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Catholic Physicians' Guild

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Current Literature:

Abstracts and Titles

Material appearing in this column is thought to be of particular interest to the Catholic physician because of its moral, religious, or philosophic content. The medical literature constitutes the primary but not the sole source of such material. In general, abstracts are intended to reflect the substance of the original article. Parental editorial comment may follow the abstract if considered desirable. Books are reviewed rather than summarized. Contributions and comments from readers are invited.

Taylor, B. W., Litin, E. M., and Litzow, T. J.: Psychiatric considerations in cosmetic surgery. *Mayo Clin. Proc.* 41:608-623 Sept. 1966.

There are close relationships between body structure and personal identification, and as a result the patient presenting himself for cosmetic surgery is subject to many interpersonal, religious, and social pressures. In the past, cosmetic surgery has occasioned condemnation on religious grounds as an impious effort to improve on the handiwork of the Creator. Present religious attitudes toward the question may be summarized as follows:

1. *Jewish*: In Jewish thought considerable conflict exists regarding the propriety of cosmetic surgery. One's life must not be endangered, no matter how small the risk, without serious reason; any mutilation of the body without grave medical reason is objectionable; and efforts to improve on God's work run counter to the divine plan. Opposed to these considerations, however, are many references encouraging physical attractiveness. Rabbi Jakobovits has concluded that cosmetic surgery is permissible if the defect prevents

one from securing a marriage partner, or impairs a happy marital life, or prevents one from performing a constructive function in society (such as securing employment).

2. *Protestant*: In general, surgery that contributes to the patient's well-being is welcome, and cosmetic surgery is justifiable to the extent that it qualifies under this precept.

3. *Catholic*: In the Catholic view, surgical procedures are regulated by the principle of totality, which maintains that the parts of a physical entity are ordained for the good of the whole. Relevant questions include the morality of the intention, the degree of operative risk, and the reasonableness of the motives.

Giannella, Donald A. (editor): *Religion and the Public Order, 1965*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago. 367 pp. 1966.

Subtitled "An Annual Review of Church and State and of Religion, Law, and Society," this scholarly production of the Institute of Church and State of Villanova University School of Law contains much of contemporary interest even to the

non-legal mind. Of particular significance to the physician, however, is the contribution "Birth Control: The Issue and the Reality," by Albert C. Saunders, who is Director of Research and Publication, the National Council of Churches, Washington Office. Church-State problems of birth control, including the somewhat tangential subject of therapeutic abortion, are discussed.

Visscher, M. B.: Medical research and ethics. *J.A.M.A.* 199:631-636 27 Feb. 1967.

Logical proof of an ethical system continues to elude the philosopher. Thus several ethical positions are possible in connection with the use of animals for scientific investigation. The majority opinion is that the humane use of lower animals to promote human welfare is ethical. Antivivisectionists cover a wide spectrum, from the absolute (or abolitionist) type, who would forbid any sacrifice of animal life for scientific purposes, to the moderates, who would permit the infliction of death but not pain on animals. All antivivisectionists, however, have two common characteristics: (1) a bias for animal rather than human interests, and (2) a distrust of science and scientists. A basic premise underlying the use of animals in scientific investigation is respect for the sanctity of human life. This is also a major consideration in the problem of human experimentation, a full consideration of which is beyond the scope of the present article. It is interesting to note, however, that stringent laws governing animal experimentation were enforced during the Nazi era in

Germany at the same time that infamous human experimentation was being performed.

(Cf. also, Allen, J. G.: Pain and common sense. *Arch. Surg.* 86:883-886 June 1963.)

Dunn, H. P.: The reliability of the safe period. *Australian & New Zealand J. Obstet. & Gynaec.* 6:331-334 1966.

The reliability of the safe period was evaluated in a group of 359 patients of proved fertility, and a total failure rate of 11.9 per 100 woman-years was found. While "nothing can compare with the oral contraceptives for effectiveness, . . . for the rest there is not much to choose between them."

[Dr. Dunn is Corresponding Editor from New Zealand for THE LINACRE QUARTERLY.]

Parker, G.: Voluntary male sterilisation. (correspondence) *Lancet* 1:219-220 28 Jan. 1967.

The writer some months ago permitted his name to be included among surgeons prepared to perform contraceptive vasectomy in selected cases. He has been disturbed by the type of patient requesting this service — all have come from the middle and lower-middle classes, and none "from that huge, feckless, and fecund class of unskilled labour who breed endlessly." Although possibly a physician should not be concerned with social problems, the individual seeking vasectomy, it would seem, "should be controlled as to quality as well as to quantity if the end-result is not to be a grave reduction in number of the best elements in this country."

