

Birth pill for males developed by China

TOKYO (AP) — Chinese scientists have developed a safe, highly effective male oral contraceptive derived from the cotton plant, the official Hsinhua news agency reported today.

It said trial use by more than 10,000 men "gave an effective (contraception) rate of up to 99.89 per cent." Half those tested had used the substance — called gossypol — more than two years and some for as long as four years, it reported.

Gossypol is a crystalline substance obtained from the root, stem and seeds of cotton, Hsinhua reported.

"Generally, the contraceptive is taken for a two-month period," the report said, "with a daily dose of 20 milligrams."

"The sperm-survival rate declines and the sperm become fewer and fewer until all die."

"At this stage, a maintenance dose is used which is 150 to 220 milligrams a month, generally taken twice a week. The health of the men taking the contraceptive was not affected. When the contraceptive is not taken for two to three months, the sperm condition returns to normal."

But it said "some men who take the contraceptive in some areas have low blood potassium."

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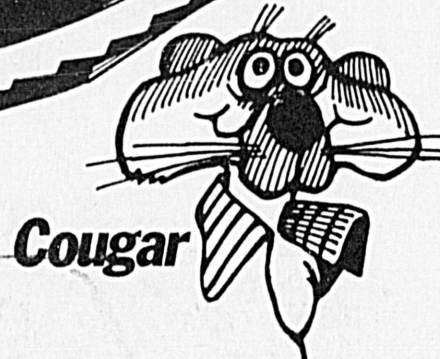
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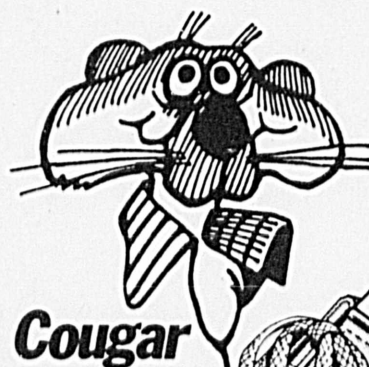
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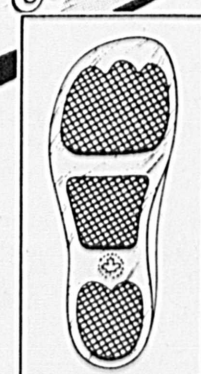
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