

1969 and 1971. While most of his observations are couched in the language of anthropology, at times he allowed himself to wax sentimental about the people he was studying.

A passage from his journals, published in *Science* in 1976 when he won the Nobel, is revealing retrospectively. "I know full well that I shall be walking the streets of Paris, Rome, London, New York and Washington again and that from these places the New Guinea jungles and the 'savages' are but remote museum pieces or subjects for art ciné films and literature — hardly the humans with whom I now live and sleep." In his jour-

nals, Gajdusek also refers to being approached by young boys for sex and being encouraged by their parents to accept. (His journal entries do not reveal whether he ever did.)

In light of the charges against him, this remark seems weightier than it otherwise might. And yet, as the entry makes clear, Gajdusek had then and continues to hold genuine feeling for the people he was observing. "To me they are . . . among the warmest and closest friends I have had. I respect, admire and love them, and know that once I part from them, I may never see them or hear from them again."

As it happened, Gajdusek's eventual

departure did not mean the end of his relationships with the peoples he had grown so fond of. He was able to incorporate in an unusual and often profoundly generous way the cultures he visited into his own. Many of his "adopted" children are now leaders and scientists in their own countries and in nations around the world. The question, to be decided now in court, is how much, if at all, he allowed the sexual practices of New Guinea and Micronesia to be transferred to his life at home. An initial hearing is scheduled for early May.

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Medical students lie to get ahead

Honesty is sacred in the medical profession; it is at the crux of both the public's trust in physicians and of the trust among physicians themselves. Thus the results of a study published in the March issue of the *Annals of Emergency Medicine* about the honesty of one particular group, the applicants to the University of California, Los Angeles, Emergency Residency Program, are pretty unsettling. The study found that one in five applicants who claimed to have published articles or abstracts misrepresented their citations by claiming authorship either of a fabricated article, an article in an imaginary journal, an article that existed but that did not include the applicant as an author, or by listing a publication as "in press" that was not.

This study follows a similar study published last July in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* that found that 16 of the 53 applicants to the gastroenterology fellowship program at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine fudged their publication credentials as well. Gail Sekas, a physician and coauthor of the gastroenterology study, says that the results were both "a shock" and "very, very discouraging." The results were such a surprise, in fact, that Sekas and her co-author William Hutson, also a physician, proceeded to conduct a limited review of applications for infectious disease fellowships at the Pittsburgh medical school. Because infectious disease is a much less coveted field than gastroenterology, they were hoping to find more encouraging results. They did not.

Sekas and Hutson say competitive advantage is a potential motivation for misrepresentation. Having publications,

Sekas says, make one look more "marketable." She believes that if misrepresentation of publication records is detected, the individual should be kicked out of his or her respective program.

William Beck, associate dean of student and house staff affairs at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, agrees that misrepresentation is grounds for "prompt dismissal." Honesty is "held in such esteem in an academic center that misrepresentation of academic production is probably as lethal an offense for the individual as could possibly occur," Beck says, adding that he does not "see students from this school [Penn] doing that."

However, Sekas and Hutson did investigate the issue of whether there was a relationship between misrepresentation and the student's institution. They found no correlation. "They're scattered all over the place," said Sekas. Harry Kimball, president of the American Board of Internal Medicine, says, "I don't know that anybody has a lock on this."

Contrary to expectations, the studies also revealed that misrepresentation was just as common among the very best candidates as less qualified candidates. The emergency medicine study found that applicants claiming to have the most publications misrepresented their credentials more frequently than those claiming fewer publications. Interestingly, those who misrepresented their publications did not have any advantage over those who did not in making it to the interview stage of the application process. Furthermore, gender did not play a role in frequency of misrepresentation in either study, and the differences between for-

eign medical graduates and US graduates were also found to be statistically insignificant.

In response to these studies, many schools now require their applicants to include reprints of their publications along with their applications. Many schools are also including a disclaimer on their applications stating that misrepresentation serves as grounds for dismissal from the program. It is impossible to predict how pervasive such dishonest and fraudulent activities are, but the authors of both studies are concerned that it has serious implications for the integrity of the medical profession. Swaminatha Gurudevan and William Mower, authors of the emergency medicine study, say that an individual who misrepresents credentials on an application is likely to continue such fraudulent activity with patients and colleagues. Kimball emphasizes the patient's perspective: "If I can't trust what he or she says about their credentials, how can I trust them with my other decisions?"

Misrepresentation occurs in many other professions, says Sekas. "As bad as we thought medicine was, it's still better than other fields." (Some studies have reported that somewhere around 30 percent of people who claim to have MBAs do not, and 80 percent of people who claim to be board certified for nutrition are not.) But Sekas also says that medicine has higher expectations, perhaps because the consequence of misrepresentation is greater. "I think that any kind of misrepresentation, or lying, or fudging constitutes a threat to the [medical] profession," says Kimball. "It's not something you should sweep under the rug."

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