



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
TWIN CITIES

Laboratory of Physiological Hygiene  
School of Public Health  
Stadium Gate 27  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455

August 19, 1974

MEMORANDUM

TO: MRFIT Intervention Team

FROM: Henry Blackburn

RE: Rosenman-Friedman, Type A Behavior and Coronary Risk

The publication of the Rosenman-Friedman book, its newspaper serialization and an August 1974 Reader's Digest article about it has led to increasing questions and concern by MRFIT participants. Their queries have particularly dwelt on one of Rosenman-Friedman statements: "If you don't also change your Type A behavior pattern, other protective measures against a heart attack -- a healthy diet, exercise, no smoking -- may be largely a waste of time."

I believe an answer to the query of participants about this matter should be along the following lines, and invite your comments and modifications.

We regard it an interesting theory that behavior of this type may influence risk of heart attack. We are convinced that it is not the prime cause of our national problem of heart attacks. This is because we have carefully observed natural populations of men largely free of these characteristics who have much coronary disease and other groups of hard driving peoples where coronary disease is rare. It may be that in our country where the coronary rate is generally high, that Type A behavior is involved. It is clearly unpleasant and unnecessary behavior and may concernably affect individual risk. But the evidence is that its effect, if any, is not as great as that of the risk factors we are working on together to modify.

To pose and test the R-F theory that behavior change may be beneficial is scientifically proper. To imply that such behavior change is essential to any effective preventive approach to coronary disease is an inappropriate and reprehensible deception, even if the motives of its proponents are sincere.

HB:jp

pc: Steering Committee

Dr. R. Shekelle