CONF. corres - KEYS

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TWIN CITIES

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August 31, 1982

CONFIDENTIAL

TO: Ancel Keys

FROM: Henry Blackburn

SUBJECT: Editorial Suggestions for Last Draft of "Serum Cholesterol As Risk -- 15-Year Mortality in Seven Countries"

This is an important paper which should be published.

Page 1, paragraph 1: ". . . and the common view is that individual risk is directly proportional . . . ."

Page 1, paragraph 2: ". . . they do not, in fact, prove that . . . ." The term proof is vague and negative. Prefer establish?

Can you say definitely that the logistic does not fit the data better?

Page 2, paragraph 1: Suggest "over the range of cholesterol distribution. (period)."

Page 5, paragraph 2: You might explain why you decided to use a linear regression on the S. European data here and in Figure 5.

Page 2, paragraph 1: Again the word proof. What does it mean? ". . . but in neither case does this establish that the true relationship is linear . . . ."?

Multiple typos. Be glad to have a secretary redo it today or tomorrow.

Page 10, Discussion: "Popular," "built-in," etc., are perhaps unnecessary terms. Why not start out "few data are published in detail suitable for comparison with the mortality . . . etc."

Is that true? There are many details from the pooling groups. Is the lowest rate significantly lower in the second quintile in the pooling projects? This was true in four of the eight studies and is therefore uncertain?

Page 11, paragraph 1: The language is personal, not that of a joint publication. For example, "evidence for a continuous linear relationship is conspicuously absent" -- "substantially unrelated to cholesterol." Is the idea that the linear model is "final truth," setting up a straw man? I'm sure ol' Jerry Cornfield would spin in his grave to be pushed there. Hardly fittin'.

As we've discussed, you helped build the idea of a continuous relationship. Now you're tearing it down. I think that's important, but am disappointed you pose no alternative interpretations which Dave Jacobs and I have suggested to you. Or make a full breast of it: "I've once proposed this model. On careful consideration, it may be that . . . .".

Finally, you address only the issue of individual risk. You do not discuss, as I hoped, what this implies for population distributions and public health as well as personal advice.

Ancel, I would like much to see the following action occur before this is submitted for publication, according to the earlier agreed upon policy for Seven Countries as well as all other publications issued from the LPH. This would be to send a copy of this manuscript to all co-authors containing at best this substance in your cover memo: "I would be grateful for your editorial comments addressed to me in Pioppi by October 1 when I would like to submit this for publication. Henry Blackburn has some concerns about the language and style as a joint Seven Countries publication and suggests either no interpretation or more detailed interpretation to indicate how this new interpretation that the risk being discontinuous should be presented, along with alternative interpretations, and also how it should affect advice to paitents and public policy about optimal blood cholesterol levels for populations. I would welcome your suggestions, on whether the manuscript should stay as it is, or with specific editorial comments on how we might change or add to it to address his concerns."

/jml

Attachment

bpc: D. Jacobs ✓
Copy of ms. 8/31/82
jml