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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### SACRIFICE AND MORTALITY

Sir.—The sheer economy and clarity of the request 'Drop dead!' is quite unmatched by the pretentious obscurity of other adaptations of the English language by North Americans. For years most Englishmen have twitched on hearing or reading, in accounts of laboratory experiments, that animals were 'sacrificed', to deities. The shorter word 'killed' is always more appropriate. Recently, an even worse distortion of the English language has crept into reports on studies on animals: 'deaths' are being referred to as 'mortality'. According to the Shorter Oxford Dictionary, 'mortality' is "the condition of being mortal or subject to death", "loss of life on a large scale, as by war or pestilence", "mortals collectively", or "the number of deaths in a given area or period from a particular disease". None of these definitions encourages the use of 'mortalities' to mean 'deaths'.

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[We can enlarge on Dr. Roe's experience with monstrosities such as 'euthanize' and 'euthanize'. After waging a losing battle over 'sacrificed', 'medicated' and 'mortality', one attains a state of resignation to the inevitable. There are more important issues to be concerned about in Toxicology—Ed.]

### ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS IN THE ORIGIN OF CANCER

Sir.—We regret that the section on nitrosamine carcinogenesis in our paper "Environmental factors in the origin of cancer and estimation of the possible hazard to man" (*Fd Cosmet. Toxicol.* 13, 251) was prepared without adequate care and therefore is erroneous. We ask that readers accept our apology for this mistake and disregard that section of the paper.

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