

March 19, 1976

Dr. Sheila C. Mitchell  
National Institutes of Health  
Health Director,,  
Bldg. 31, Rm. 15A52  
Bethesda, MD 20014

Dear Sheila,

I find that our Japanese data on the relationship between body mass index (one measure of overweight and indirectly a measure of obesity) and blood pressure are not particularly revealing. You realize that we were dealing with total populations, close to 100% samples of rural farmers and fishermen ages 40 to 60. In these populations, where there was considerable range of blood pressure, the correlation coefficient between body mass index and systolic blood pressure was, in the fishing village Ushibuka, .167, for diastolic pressure .186. In the farming community, Tanishimaru, the corresponding correlations between body mass index and systolic blood pressure were .048, and diastolic .040. I feel relatively sure that the low correlations are due largely to the narrow range over which we were able to examine the body mass in these active farmers. The correlation is considerably higher in our culture where there is a huge range of body mass. So the lack of correlation doesn't really tell us much about the association because of the limitations of spread in the "spread."

Cordially,

Henry Blackburn, M.D.

HB:jp