

CORRESPONDENCE

Infant Precocity

SIR.—Leiderman *et al.* reported¹ that social factors made an important contribution to precocity in African infants. We have found that Arab infants in Lebanon are also precocious.

In a study of mental development throughout the course of rehabilitation of severely malnourished infants² we also tested a group of thirty healthy infants of the same low socio-economic class, matched for age and sex, all growing well by an Index of Thriving³. The average monthly income of the family was only about US \$90 with four or five children per family, most of the mothers illiterate and a few fathers with primary education. Each child was tested at 2-week intervals by a bilingual Arab female psychologist using the Griffiths Mental Development Scale. This test has five functions, locomotor, personal-social, hearing and speech, eye-hand coordination and performance, the expected United Kingdom score being 100. A total of seventeen infants were tested for the maximal number of eight consecutive sessions and a follow-up test about 4 months later. The mean values and standard deviations are shown in Table 1. It will be seen that without exception the mean value was over 100 and frequently well above this. The score tended to be highest for locomotor function and lowest for hearing and speech (the area most affected by malnutrition). Sixteen children from among the original thirty were tested by the Stanford Binet Intelligence Test nearly 4 yr later when they

were still growing well, as part of a study of the long-term effects of malnutrition on mental development⁴. The mean (\pm s.d.) IQ then was 98.7 (\pm 7.1) with no precocity.

Yours faithfully,

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¹ Leiderman, P. H., Babu, B., Kagia, J., Kraemer, H. C., and Leiderman, G. F., *Nature*, **242**, 247 (1973).

² Yaktin, U. S., and McLaren, D. S., *J. ment. Def. Res.*, **14**, 25 (1970).

³ Kanawati, A. A., Haddad, N., and McLaren, D. S., *J. trop. Pediat.*, **15**, 233 (1970).

⁴ McLaren, D. S., Yaktin, U. S., Kanawati, A. A., Sabbagh, S., and Kadi, Z., *J. ment. Def. Res.* (in the press).

Grassy but not Graminae

SIR.—I should like to correct a misconception which appeared in *Nature*, **243**, 342 (1973). In "Grass Roots at the Base of the Neogene", M. D. Brasier comments on the likely ecological effects of "marine grasses" when these first invaded reef communities. He says, "It follows that remarkable changes must have occurred after the initial colonization of the seafloor by the Gramineae". Unfortunately, although the name "sea-grass" is commonly used to refer to marine angiosperms in general, they are not true grasses (members of the family Graminae). They represent a variety of groups within the monocotyledons¹. *Thalassia*, the one genus named is, for

example, a member of the family Hydrocharitaceae². The name "sea-grass" comes from the generally linear or strap-shaped leaves of these marine flowering plants, which are superficially like the leaves of many grasses.

Yours faithfully,

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¹ Den Hartog, C., *The Sea-grasses of the World*, 275. Kon. Nederlandse Akad. Wet. Nat. Tweede Reeks, Deel 59, No. 1 (North Holland, Amsterdam, 1970).

² Tomlinson, P. B., and Vargo, G. A., *Marine Sci. (Miami)*, **16**, 748 (1966).

Reports and Publications

not included in the Monthly Books Supplement

Great Britain and Ireland

- Union Internationale des Laboratoires Independants—Directory. Pp. 225. (London: Union Internationale des Laboratoires Independants, Ashbourne House, Aberon Gardens, NW11, 1973.) 10 DM. [175]
- The Kent Incorporated Society for Promoting Experiments in Horticulture. East Malling Research Station: Report for 1972 (1st October 1971 to 30th September 1972.) Pp. xii+236. (East Malling, Maidstone: East Malling Research Station, 1973.) £1.25; \$4.60. [175]
- Home Economics Brochure 1973. Pp. 64. (Alperston, Wembley, Middx.: Griffin and George, Ltd., 1973.) [175]
- The Wellcome Trust, 1970/72—Ninth Report. Pp. 147. (London: The Wellcome Trust, 52 Queen Anne Street, W1, 1973.) [185]
- Cotton Research Corporation. Annual Report for 1972. Pp. 17. (London: Cotton Research Corporation, 14 Grosvenor Place, SW1, 1973.) [185]
- Eli Lilly and Company—Report to the Shareholders 1972. Pp. 28. (London: Lilly Industries, Ltd., 1973.) [185]

