

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL SCHOOL
DEPARTMENT OF PREVENTIVE MEDICINE

Boston, Massachusetts 02115

January 22, 1970

Henry Blackburn, M.D.
Professor
University of Minnesota
School of Public Health
Stadium Gate 27
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455

Dear Blackburn:

Your letter reminded me very much of the arguments which I have continually with Bill Castelli. Bill is obviously exercised about the pandemic of arteriosclerotic disease and is intent about doing something to correct it. Bill and I can never agree and the same must be true, I am afraid, about you and me.

I agree with many of your criticisms. I do not really believe that, at present, we can judge the effect of hard water. About all I said was that it was interesting. Obviously if we can doctor the water this is the kind of preventive action that is easy. - d. G. G. G. G.

From my observations of practice I am very dubious about any kind of preventive medicine that involves change in life style. I do have a certain amount of sympathy with some who feel that we should take action to change the composition of our food. I am rather shocked at the amount of fat which we consume in frankforters and knockwurst, for example. I certainly can see no obvious reason why we must continue to consume this kind of food. I realize that if we can change living or smoking habits or other risk factors this would be desirable -- but is it possible?

Smoking carries so many dangers that I think we are fully justified in attacking it. Benefit can confidently be promised, but this is not proven for many other risk attributes. I have been much impressed by Holland's studies of smoking epidemiology among children in England. Information about smoking rates in different populations of children may present some possibility for prevention. I hope to repeat some of those studies in our own area.

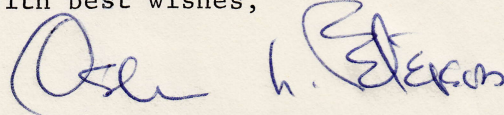
Professor Blackburn

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Let me say again that I was very pleased to meet you. I have used your paper on the reliability of EKG readings as a teaching instrument for quite a few years. It is always pleasant to meet the man whose work one knows and trusts.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Osler L. Peterson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Osler" being more prominent.

Osler L. Peterson, M.D.

Acting Chairman

Department of Preventive Medicine