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NEWS

BEARDS AND MOUSTACHES: HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH?

... A team of scientists from the USSR Academy of Medical Sciences' Research Inst. of General & Communal Hygiene analyzed the quality of air inhaled by men with moustaches and beards. The air inhaled by these men "was found to contain several dozen toxic substances including phenol, benzene, toluene, ammonia, sulphuretted hydrogen, acetone, isoprene and acetic acid. . . . Most probably, the substances were exhaled by the subjects themselves, absorbed by the hair surface and then released again, having been inhaled. . . . The average pollution index of inhaled air in the case of moustached subjects equalled 4.2 maximum permissible concentrations

[MPC] as against less than one MPC in clean air. A beard does not increase pollution so much—only to 1.9 MPC. However, if both a moustache and a beard are worn the index goes up to 7.2—if the person is a non-smoker. In the case of smokers, the figures 24.7 (moustache alone), 18.2 (beard alone) and 49.3 (both)."

[Mikhail Dmitriyev in *Sputnik* (12): 145-6, Dec. 84. (From *Priroda*) Reproduced with permission from Press Digest, *Current Contents*®, No. 4, January 28, 1985, p. 11. (Published by the Institute for Scientific Information®, Philadelphia, PA, USA.)]

DEPRESSED? CALL SHRINK LINK

... "A new form of practice: counselling strangers who are anxious, depressed, or just plain worried. And the patients supply their own couches. A telephone service called Shrink Link has been operating in New York since October [1984]. Anyone who has a problem can call . . . and talk to a psychiatrist or psychologist at a cost of \$15 for each 10 minutes, payable by credit card. . . . Howard I. Glazer [Payne Whitney Psychiatric Ctr., Cornell U.] says using the phone has advantages. He says people don't hesitate to use it before problems get severe enough to drive them to make an office appointment. . . . Callers present a wide range of problems. Many have financial worries. Single women often complain that all the attractive men they meet are married or gay. Callers who are under stress and mainly tense may get coached in

relaxation exercises. Chronic pain that restricts activity is a frequent complaint, and these people are referred to pain clinics. 'We have to be very careful,' says Kathryn Hahner [Shrink Link project director]. 'If a problem appears to be even slightly medical, we refer the caller to a physician or a clinic.' But some who need referral for psychotherapy are reluctant to accept it, often for financial reasons, Hahner says. To such people she suggests resources offering services for fees adjusted according to income."

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