

Letters to the Editor

Fatty Acid Content of Margarines and Other Table Fats

Dear Sir:

In regard to the recent Letters to the Editors about the fatty acid content of margarines (in your March 1963 issue), I wish to mention that the Bernfeld, Homburger and Kelley paper entitled "Fatty Acid Content of Margarines and Other Table Fats" in the December 1962 issue of the Journal omitted what I consider to be a pertinent reference to previous work.*

I would also like to point out that the data as given by Bernfeld et al. are not easily usable by dietitians and practical nutritionists, since

* OSTWALD, R. Fatty acids in eleven brands of margarine. *J. Am. Dietet. A.*, 39: 313, 1961.

no values for fat or water content are listed. Therefore, the amounts of a given fatty acid per unit weight of margarine cannot be calculated from their data (also see*).

This is not to detract from the additional valuable data offered by Bernfeld et al. It is hoped that an increasing number of such investigations will provide the consumer with valid and meaningful information about the composition of the foods he buys.

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Chorionic Gonadotrophin in the Treatment of Obese Women

Dear Sir:

May I refer to the article "Chorionic Gonadotrophin in the Treatment of Obese Women," by Leela S. Graig et al. published in your March 1963 issue?

That twenty obese women maintained on a diet of 550 calories over a period of forty days, with or without chorionic gonadotrophin, have shown an average loss of only 9 pounds is entirely contrary to all experiences so far recorded. Evidently, as the authors themselves admit, the diet was not scrupulously controlled and observed. The diet described by the authors is hardly as they claim "a modification" of the one used by Simeons, Sohar, Lebon and others. In caloric value and composition it differs considerably from the diet I have recommended for use in association with human chorionic gonadotrophin.

It does, moreover, seem a little wayward to conduct an elaborate double blind experiment when the most important factor, the diet, is poorly controlled. If the authors had excluded from their series all the cases in which they had doubts about the strict observance of the diet throughout most of the treatment, the value of their study would have been enhanced. As it stands, their work on the use of human chorionic gonadotrophin is rather like testing the value of insulin in diabetic patients whose carbohydrate intake is unestablished.

Before a new method is tested one does rather expect the student to have first fully acquainted himself with the technic under investigation. Had these authors done this, they would have excluded from their series all the patients who required vitamins, thyroid and diuretics "for other conditions" which are