



Department of Community Health

• School of Medicine
Davis, California 95616

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LAB OF PHYSIOLOGICAL
HYGIENE

Oglesby Paul, M.D.
Northwestern Memorial Hospital
303 East Superior Street
Chicago, Illinois 60611

Dear Dr. Paul:

I hope you will excuse this intrusion into your very busy day. Dr. Borhani has shared with me the draft manuscript "A National Study of Primary Prevention of Coronary Heart Disease" and I would like to take the opportunity to relate to you my reactions to it. I am particularly concerned with the listing of the Principal Participants and "Key bodies".

My concern stems from the fact that this paper, with national and international distribution, is the "official announcement", to the medical community, of MRFIT, and those listed as authors, participants, and "Key bodies" will be credited in future years with the organization and development of this important Program. My concern is that many "Key bodies" have been omitted because of a failure to follow the general policy as given in the MRFIT Manual of Operations. In section II, J.1, there are statements on MRFIT publication policy which specifies that... "the investigators of all centers to be recognized and thus list papers in their bibliographies", and... "allows all investigators to gain academic recognition for their contribution to the program", and finally, "all investigators have the opportunity to participate in study wide presentations and the preparation of MRFIT papers".

Dr. Paul, I feel the above manuscript violates the policy as stated in the MOOP in that several investigators (although not principal investigators) who have contributed nationally to MRFIT over the past three years are excluded from recognition by what appears to be a decision to list no more than two persons from each center. In many cases there are more than two investigators involved in MRFIT from each center. Yet, the decision to recognize only two persons, places the principal investigator in an extremely awkward position with regard to those he chooses not to list (viz., recognize).

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Dr. Paul, I understand that the candidate journal stipulated that the originally submitted paper be cut by about 50 per cent, and the decision to list no more than two per center was for sake of space. Yet, I wonder if the failure to recognize all who have contributed nationally is worth the expediency of a couple of extra lines. If the Journal of the American Medical Association (or for that matter, any other journal) is unwilling to give a fair amount of space to a meaningfully complete description of MRFIT and the people involved, then I urge another journal be selected. The tendency to restrict publication space is, in my mind, the first step from quality to mediocrity.

I took the liberty of reviewing the names of "Key bodies" listed. It is my understanding that no more than two individuals from the 20 collaborating centers, ECG Center, Laboratory Center, Coordinating Center and NHLI would be named. Yet, I see that three persons from the San Francisco Center, Chicago Center and National Heart and Lung Institute have been named. In addition, I note names of persons who, from my recollection, have not been "active" in either the Steering Committee or its sub-committees while investigators as Dr. Cohen from St. Louis (Chairman of the Design and Analysis sub-committee), Tavia Gordon from NHLI, and myself who have been active in MRFIT nationally since its inception and have faithfully attended Design and Analysis meetings as well as contributed to the overall design of the Trial (aside from local center input) are not recognized.

Dr. Paul, the basis for voicing my concern is a simple one. Investigators located in academic environments must produce evidence of creative and scientific work. While in my own situation Dr. Borhani has on every instance documented my efforts on MRFIT to the appropriate University Administration and Review Committees, in the final analysis, it bears little weight when compared to official recognition in print. Thus, I am placed in an extremely difficult situation justifying the large amount of time spent when the prospects for recognition through printed journal articles will not be forthcoming. I cannot fault my Department Chairman for this situation. I believe it reflects a poorly thought-out policy which, in my opinion, has ignored the interests of the non-Principal Investigators, many of whom have committed much of their professional careers and efforts toward the implementation of this very important program. In essence, I feel that the Publication Committee of MRFIT has not adequately developed a policy and attendant procedures by which articles are identified, author(s) are assigned and credits given.

As chairman of the Steering Committee may I, in all respect, ask that you would take this problem under very serious consideration and if necessary call a special meeting of the membership to address it straightforwardly.

Oglesby Paul, M.D.

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It has been a privilege for me to be involved with MRFIT, both nationally and as part of our own clinical center. I have written this letter because I am deeply concerned not only for my own future with MRFIT but the future of others who may be in a similar situation. I hope you will forgive the bluntness of my comments, but I felt compelled to speak out.

I hope this letter finds you in the best of health.

Very respectfully,



Jess F. Kraus, Ph.D.
Associate Professor

JFK:crs

cc: All MRFIT Principal Investigators
ECG
Laboratory
Coordinating Center Directors
William J. Zukel, M.D.