



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
TWIN CITIES

Division of Epidemiology
School of Public Health
Stadium Gate 27
611 Beacon Street S.E.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455

(612) 624-5400

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Colleagues in the Seven Countries Study

Dear Colleagues,

Most of you attended or know about our meetings discussing the status of the Seven Countries Study. We agreed we should tell one another what we were doing, proposing or wanting to do analyzing particular sets of data and possibly publishing. We never came up with a detailed plan for covering important questions and avoiding conflicts between investigators. A situation has now arisen that spells out the need for agreement among us.

You know that for many years my major interest has been the question of relationships between mortality, longevity and bodily characteristics, particularly fatness. Working alone I analyzed the data on the U.S. railroad men and two years ago produced a draft ms. on longevity and body fatness recorded in middle age with authors: Ancel Keys, Henry Longstreet Taylor, Henry Blackburn, Josef Brozek. I gave the final version to Henry before sending it to a journal. Then I learned that David Jacobs and four associates had written a ms. on much the same subject using the same data and their ms. had been accepted by the Am J of Epid. We discussed this with Russell Luepker, Henry Blackburn's successor as Director of the Division. We now agree to join forces in regard to that paper.

More important, to avoid such conflicts, we propose Henry Blackburn and Alessandro Menotti be coordinators with the arrangement that all members of the Seven Countries Study advise either Henry or Alessandro about what they propose to analyze and write on findings. Henry or Alessandro would advise the proposer about possible objection or conflict with other investigators and David Jacobs would keep a "scoreboard" periodically letting everyone know what is cooking. So David Jacobs would join our group, taking part in discussions and work as agreed to by the investigators. Whoever produced the data must always have first priority in deciding its use.

Please advise me or Russell Luepker what you think about the arrangement as proposed above. I expect to be here until mid-September and at Minnelea from September 20 until Decemer 3.

All good wishes,

Ancel Keys