrate professional experience in Family Planning or Sex Education.

For further information, and to send your resume, address: George J. Langmyhr, M.D., Assistant Director, Division of Family Study, Department of Psychiatry, University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, 4025 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104. Telephone : 215-382-6680.