

January 24, 1974



Henry Blackburn, M.D.  
Professor and Director  
Laboratory of Physiological Hygiene  
School of Public Health  
University of Minnesota  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455

*correct*

Dear Henry:

Thank you for helping to make the first American Heart Science Writers Forum a great success. I am sure you recognized the enthusiasm of the writers and by this time must have seen that we received good coverage throughout the nation.

The meeting was good for the science writers and also good for the scientists. I think we all profited from hearing work in other fields presented in a clear and simple way.

Your Wednesday presentation was great. I only wish Boo and I had heard the musical seminar Tuesday night.

Thank you again for your contribution.

Sincerely yours,

*Dick*

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March 22, 1974

Patrick Young and Albert Rosenfeld  
Science Reporters  
SATURDAY REVIEW/WORLD  
488 Madison Avenue  
New York, New York 10022

Dear Messrs. Young and Rosenfeld:

Did we meet in Marco Island? I was highly impressed with your SR summary, on the American Heart Association Science Writers Symposium, at least in respect to all presentations but mine about coronary disease prevention. I'm inclined to wonder whether you slipped out that last day before the last presentation. At any rate, your article is more than a bit misleading about the NHLI Multiple Risk Factor Intervention Trial (MRFIT) in which you say that, "not only will diet and exercise habits be modified, but also entire life styles will be altered". This is simply not so; there will be no formal intervention on exercise or on "life style" other than that involved in attempts to reduce serum cholesterol, blood pressure and cigarette smoking. "Hence, the emphasis, in MRFIT, on life-style changes", is off the mark and was certainly not conveyed in any remarks that I made in discussion questions about MRFIT.

Your closing paragraph is particularly inappropriate, "...the MRFIT program and its ambitions attempt to pin down once and for all such risk factors as a high-cholesterol diet, smoking, and stressful life styles..." This misses the whole point of MRFIT which is not at all designed to "pin down once and for all" that the three risk factors in it are important, (already demonstrated and, incidentally, not including "stressful life style") but indeed is an attempt to modify these factors and demonstrate the practical possibility of reducing CHD risk.

Finally, your pessimistic closing tone on the possibility of reducing risk factors is unfortunate and probably not justified in terms of sustained and multi-pronged personal and public health efforts. At any rate, such changes may be necessary to achieve a significant reduction in the social burden of coronary disease.

Otherwise, the article is well and carefully done.

Regards,

Henry Blackburn, M.D.  
Professor and Director  
Vice-Chairman MRFIT

HB:jp  
pc. C. Kaelber  
O. Paul

blind copy to Virgil



11-14-74

THE JOHNS HOPKINS MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS

CARDIOLOGY  
DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE

Richard S. Ross, M.D.  
Director



Please address reply care of  
THE JOHNS HOPKINS HOSPITAL  
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21205  
Phone: 301-955-5999  
If no answer 301-955-4331

November 11, 1974

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

Dear Henry:

Thank you for the kind words about the Presidential Address. I have reworked it rather extensively since you saw it and believe that I have improved it. I also thank you for sending me the manuscript of your recent article on coronary risk factors. I enjoyed reviewing this.

Incidentally, I have finished the editing of my portion of the discussion; and it is on its way back to you.

I look forward to seeing you in Dallas.

Sincerely yours,

Richard S. Ross, M.D.  
Clayton Professor of  
Cardiovascular Disease

RSR/nme

THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21205

OFFICE OF THE DEAN  
725 N. WOLFE STREET

CABLE ADDRESS  
HOPMED

March 23, 1976

RECEIVED

MAR 29 1976

LAB OF PHYSIOLOGICAL  
HYGIENE

Dr. Henry Blackburn  
University of Minnesota  
School of Public Health  
Stadium Gate 27  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455

Dear Henry:

Thank you for your reflections on your recent offer. I have taken the liberty of sending a copy to Harry Woolf who will be amused.

Please let me know how things go in Amsterdam. I shall be thinking of you amongst the tulips the first week in April. Two years ago I was able to accept a Dutch Cardiac Society invitation to speak at their annual meeting in early April and it was absolutely lovely. Memories like this make me regret my passage through the change of life and I understand why you are hanging onto your youth with such tenacity.

I hope the manuscript will be helpful. If you quote me too much Johnson and Efler may shoot you, so be careful.

Sincerely yours,

*Richard S. Ross*

Richard S. Ross, M.D.  
Dean of the Medical Faculty  
Vice President for Health Divisions

cc: Dr. Woolf



March 29, 1976

Richard Ross, M.D.  
Vice President and Dean  
Johns Hopkins Medical School  
725 North Wolfe Street  
Baltimore, MD 21205

Dear Dick,

Many thanks for your letter and manuscript which helps my preparation for the Amsterdam meeting.

I was, of course, pleased and flattered and challenged by Dr. Woolf's 'phone call. I hope he did not think I was too abrupt, but I have been faced with other opportunities recently involving expanded administrative responsibilities. I have decided, rightly or not, administrative competence should not be stressed by higher level strains. I am not certain what I have best to contribute in the next period. However, I'm fairly sure it is not at the level of deanship of such a large and distinguished organization as Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, though I would have splendid colleagues, skilled collaborators and wide support. Indeed it would be exciting to work opposite you in the School of Public Health. Good things could happen. But I strongly suspect that I have reached my level of administrative incompetence. Dr. Woolf's suggestion that such a realization is only preparation for the next level of incompetence was perhaps realistic but not sufficiently reassuring.

Cordially,

Henry Blackburn, M.D.

HB:jp