Other Countries

- Chemical Physics*, Vol. 1, No. 1, January/February, 1973. Pp. 1-88. Subscription price for 2 volumes (10 issues) 1973: Dfl.220; \$69. (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1973.) [53]
- Anuario del Observatorio Astronomico de Madrid para 1973. Pp. 500. (Madrid: Observatorio Astronomico, Alfonso XII, 3, 1973.) [53]
- Australia. Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization: Division of Applied Geomechanics. Abstracts of Published Papers, No. 1, 1972. Pp. 49. (Melbourne: CSIRO, 1973.) [53]
- US Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Public Health Service: National Institutes of Health. The National Library of Medicine: Programs and Services, Fiscal Year 1972. Pp. 56. (Bethesda, Md.: National Library of Medicine, 8600 Rockville Pike, 1973.) [53]
- Food Irradiation Information, No. 1, November 1972. Pp. 82. (Karlsruhe, Germany: International Project in the Field of Food Irradiation, Institut für Strahlentechnologie, Postfach 3640, 1972.) [63]
- Records of the Australian Museum, Vol. 28, No. 10: Maori Greenstone Pendants in the Australian Museum, Sydney. By D. Wayne Orchiston. Pp. 161-213+plates 22-24. (Sydney: The Australian Museum, 1972.) \$2.50. [93]
- World Meteorological Organization. Technical Note No. 123: The Assessment of Human Bioclimate—a Limited Review of Physical Parameters. By Prof. H. E. Landsberg. Pp. 36. (Geneva: World Meteorological Organization, 1972.) [93]
- NN and ND Interactions—a Compilation. By James E. Enstroom, Thomas Ferbel, Paul F. Slattery, Barry L. Werner, G. T. Guiragossian, Y. Sumi and T. Yoshida. (Particle Date Group.) Pp. 281. (Berkeley, California: Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory; Geneva: CERN, 1972.) [93]
- Annals of the Transvaal Museum. Vol. 28, No. 6: Some Observations on Age Ratio, Weight and Molt of the European Swallow, *Hirundo rustica*. L., in

Table 1 Mean (\pm s.d.) Values for Seventeen Lebanese Infants on Griffiths Mental Development Scale

Test	Age (weeks)	Mental age	Developmental quotient	Locomotor	Personal-social	Hearing and speech	Eye-hand coordination	Performance
1st	26.7	29.5	109	111	112	103	110	108
s.d.	11.3	12.0	8.4	15.4	11.6	10.6	14.7	9.9
2nd	28.0	33.5	112	115	115	111	111	107
s.d.	11.5	14.1	10.6	19.3	9.2	11.6	7.8	15.9
3rd	30.3	34.3	117	114	115	111	108	107
s.d.	11.7	13.5	6.9	13.4	8.1	8.7	8.7	13.5
4th	32.3	35.3	109	114	112	107	109	103
s.d.	11.5	13.7	11.2	14.4	13.8	10.1	13.9	14.2
5th	34.2	38.8	112	116	115	108	109	110
s.d.	11.6	12.6	7.0	12.5	7.5	9.3	9.0	11.2
6th	36.2	40.9	111	117	114	104	105	111
s.d.	11.5	11.3	6.9	13.9	9.5	9.8	9.0	8.1
7th	38.2	43.2	113	115	114	106	109	112
s.d.	11.5	11.1	8.1	15.2	9.3	9.9	11.3	8.2
8th	40.5	44.5	111	115	113	105	110	109
s.d.	11.4	10.6	7.5	11.8	6.5	8.0	10.7	10.9
Follow-up	57.6	61.4	108	116	109	102	110	106
s.d.	12.9	11.4	10.4	10.4	8.4	10.4	10.9	10.4