

March 16, 1977

Dr. John F. VanPilsun
Professor, Biochemistry & Medicine
219 Millard Hall
Campus

Dear Dr. VanPilsun:

We have recently heard of your important function in teaching nutrition courses, including those of Minnesota medical students.

We would like to invite you to share with us in a seminar, or in informal discussions, your experience, data and views on the relation of nutrition and atherosclerosis. Perhaps in this way we could find areas of agreement to emphasize in teaching, and areas of disagreement in which it could clearly be pointed out the alternative views held by the scientific community, including those experienced in population studies and nutritional researches at the University of Minnesota.

Particularly, it would seem desirable for us to discuss different views of the scientific "evidence about which you may be teaching, that: "It has not been proven that cholesterol is related to heart attacks." If this is your view, there must be important differences indeed in your evaluation of the evidence, and your definitions of "relationships" and of "proof".

At any rate, I hope you will have an interest in sharing ideas with us so that the medical students may receive balanced, or at least alternative views, in future courses in nutrition.

Cordially,

Henry Blackburn, M.D.
Professor and Director, and
Professor of Medicine

HB:jp

bpc: N. Gault
L. Stauffer

A. Leon.

University
of
Minnesota
memo

date March 8 1977

to Dr. Leon

from John Conrad

re: Conversation March 2, 1977.

During a Biochem 5-300 lecture on 3/2/77 Dr. J.V. Van Pilsum stated in his lecture on nutrition "It is criminal the way that advertising leads one to believe cholesterol causes heart attacks. It is a big hoax. It has not been proven that cholesterol is related to heart attacks." In replying to a question he conceded that atherosclerotic plaques were cholesterol based; however, it wasn't the whole story--there were other factor(s).

During personal conversation the next day, Dr. Van Pilsum stated that the term criminal referred to that form of advertising concerning cholesterol warnings which might cause people to become nutritionally deficient in nutrients. Fad diets do a great deal of harm and he was concerned; however, as far as he is concerned everything is in the genes--that is to say one's fate rests on what was inherited at birth, and he alluded to the fact that little could be done to change one's destiny.

In this area I feel that he is off base, but who am I to judge?

Dr. Van Pilsum is a good lecturer with interesting, informative material.

8-92050

→ TO : H. BLACKBURN

THIS IS DOCUMENTATION OF SOME ^{MONSUNG} MOKE OF THE ANTI-CHOLESTEROL HYPOTHESIS THAT OUR MED STUDENTS ARE BEING SUBJECTED TO BY THE BIOCHEM. DEPT. VAN PILSUM ALSO SAID ACCORDING TO JOHN THAT A PERSON SHOULD "EAT AS MUCH BUTTER AND EGGS AS THEY WANT" SINCE FAT AND CHOLESTEROL-INTAKE IS UNRELATED TO CHD!