

# LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## Claudogens—A New Term for Antifertility Steroids

SIR,—It is becoming increasingly difficult to define the precise mechanism of action of antifertility steroids. Such highly progestational agents as  $17\alpha$ -acetoxy- $6\alpha$ -methyl-16-methylenepregn-4-ene-3,20-dione,<sup>1</sup>  $17\alpha$ -acetoxy-6-methylpregna-4,6-diene-3,20-dione<sup>2</sup> and  $17\alpha$ -acetoxy- $6\alpha$ -methylprogesterone<sup>3</sup>, for example, can undoubtedly exert their antifertility effect by preventing ovulation. At the same time it has been suggested<sup>4</sup> that compounds of this type may effectively bar conception at doses lower than those required to inhibit ovulation by congealing the cervical mucous and so rendering it inimical to the sperm. Certain 19-norsteroids can additionally interfere with the implantation and postimplantation stages under selected experimental conditions. Other instances of multiplicity of biological actions at differing dose levels will be known to workers in this field.

In these circumstances it seems desirable to introduce a descriptive term applicable to steroidal products with antifertility action. It is suggested that the word "claudogenic", incorporating the prefix "claudio" derived from *claudere* (to halt) would be an appropriate adjective for this purpose. The active agent could then be termed a "claudogen".

V. PETROW.

Research Department,  
The British Drug Houses Ltd.,  
London, N.1.  
September 7, 1960.

### REFERENCES

1. B.D.H., Kirk, Petrow, Stansfield and Williamson, Brit. Prov. Pat. Appln. 24077/58; B.D.H., Petrow and Williamson, Brit. Prov. Pat. Appln. 22065/58.
2. B.D.H., Kirk, Petrow and Williamson, Brit. Prov. Pat. Appln. 35428/58; B.D.H., Ellis, Hill, Petrow and Williamson, B.P. 843,353; Ellis, Kirk, Petrow, Waterhouse and Williamson, *J. chem. Soc.*, 1960, 2828; Elton, Edgren and Calhoun, *Proc. Soc. exp. Biol. N.Y.*, 1960, **103**, 175; Ringold, Ruelas, Batres and Djerassi, *J. Amer. chem. Soc.*, 1959, **81**, 3712.
3. B.D.H. and Petrow, Brit. Pat. 852,684; Barton, Ellis and Petrow, *J. chem. Soc.*, 1959, 478; Babcock, Gutsell, Herr, Hogg, Stucki, Barnes and Dulin, *J. Amer. chem. Soc.*, 1958, **80**, 2904.
4. Greenblatt, *Fed. Proc.*, 1959, **18**, 1055.