post-necrotic analysis of the patients give a history of jaundice. Presuming that all jaundice in the past is due to infectious hepatitis, the actual percentage may be much less, as pallor of anaemia due to ankylostomiasis is often wrongly described as icterus by these patients, as they are not good witnesses of their past events. Further, infectious hepatitis is more common in cities, but cirrhosis are mostly drawn from villages. It is therefore likely that viral hepatitis may be of even lesser importance in causation of cirrhosis in India than elsewhere.

A majority of patients, 55 to 75%, show a post-necrotic pattern of hepatic tissue.—I am, etc.,

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Folate Requirement in Pregnancy

Sir,—The detailed investigations reported by Dr. I. Chanarin and others (18 May, pp. 390 and 394) are clearly of great importance in further defining the pathogenesis of folic-acid deficiency in pregnancy as an equilibration of supply and demand. We have recently completed a somewhat similar investigation where serial whole-blood folate levels were followed throughout pregnancy and the puerperium in patients either on iron alone or on iron plus 330 mg. of folic acid a day. Few low whole-blood or red-cell folate values were found at the time of delivery in the group on iron alone, but by six weeks postpartum a sharp fall had occurred, with the median whole-blood folate value for the group lying below the lower limit of our normal control range but within the range found in overt megaloblastic anaemia.

We have interpreted this unexpected finding as being due to the delay with which the red-cell (or whole-blood) folate levels reflect the folate status of pregnancy and the possible implication of this on the evaluation of the significance of low folate levels in the red-cell fraction. Preliminary observations to this effect are available if they exist to us elsewhere.

Low-dose Oral Progestogen

Sir,—Continuous low-dose progestogen therapy is a current subject for research in contraceptive pill preparations, as exemplified by the paper from Dr. J. Zakaftur and others (4 May, p. 263). So that the records of the subject can be kept in order I draw attention to Table II in the above paper (p. 264).

The following calculations are based on the data given in the paper:

1. There was a total of 24 pregnancies in 3,400 observed months.
   - 24 pregnancies in 3,400 months
   - 24 pregnancies per 1 woman month
   - 24 pregnancies per 1 woman year
   - 24 × 12 × 100 pregnancies per 100 woman years
   - 3,400 pregnancies per 100 woman years
   - 8.5 pregnancies per 100 woman years, not always as inferred in Table II.

2. If we consider the 11 pregnancies which occurred due to omission of the pills a similar calculation gives 3.9 pregnancies per 100 woman years, not 2.8 as noted in Table II.

3. The 13 pregnancies due to method failure can be calculated to be equivalent to 4.6 pregnancies per 100 woman years, not 3.3 as noted in Table II.

Indeed, the title of Table II is also somewhat misleading in an article about the inhibition of fertility with a progestogen. It would seem more appropriate to entitle the Table "Failure of Artificial Fertility Effect" rather than "Recovery of Fertility." These are of course minor points of little importance to the general content of the paper, but they are nevertheless pertinent.—I am, etc.,

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Gender and Sex

Sir,—Of course I agree with Dr. D. H. Smyth (11 May, p. 368) that the words "sex" and "gender" are not facultatively interchangeable. But even the grammarians are, or were, not always consistent. When Latin was a sine qua non for entry into a medical school some of us must have learned from Allen's Latin Grammar: "Common are to either sex, artifex and opifex. ... I never knew, nor do I now, the meaning of opifex.—I am, etc.,

Liverpool.
A. MCKIE REID

Sir,—I sympathize with Professor D. H. Smyth's complaint (11 May, p. 368) about my phrase "young of both genders" ; "of both sexes" would have been more conventional, but not necessarily more correct. For he is wrong in suggesting that the word "gender" was invented by grammarians. The Oxford English Dictionary gives its first