

14th May, 1975

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Dear George,

Thank you for your letter of May 7th about a reference centre for ECG coding. This is a proposal which, as you know, has been discussed intermittently for some years. A number of us have felt that it would be useful: the problem has been chiefly that of finding a group with the skill and staff for its implementation. I am pleased to hear that this now seems to have been solved.

Personally I think that the primary task of such a centre should be for quality control, but that the centre might wish to offer a coding service by private agreement with other groups, who would pay the costs involved. Concerning payments for the quality control service, I do not think that this would be a major problem. It would be nice if the service could be funded by WHO, by analogy with Dr. Grafnetter's laboratory in Prague; but if this is not possible, I think groups using the facility would be willing to pay the modest cost involved. There are, however, problems for the centre itself in an arrangement of this kind. They would need presumably to retain staff for the purpose and this would involve a regular financial commitment. Use of the service, on the other hand, would be unpredictable and fluctuating.

We have ourselves provided a quality control service of this kind, primarily for the groups in the WHO Collaborative Trial, but also for a few other centres by special arrangement. Any change in the arrangements for the Collaborative Trial could be made only after discussion at our next year's meeting. Personally I should advise against discontinuation of our established arrangement although we might well in addition wish to test comparability with the proposed new centre.

It is very important that the new centre should be in line with existing internationally accepted standards. These are represented in the course of training in Minnesota coding included in the document produced for WHO on "Training in Cardiovascular Epidemiology". I developed this course in collaboration with Dr. Blackburn and the detailed procedural rules were agreed between us. Dr. Blackburn and his colleagues will shortly be producing a new and improved training course. I do not

expect that this is likely to conflict with the standards we have already adopted, at least not in any important respects. It will however extend its coverage and I hope also that it will produce an improved set of reference tracings. I believe that when this course is available it should in all probability be accepted as a world standard. In the meantime I hope that the proposed reference centre in Budapest will be able to give an undertaking that their coding procedures will follow the rules in the WHO document mentioned above.

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Geoffrey Rose

cc. Dr. H. Blackburn