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Letter from Canada

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Letter From Canada

The British Columbia Catholic Physicians' Guild held a successful first convention last November in conjunction with other Christian physicians. It was held at Harrison Hot Springs Resort, so there was relaxation as well as intellectual stimulation. It had not been planned that the wives would participate or necessarily attend the sessions, but all were so keen they decided to forgo the pleasures of the resort to attend all sessions. The talks were published for local distribution and forwarded to THE LINACRE QUARTERLY for publication if desired. Another convention is being planned for this year.

In February 1965 issue of THE LINACRE QUARTERLY, Dr. Harold Groden published a preliminary report on the use of combined estrin and progesterin to artificially regulate the cycle and make artificial rhythm easier. His proof of ovulation was indirect — such as basal body temperature and endometrial biopsies. I think I was motivated to challenge his results by his manner of presentation and my own presumption that these hormones could themselves cause these changes which were being interpreted as proof of ovulation.

In June, 1965, I began prescribing Ortho Novum, 2 mg. tablets to be taken from day 15 to day 25 inclusive in each cycle. I instructed the patients to abstain from day 9 to 16 inclusive, and I kept follow-up records of results at 6 months intervals. To date 135

couples have been followed at least 6 months. No pregnancies have resulted following the above schedule. Nearly all have a cycle of between 27 and 29 days. Side effects are minimal. Some have promised, when the next pregnancy is desired, to continue on the Ortho Novum 2 mg. tablet, but to make use of days 9 to 16, in order to prove ovulation by conception.

It has seemed a long wait. Most couples who desired another pregnancy stopped taking the pill and pregnancy resulted. They were happy to experiment in the control of births by the use of the pills, but were unwilling to take risks with the use of these drugs in a conception. However, one couple who had found the system working well for 18 months, had intercourse on day 15 and a pregnancy resulted. So, though I have not enough statistics to write a paper, I am now less skeptical of Dr. Groden's thesis.

I can conclude that in one patient the use of Ortho Novum 2 mg. from day 15 to 25 did regularize the cycle, but did not inhibit ovulation. The remaining 134 couples are happy to be able to control births by abstaining only from day 9 to 16 and not feel confused about the morality of other forms of birth control. Since March 1967 I have used Ortho Novum 1 mg. with identical results so far. It is not very scientific, but it is moral and it works.

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