

### Antifertility Intermediate

SIR,—Male antifertility with 2,3-epoxypropanol was disclosed in two letters (*Nature*, **226**, 86 and 87; 1970). Jackson *et al.* suggest glycidol as an active intermediate of  $\alpha$ -chlorohydrin. We propose an opposite mechanism—that glycidol is partially converted to  $\alpha$ -chlorohydrin; both hypotheses consider the greater chemical reactivity of glycidol. Until these letters, no non-chlorinated related substances, including other halogens, were shown to be effective<sup>1</sup>. It seems more probable that glycidol would react with hydrochloric acid in the stomach to form  $\alpha$ -chlorohydrin, glycerol and other substances—which explains the higher amounts required for activity. Hahn in his letter assumes the oxygen bridge of the active epichlorohydrin opens, in the rat, to form  $\alpha$ -chlorohydrin, whereas opening the epoxy bridge of the active glycidol would yield inactive glycerol. The reactive glycidol, as

we propose, opens up to form  $\alpha$ -chlorohydrin in addition to glycerol.

The compound at the site of antifertility activity may indeed be  $\alpha$ -chlorohydrin. Although 25–32 per cent of the compound is given off as <sup>14</sup>CO<sub>2</sub> (labelled at the middle carbon) another 16–26 per cent is excreted in urine as the parent compound<sup>2</sup>.

Yours faithfully,

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<sup>1</sup> Ericsson, R. J., and Youngdale, G. A., *J. Reprod. Fertil.*, **21**, 263 (1970).

<sup>2</sup> Kirton, K. T., Ericsson, R. J., Miller, W. L., Cornette, J. C., Forbes, A. D., and Duncan, G. W., *Fed. Proc.*, **28**, 705 (1969).

## Announcements

### University News

**Dr George Chadwick** has been appointed to the second chair of town and country planning in the **University of Newcastle upon Tyne**.

**Dr Ralph Riley**, Cambridge Plant Breeding Institute, has been appointed a special professor in the Department of Botany, **University of Nottingham**.

**Dr D. J. Greenland**, University of Adelaide, has been appointed head of the Department of Soil Science, **University of Reading**, in succession to **Professor E. Walter Russell**.

### Appointments

**Mr R. H. Weir**, director of the National Gas Turbine Establishment, has been appointed director of the **National Engineering Laboratory** in succession to **Mr F. D. Penny**. **Mr I. M. Davidson**, deputy director of the National Gas Turbine Establishment, has been appointed director.

In a series of appointments at the **Oak Ridge National Laboratory**, **Dr Floyd L. Culler** has been made deputy director from the middle of May—he will succeed **Dr H. G. MacPherson**, who is to become professor of nuclear engineering at the University of Tennessee. Four associate directors have also been appointed and are: **Dr James L. Liverman** (biological and environmental sciences); **Dr Arthur H. Snell** (basic physical sciences) who has been at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory since its beginning in 1958 and who has been responsible as an assistant director for work on controlled nuclear fusion; **Dr Donald B. Trauger** (reactor engineering sciences) who has been since 1964 director of the laboratory's advanced gas cooled reactor programme; and **Dr Frank R. Bruce** (administration). The laboratory has also set up a new Ecological Sciences Division under the direction of **Dr Stanley I. Auerbach**.

### Miscellaneous

**Dr Charles Stark Draper**, the founder of the Instrumentation Laboratory (now the Draper Laboratory) at MIT, has been awarded the fifth Founders Medal of the National Academy of Engineering.

**P. P. Feofilov** has been awarded the C. I. Vavilov gold medal of the USSR Academy of Sciences for his work on spectroscopy and luminescence of activated crystals.

**The Meldola Medal** for 1969 has been awarded to **Dr P. W. Atkins**, Oxford, in recognition of his work in theoretical chemistry.

**The Organisation Internationale de Lutte Biologique (OILB)** is to be enlarged and restructured to form the new International Organization for Biological Control, to promote research into biological control in the broadest sense throughout the world. Provision will be made in the new statutes for individual, institutional and supporting membership, and for the creation of largely autonomous regional sections on a biogeographical basis.

**ERRATUM.** In the article "New Finds at the Swartkrans Australopithecine Site" by C. K. Brain (*Nature*, **225**, 1112; 1970), a penultimate sentence should be added to the paragraph beginning "In 1958 . . ." on page 1113: "A concentration of coarse material is visible in the outer cave filling, against the N. wall, just east of the face worked by Broom and Robinson".

**ERRATUM.** In the article "A Comparison of Marijuana Users and Non-users" by Norman E. Zimberg and Andrew T. Weil (*Nature*, **226**, 119; 1970), the third sentence in the first column on page 122 should be "There were no signs of overt intellectual deterioration in the C interviewees, . . .".

**ERRATUM.** The title of the communication by Mephram and Lane (*Nature*, **226**, 180; 1970) was given incorrectly on the contents page. It should read: "Adaptive significance of the sculptured exine of pollen".

**ERRATUM.** The book *Matrix Algebra for Business and Economics* was incorrectly priced at 40s (*Nature*, **225**, xxxii; 1970). It costs 140s.

### International Meetings

May 19–21, **Non-ferrous Metals: the Next Fifty Years**, London (The Secretary, the British Non-Ferrous Metals Research Association, Euston Street, London NW1).

June 9–12, **Thirteenth Annual Meeting of the Canadian Federation of Biological Societies**, Montreal (Dr K. K. Carroll, Biochemistry Department, University of Western Ontario, London 72, Canada).

June 22–July 31, **Advanced Study in Gerontology** (summer institute), Los Angeles (Summer Institute Coordinator, Gerontology Center, University of Southern California, University Park, Los Angeles, California 90007, USA).