



STANFORD UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

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STANFORD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
Department of Genetics

Dear Dr. Starr:

*draft letter in response*  
I had thought and written, at some length about the issues raised in your letter of December 4; then, when it came time to meet my column deadline, I found I had little else on my mind. I must be apologetic if any of this is offensive for being shared with a not very large reading public; certainly this was not my intention. I must, however, admit to being somewhat upset by the possible mischief of playing the game you did with your model of nuclear safety. ("Widgets" might have been less troublesome.) However, I will also admit that my own opinions, and information, are still in a formative stage.

*(my criticism)*  
May I nevertheless point to the enclosed critique as an answer to some of your elicitation~~ions~~. I would stress;

- 1) the distortion of the market
- 2) the cost of insufficient information

as matters that deserve more attention than you gave in your treatment.

I would also want to go into other matters like the effect of innovations on institutions which are the most important in the long run. You could then fault me for the price of inhibiting technical progress by exaggerating present risks in particular cases.

Rather than go on, let me reply that I would be delighted to spend a day with you and others, preferably here or at UCLA rather than a jet-day away.

Sincerely,

*Joshua Lederberg*  
Joshua Lederberg

Note also Fahn- Tyranny of Small  
Decisions  
contra Popper

See J1 column of 1/24/77