

## Lipstick on the collar goes high-tech

Forensic biochemistry has moved from the bench to the bedroom with the creation of S-Check, an infidelity detection spray that wives can apply to their husbands' underwear. The new product garnered an Ig Nobel Prize for Chemistry for Takeshi Makino, president of the Safety Detective Agency in Osaka, which markets the product. These prizes from the *Annals of Improbable Research* are the scientific community's chance to laugh at itself (see page 1506).

The infidelity detection product consists of sprays that can show traces of semen on underwear for up to 2 weeks (if the underwear is not washed). According to the *New Scientist*, the test is believed to be similar to one commonly used by forensic scientists, although the Japanese detective agency is keeping its method a secret. Known as the acid phosphatase test, it involves the use of 2 chemicals. First,  $\alpha$ -naphthyl phosphate is sprayed onto the sample, reacting with semen to produce  $\alpha$ -naphthol. The second chemical is a dye, which reacts with  $\alpha$ -naphthol to change colour. The chemical reac-



tion produced by the Japanese product turns the undies bright green if semen is present.

Makino says his detective agency is selling 200 sets of S-Check a month, almost all to married women. — *C.J. Brown*