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The Many and Varied Good Uses of Hypnosis

To the Editor:

The New York Court of Appeals was correct to bar hypnotically induced testimony from court proceedings, on the grounds that the procedure increases the risk of contaminating the witness's memory (news story July 6). However, it is not true, as the court apparently stated, "that hypnosis has failed to gain general acceptance in the scientific community."

In the United States there are two professional societies and a division of the American Psychological Association devoted to the scientific study and application of hypnosis, and the National Institute of Mental Health and other Federal agencies have consistently supported hypnosis research for more than 25 years.

Hypnosis is widely (and appropriately) employed in medicine, dentistry and clinical psychology, and the court itself considered a large body of scientific research in arriving at its judgment. It is the use of hypnosis to

refresh memory that has failed to gain scientific acceptance, and correctly so.

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