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CONFIDENTIAL

TO: Arthur Leon
FROM: Henry Blackburn
SUBJECT: NEJM Manuscript Review

Thanks for your review of the article on work capacity and coronary disease for the New England Journal of Medicine.

I agree with some of your comments and am incorporating them into the final review. I guess I find that your review comments in no way justified a rejection. Thus, your rejection clearly appears arbitrary. Unless the rejection can be justified step by step in a logical, convincing manner, the best way to express your arbitrary feelings is to pass something and give it a relatively low priority. Even that, of course, is not appropriately objective for a good review.

I believe it is common policy of journals to request individuals not to mark up the manuscripts and I am asking Marilyn to make erasures of your numerous notes.

Your comments "too small a number of discovered MI cases for a good epidemiologic study," I find rather vague. Thirty-six events is not terribly big, but far more significant studies have been made with the same number of events. In addition, the sample size has well taken care of the analysis and the confidence intervals applied. Your comments "a good epidemiologic study" is a bit disturbing. Either the study is a good study or it isn't, and I don't see what epidemiologic has to do with it. There is no set number of cases to produce a good epidemiologic study of anything. Thus, I have eliminated that disconcerting comment.

I find that the authors do define relative risk adequately. I find the analyses well done and the issue of confounders, including HDL, rather well-discussed, the conclusions reasonable, and the composition excellent and highly succinct for such a large amount of data which is extremely well reduced.

Thus, I am puzzled by your negative review. It is perfectly appropriate that our opinions differ, but I will not forward your rejection because I don't

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think you have justified it. Any lack of standardization in the measurements would reduce, not enhance, the associations found.

They also accurately define body mass index as you claim they had not.

Finally, I guess I would say it is extremely dangerous and of questionable policy to request that authors cite your work. It's a dead giveaway as to the reviewer, in addition to being of questionable taste, even if the authors were so thick that they didn't define the source.

/ljb

(Dictated by, but sent in the absence of, Dr. Henry Blackburn.)