

SOCIETY

strual cycle. The key is an accurate measure of the viscosity (resistance of flow) of cervical mucus, which decreases for four days prior to ovulation and then increases. Kosasky has accurately predicted ovulation—or the lack of it—in over 2,200 tests on 100 women.

The Ovutimer's simple consumer version will utilize a weighted stand about the size of a cigarette pack. The woman samples her mucus on a probe covered by a grooved plastic plate. She places the plate against another plate mounted on the stand. If the two plates stick together when the stand is turned over, the mucus is safely thick and impenetrable by sperm. A normal woman would need to test herself four times a month; once she has detected her own ovulation, she can look forward to three weeks of protection. The device will be tested by 2,000 American women and could be available next year.

Blacks, Immigrants, and IQ Tests

"New Light on Black IQ" by Thomas Sowell, in *The New York Times Magazine* (Mar. 27, 1977), 229 W. 43rd St., New York, N.Y. 10036.

Controversial UCLA psychologist Arthur Jensen asserted in 1969 that (1) the average IQ of blacks is 15 points below that of fully-assimilated minorities; (2) black performance on tests is lowest when dealing with abstract material; (3) 80 percent of human intelligence is fixed forever at conception; and (4) the struggle to promote equal opportunity through education is therefore doomed to failure.

But Sowell, an economist at the Center for Advanced Study at Stanford, finds current patterns of black IQs "encouraging." Analyzing U.S. Army mental tests and some 70,000 elementary school transcripts, he finds that during World War I the IQs of European and Asian immigrants were nearly identical to black IQs today. Acculturation, education, and upward mobility closed the gap. Sowell concludes that, thanks to social changes of the past two decades, these factors are now beginning to influence the IQs of disadvantaged minority groups.

Soon after their arrival in America, Jews, Poles, Italians, Chinese, and Japanese had lower than average IQs (in the 80s and occasionally 70s), observes Sowell. But during the past 50 years, the average IQ of Polish- and Italian-Americans has gone up 20 to 25 points—a total exceeding the current gap between blacks and whites. Virtually all immigrant groups now have IQs at or above the national average.

As for Jensen's view that blacks have more difficulty on tests dealing with abstract material (i.e., material not dependent on "cultural information"), Sowell explains that similar results were found for white children in isolated mountain communities, for rural working-class children in England, and for Chinese-Americans during their early years in this country. Chinese-Americans now do best on abstract portions of standardized tests and figure prominently among the nation's Nobel Prize-winning scientists and mathematicians.