

November 9, 1976

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Dear Jerry,

I have come upon a very nice caricature of Virchow which I am mounting in the laboratory under which will be the text of your quotation of him regarding social illnesses. I also have a caricature of Charles Darwin by the same artist and am finding nothing directly related to our undertakings in "Origin of the Species". I recall that you had recently read a book about Darwin which had some very relevant quotations. Could you refer me to that book or those quotations?

I'm sorry that we did not keep in closer contact and work more in concert on strategies for MRFIT in recent times. Between our myriad travels and activities and burdens and frustrations we were not acting sufficiently together. I am still hoping that an Executive Committee with appropriately experienced leadership and with authority vested in Bill Friedewald, as well as activities undertaken by working groups such as ours in nutrition, may get MRFIT going. The combination of very poor organization and management, and lack of concern with the major issues of MRFIT, has gone on quite too long.

I understand fully your position on office in MRFIT as it stands now. But I am hopeful that Oley Paul will see the light and, when no longer under fire, resign. I am also hoping that you will one day provide the leadership and challenge that you did so beautifully with the Coronary Drug Project, at least for two or three years, to bring MRFIT together effectively and to get publications under way.

So that you will also understand my viewpoint, I will continue to function minimally until I feel that I am in a situation free of the frustration of Oley Paul's management of the study. I am also becoming more involved, as apparently are you, in the needs of my own institution and community. Though I have turned down many offers for greater administrative duties elsewhere, it appears that I may be required to assume them here. The days of national committee work and international peripatations is clearly drawing rapidly to a close. I now have an investment in a division with 14 faculty and 50 employees. This will likely increase in the very near future (confidentially) on reorganization of the School of Public Health.

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Also the future of the laboratory may be involved much more in community studies in the upper Midwest. I find that my administrative skills and resources are barely adequate for my local situation and I will unequivocally not accept major office in MRFIT, even in the unlikely circumstance that I might be asked.

The enclosed format for a lab. retreat was highly successful and may interest you. I look forward to seeing you this weekend in Miami.

Cordially,

Henry Blackburn, M.D.

HB:jp
enclosure

SLR -

Remove these for you.

This 1976 letter is as close
as will get apparently to
the best letter I could
self-include in MRFIT.
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