

Date: February 22, 1996

TO: D.R. Milne

FAX # 419 382-2378

Total Pages (including this sheet)-1-

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Dear Mr. Milne,

*I do not participate in public debates except for and with my peers.*

*The tragedy in public discussions of electroshock is the anger shown by many in the laity and some in my profession to the mentally ill. The same persons who would undergo coronary artery bypass surgery or hysterectomy or other surgery with alacrity are distressed out of all proportion at the idea of electricity coursing through their brains, not realizing that their brains are hotbeds of electrical circuits already.*

*You would do better to ask the question: Why is it that ECT is available at the leading academic centers in the nation but not in almost all the state and veterans administration public mental hospitals? Why do we have a two-tier treatment program? [It is not financial since mentally ill patients are equally likely to be admitted to the academic hospitals in your state as to the public facilities.] Try the professor of psychiatry in your [or any] state and its commissioner of mental health.*

*Max Fink*  
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From:

Max Fink, M.D.  
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FAX: 516 862-8604

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Date: Feb 21, 1996

TO: Mr. D. Milne

FAX # 419 382-23<sup>13</sup>~~78~~

Total Pages (including this sheet)-1-

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Dear Mr. Milne,

The essay by Gary Figiel is in the nature of 'Chicken Little's fears. The four articles to which he refers find no justification for the routine use of labetalol or esmolol other than the anxiety of the physicians. ECT is no more risky to the heart than climbing a flight of steps -- indeed, less so.

More harm is probably done by routine use of anti-hypertensives than by unmodified seizures, since severe and persistent hypotension is a common accompaniment of such use.

If you publish such anxious statements, perhaps at the least you would ask the author to specify what he means by 'MAJOR' and what he means by "MINOR" effects. Also, a *complication* is an unexpected, and potentially damaging event. You may ask the author what the consequent 'complications' were in the unmedicated series.

I will not consider a reply. You do no service by such publication.

Max Fink

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