INTEREST CONTINUES to quicken in the many problems posed by human experimentation. A sym-

posium on this subject was held at the University of Santo Tomas in Manila on 31 August 1966, under the auspices of the Catholic Physicians' Guild of the Philippines. The papers were published in the July-Sept. 1966 issue of *Medical Forum*, volume 9, pages 202-214 as follows:

de la Fuente, V.: Medical aspects of human experimentation.

Molina, A. M.: The legal aspect of "human experimentation."

Piñon, M. (O.P.): The moral aspects of human experimentation.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS of interest include the following:

Walldén, L.: Den kristna och den ateistiska attityden i eutanasidebatten. *Lakartidningen* 62:3814-3815 17 Nov. 1965 (The Christian and atheistic attitudes in the euthanasia debate.)

Walldén, L.: Människovärde, läkekonst och dödshjälp. *Lakartidningen* 62:3113-3117 29 Sept. 1965 (Human dignity, healing art and care for the dying.)

van den Berg, J. H.: *The Psychology of the Sickbed*. Duquesne University Press: Pittsburgh. 136 pp. 1966 \$2.95.

Hiebert, E. N.: The uses and abuses of thermodynamics in religion. *Daedalus* 95:1046-1080 Fall 1966.

Keck, G.: Wissenschaft ohne Gewissen ist der Ruin der Seele. *Wien Tierärztl. Mschr.* 53:618-623 Sept. 1966 (Science without conscience ruins the soul.)

Hardin, G.: Blueprints, DNA, and abortion: a scientific and ethical analysis. *Med. Opinion & Rev.* 3:74 ff. Feb. 1967.

Sharpe, William D., M.D.: *Medicine and the Ministry: A Medical Basis for Pastoral Care*. Appleton-Century: New York. 356 pp. 1966 \$6.95 (Reviewed by C. D. Krumbhaar in *New Eng. J. Med.* 276:476-23 Feb. 1967.)

Rubin, P.: Comment: controlled clinical trials. *J.A.M.A.* 199:745-746 6 March 1967.

Williamson, W. P.: Should that patient be kept alive? *Med Economics* 44:60-64 9 Jan. 1967.

Day, E.: The patient with cancer and the family. *Med. Tribune* 8:11 11 Jan. 1967.

Matsunaga, E.: Possible genetic consequences of family planning. *J.A.M.A.* 198:533-540 31 Oct. 1966.

—: British policy on the therapeutic abortion: report of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association, June 1966. *J.A.M.A.* 199:199-200 16 Jan. 1967.

(Editorial): Athanasius Kircher (1602 - 1680) clerical scholar. *J.A.M.A.* 199:336 30 Jan. 1967.

(AMA Committee on Human Reproduction): Evaluation of intrauterine contraceptive devices. *J.A.M.A.* 199:647-649 2 Feb. 1967.

(AMA Council on Drugs): Evaluation of oral contraceptives. *J.A.M.A.* 199:650-653 27 Feb. 1967.

Ryder, N. B. and Westoff, C. F.: Use of oral contraception in the United States, 1965: In only 5 years oral contraception has become a major means of regulating fertility. *Science* 153:1199-1205 9 Sept. 1966.

—: Debate flares over ground rules for therapeutic abortion; proposals to liberalize state laws embroil physicians, clergy, lawyers. *Med. World News* 8:58 ff. 1967.

(Editorial): Bicentenary of Malthus. *New Eng. J. Med.* 275:1021-1022 3 Nov. 1966.

Alvarez, W. C.: Our archaic laws on sexual deviance. (editorial) *Modern Med.* 34:119-122 7 Nov. 1966.

Nissen, R.: Cosmas and Damian and transplantation. (correspondence) *J.A.M.A.* 198:1373 26 Jan. 1966.

Page, I. H.: Medical ethics. (editorial) *Science* 153:ed. page 22 July 1966.

Rosner, F.: Mosaic dietary laws. (correspondence) *J.A.M.A.* 198:488-489 24 Oct. 1966.

—: What was the medical cause of Christ's death? *Med. World News* 7:154-159 21 Oct. 1966.

Lederberg, J.: Experimental genetics and human evolution. *Pharos of AOA* 29:99-106 Oct. 1966.

Anderson, E. W.: Psychiatric indications for the termination of pregnancy. *J. Psychosom. Res.* 10:127-134 1966.

—: Pilgrims at Lourdes provide strange case load for MD board. *Med. World News* 7:164-169 18 Nov. 1966.

—: Progress in science has two faces; researcher warns that each new advance brings a social or moral dilemma. *Med. World News* 8:39 6 Jan. 1967.

Rice, D. T.: Population and the four R's. *Pharos of AOA* 29:109-115 Oct. 1966.

—: Medical ethics in a changing world. *Med. World News* 7:63-70 20 May 1966.

Readers interested in submitting abstracts, please send to:

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