



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
TWIN CITIES

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CONFIDENTIAL

TO: Arthur Leon

FROM: Henry Blackburn

SUBJECT: Physical Activity Research Task Force Meeting, 9/23/82

I'd be very grateful to get some minutes, including your brief summaries of status, from the excellent physical activity meeting. Certainly this is a broad array of studies. Though some of them fit into a logical pattern, many of them seem to be "free-floating activities." You might want to think about focus so that you can establish the essential thing that we have been discussing over the years and don't yet have, an identity and a theme for these researches. It will eventually pay off with NIH.

One of the primary problems with the results of many studies has been negative results due to inadequate power. Thus, I think we should be more concerned with developing major and sound protocols than spinning off dozens of less than sound studies. Please consider more use of consultation on design, sample size, methods and quality control. I also suggest consultation on rigor of methodology. We have spent much of our lives here in devising ways to better record electrocardiograms and blood pressure, etc. I'm not aware that these are being exploited in the physical activity and nutrition studies. All major studies in LPH have careful systematic method training and ongoing quality control of observers and values in measurements. By reducing variability and increasing sample size you might reach greater power and end up with fewer puzzling, inconsistent or neutral findings. This is not a general criticism, simply a request that we enhance rigor and take advantage of consultation.

Since we are finally meeting as a group to review and brainstorm, I would like to suggest further that you consider bringing in an outside consultant maybe once a year to review program. I am thinking of people like Buskirk or Haskell.

In summary, there is a problem of focus, possibly a problem of rigor, in design and measurement, perhaps insufficient pre-testing, all of which can be shorn up. We have got to retrieve the Taylor reputation of a rigorous

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institution in methodology, concepts and design. You have good help and enthusiasm and ideas. I think we are now entering a new period of activity. Please keep me informed and involved.

Thanks.

/jml

cbpc: D. Jacobs
R. Prineas
H. Taylor

*9/29/82
JAC*