



T.F. Baskett, MB, FRCS, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Dalhousie University

- October is the mating season for the red deer in Scotland. This can have practical implications for shinty players in rural areas. The clash of the players' sticks, used to hit the ball around the field, apparently sounds like the clashing antlers of rutting stags (The Guardian 15.10.94). The prospect of attracted amorous stags in full flight during a shinty game should strike fear into the heart of the strongest player and could lead to ugly scenes in the goalmouth. One player, when told of the threat, pondered a moment and replied: "*the way our defence is playing, we would probably stick a jersey on it and play it at half-back.*"
- A review of the public toilets in the London Underground and British Rail stations has shown, by a narrow margin, that women write more graffiti than men (The Guardian 5.10.94). Two hundred and eight of three hundred and fifty-four (79%) of women's cubicles were so adorned compared to 237/309 (77%) of men's. When interviewed, one female expert, who preferred not to be identified, said, "*the answer is simple—we sit there longer, write faster, and have dirtier minds.*"
- The production of more and more explicit and violent films has again raised the question of censorship (The Guardian 25.10.94). Apparently, the first film ever to be censored was in 1898 and starred a piece of stilton cheese filmed through a microscope. The British Cheese Federation protested the ninety-second film on the grounds that the sight of bacterial activity magnified many-fold would deter sales.
- Another new word, "liejacking." An individual feigned a seizure on an airplane causing it to be diverted to the nearest airfield (JAMA 1994; 271:1574).
- The use of oral contraceptives appears not to increase the long-term risk of death (Ann Int Med 1994;120:821). A prospective cohort study followed

166,755 women aged 30 to 55 years from 1976 to 1988 (1.3 million woman-years). There was no difference in mortality between never-users and ever-users of oral contraceptives, after adjustment for age, body mass index, and smoking.

- Another prospective cohort study found a strong inverse association between tubal ligation and ovarian cancer, and a weaker inverse association for hysterectomy and ovarian cancer (JAMA 1993;270: 2813). Perhaps we are doing some good with our much maligned surgical intervention after all.
- The effects of second hand smoking extend to the animal world (The Guardian 7.10.94). A woman who smoked more than 40 cigarettes a day had two dogs die of lung cancer and her cat suffer from chronic asthma, which resolved when she stopped smoking. Presumably we can expect the formation of more whining acronymic pressure groups: Dogs Against Passive Smoking (DAPS) and Catus Asthmaticus Terminatum Whinge Hard In Memoriam Perpetuatum (CATWHIMP).
- The recent successful film "The Madness of King George," was originally to be called "The Madness of George III." Apparently, the backers of the film changed the name as they felt American audiences would be confused and would feel that they must have missed the two earlier films, "The Madness of George" and "The Madness of George II."
- The camouflage award of the month goes to the zebra that escaped from a circus in Northern England and was struck by a car while crossing the road at a zebra crossing (Guardian 17.3.95).