

vertisements for products whose efficacy and safety have been established by the Department of National Health and Welfare is misleading. Its adornment with scientific references only adds to the obfuscation, and we find it particularly galling to be cited in an argument supporting dieting behaviour.

David S. Goldbloom, MD

Ron Davis, PhD

Allan S. Kaplan, MD

Sidney H. Kennedy, MD

Carla Rice, AB

The Programme for Eating Disorders

The Toronto Hospital

Toronto, Ont.

## Reference

1. Ratnasuriya RH, Eisler I, Szmukler GJ et al: Anorexia nervosa: outcome and prognostic factors after 20 years. *Br J Psychiatry* 1991; 158: 495-502

[The manufacturer responds:]

At any given moment almost one in three Canadian men and one in two Canadian women are attempting to lose weight. Researchers and clinicians agree on the serious negative health implications of excess body weight and yo-yo dieting, yet thousands of Canadians continue to maintain body weights above those suggested for optimum health.

With the help of a team of clinical dietitians and physicians we have developed a range of appetizing meal replacements that are nutritionally balanced according to Canada's nutrient intake recommendations.

Each of our products contains 50% to 60% carbohydrates, less than 30% fat, 15% protein and the 22 essential nutrients recommended for good health. Slim-Fast products also contain 2 g of dietary fibre per serving, and Ultra Slim-Fast products contain 4 g per serving. Both types of product are low in sodium and cholesterol and adaptable to many therapeutic indications.

We recommend consumers

replace one or two meals per day with a Slim-Fast product. A 7-day 1200-kcal (5040 kJ) diet sheet developed by clinical dietitians is included with each product. Each low-fat, wholesome meal in the diet plan accounts for approximately 400 kcal (1680 kJ). Healthy snacks of fresh fruits and vegetables make up another 200 kcal (840 kJ) daily. In this way we help consumers to make wise nutritional choices, and we hope to retrain their eating habits step by step in a manner that is easy and motivational.

In addition, our product insert sheet encourages consumers to visit their physician before beginning to diet and to set realistic weight goals. It discusses weight maintenance and exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle.

Jerry Abraham, BS Pharm, MS

President

Stella Pharmaceutical Company Limited

Don Mills, Ont.

## Interchangeability of oral contraceptive products

The special article in *CMAJ* (1991; 144: 1223-1224), by the Expert Advisory Committee on Bioavailability, Health Protection Branch (HPB), Department of National Health and Welfare, makes statements that sound to the average reader as if blood level analysis of oral contraceptives is the accepted norm for generic substitution.

This, however, is not the case. The committee's workshop held on June 4, 1990, consisted almost exclusively of analytic chemists and pharmacochemists, who did not examine in detail the question of clinically proven interchangeability.

Clinical effectiveness is clearly the most crucial measure of oral contraceptive performance since even minor variations of the es-

tablished standard may cause a considerable increase in the number of unwanted pregnancies. For this reason the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association of Canada formally requested the HPB to hold another workshop, this time for clinicians to discuss the subject and express their concerns on behalf of practising physicians. The HPB agreed to organize such a workshop.

Only after the forum of practitioners reaches a consensus on the role of clinical tests in establishing therapeutic equivalence can the interchangeability of oral contraceptive products be considered for final ruling.

Miklos Nadasdi, MD, PhD

Medical director

Wyeth Ltd.

North York, Ont.

## Serious childhood injuries caused by air guns

Surely such articles as the one by Drs. Amir Shanon and William Feldman (*Can Med Assoc J* 1991; 144: 723-725) that show tunnel vision and personal bias have no place in a scientific publication.

Since historic times well-meaning but misguided people have sought to make life safer by attempting to ban activities not conforming to their own lifestyle. Shannon and Feldman have placed themselves among the misguided. Their demand for a ban on air guns and their suggestions on how to make such guns safer can only be described as naive.

After a lifetime in medical practice I can still marvel at the variety of activities that pass for sport and our inconsistent attitude toward the injuries sustained during those activities. An eye injury caused by a golf ball is acceptable, but one caused by a pellet gun is an occasion for pub-