

Woman clashes with company over IUD's

NEW YORK (LNS-CUP)—An American woman knows her sterility was caused by an intrauterine device manufactured by the Searle Drug Company.

But that doesn't mean she is able to successfully sue the company.

"Before the trial began, I thought I had a good chance of winning," Alison Perez said. "Besides having a firm case against Searle, my lawyer said that because I was young and pretty, the jury would be swayed in my favor."

Searle had its own ideas about "young and pretty"

single women. In fact, the company relied on sexist stereotypes and tactics to protect its "corporate integrity."

Searle, manufacturer of the Copper 7 (CU-7) intrauterine device (IUD) whose use ultimately resulted in Perez' sterility, made sure that Perez wouldn't win her case, thus precipitating a rash of well-founded lawsuits by other women who have suffered similar IUD-related complications.

Perez, now 26, recently sued the Searle Company after she had a hysterectomy

in 1974, the result of Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID). At the time, her doctor attributed the inflammation to her CU-7 IUD. But on October 4, a Long Island jury ruled that Searle was not responsible for Perez' sterility and concluded—with no supporting evidence—that her infection was caused by gonorrhea, not by the IUD.

The thrust of Searle's defense centred around Perez' sexual activity. The company flatly denied all suspected dangers associated with the IUD, even though women have been treated for IUD-based

problems ranging from serious infection to punctured uterus.

"Searle lied about a lot of things," Perez told LNX. "They said women only get PID from gonorrhea. They denied all the statistics which show that women have a nine to ten times higher chance of getting PID if they use the IUD than women who don't."

"They also probed into my sex life. Searle's lawyers even said that people only use birth control if they have unstable relationships, or if they hate kids. They really said that." Searle, of course, has had no

qualms about its role as manufacturer of "immoral" devices.

"I'm disappointed and upset that I lost the case," Perez continued. "I probably won't appeal because it costs \$4,000 just to get the tapes transcribed. And it's not that easy to get an appeal. Supposedly, there's only one chance in a hundred of getting one."

Though she will no longer challenge Searle in court, Perez showed no signs of resignation. She said she hopes to inform women of the dangers of the IUD by writing about her trial and documenting Searle's ruthless campaign to protect its profits. She hopes that women who have already suffered punctured ovaries and chronic infection will link their problems to the IUD and test Searle's strength in court again.

Pill could lead to cancer

NEW YORK (LNS-CUP)—Another "side effect" can be added to the already lengthy list of warnings about the birth control pill; this time it's fatal skin cancer.

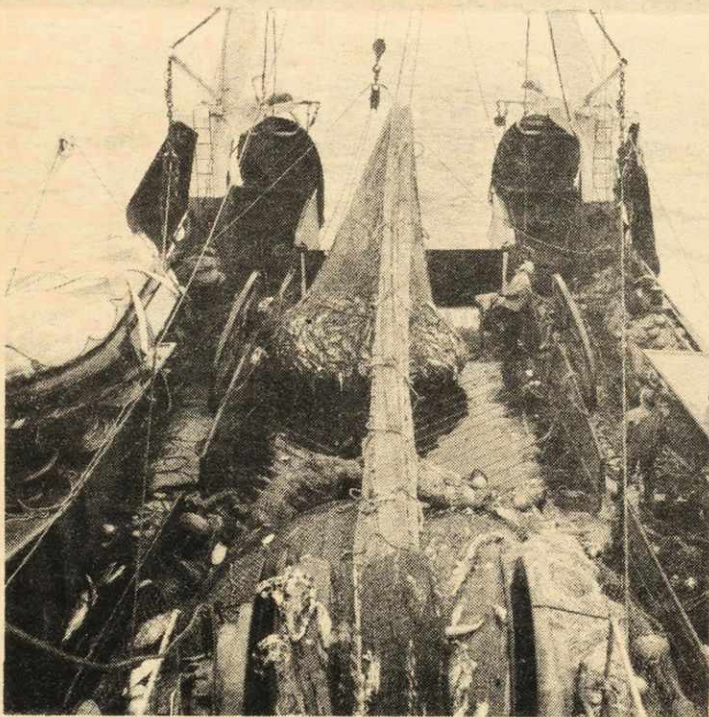
According to a December 1977 study just made public, women who use birth control pills for more than four years face almost twice the risk of developing malignant melanoma, or skin cancer, than non-pill or short-term pill users.

The study, which monitored 17,942 patients on the Kaiser health plan in Walnut Creek, California, is among the largest and longest ever conducted on the effects of the pill. It found a 79 per cent rise in the incidence of melanoma among women in the San Francisco Bay Area from 1970-1975. Half of those cases occurred in women of child-bearing age.

Pill-related melanoma is thought to occur when progesterone and estrogen, two hormones used in the pill, stimulate the over-production of skin cells. According to the authors of the study, the pill possibly increases sensitivity to the sun's rays, thereby increasing the probability of skin cancer.

The Head of the California Registry at Berkeley, Dr. Donald Austin, attempted to provide a "scientific" explanation for the relationship between skin cancer and the pill. "It might be a false alarm. There's a good possibility that women on the pill may have more sun exposure than women not on the pill. We know that women who choose the pill are different from other women in other ways."

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Canada has the opportunity to become the world's largest fish exporter. The federal government estimates that by 1985, the export value of Canadian fish products could amount to \$1.6 billion per year — almost double the current annual export value of iron ore.

Reaching this number will involve a number of challenges. For instance, it will mean exporting 90 per cent of the catch compared to about 75 per cent today. It will mean changes in catching and processing techniques to take advantage of new opportunities in overseas markets.

The trend to date is encouraging.

Between 1972 and 1977, the export value of Canadian fish products more than doubled from \$350.4 million to \$815.7 million per year.

A major factor in this growth has been successful international marketing by the Canadian fishery industry.

However, the marketing government that it is considering intervening in the marketing effort. Such statements are causing uncertainty when what we need are co-operation, coordination and consultation.

Federal government policies should be developed to encourage continued expansion of the private sector international marketing effort.

Government can enhance Canada's international marketing position by taking a skillful and exacting approach when negotiating access to foreign markets in return for foreign fishing rights in our 200-mile zone. Meaningful consultation by Canadian negotiators with representatives of the private sector before such negotiations are undertaken is a necessity.

For its part, the industry must take an even more innovative and professional marketing approach in such areas as new product development, packaging and quality control. It must consolidate the strengths of Canadian export brands by working more closely together and also with federal and provincial governments.

Unless we remove the uncertainty from marketing and other areas of the fishing industry — unless we have increased coordination, co-operation and consultation — many of the benefits of the 200-mile fisheries management zone will not be available to us.

As interested and concerned organizations involved in fishing, H.B. Nickerson & Sons Limited and National Sea Products Limited, would like Canadians to know more about our industry and the important economic opportunity it offers.

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Ocean Resources
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