July 22, 1976

William H. Weidman, M.D.
Professor of Pediatrics
MAYO CLINIC
Rochester, MN 55901

Dear Bill,

Many thanks for the excellent reprint from Michael Oliver. Rather than rejecting it, I very carefully read it (previously) and noted 58 points of valid (not emotional) disagreement. I had the pleasure of lunching with Michael last month in Amsterdam and discussing his editorial in a most stimulating way. I guess that's the sort of intellectual exchange I have hoped for and sought with you, involving the perhaps forceful but clear expression of scientific arguments and criticism --- with the expectation of equally forceful opposing arguments. The disappointing thing about our correspondence is that rather than replying with evidence of perception of my arguments and then answering them, you apparently delight in labeling as a "nut" or "emotional", "eccentric" and now we are all the way to "fanatical". The problem with labeling someone a fanatic is that one no longer has to consider his arguments.

You will please note that my arguments are generally and clearly provided, perhaps with an emotional component when I feel that my colleagues put their feet in their mouth, but they are nevertheless, scientific arguments which should provide a valid base for debate.

This is what I would always hope to conduct with my colleagues having different observations and opinions, rather than labeling, or being labelled a fanatic.

The most important source of our controversy, including that I have with Michael Oliver, has to do with grasping the public health significance of these questions and distinguishing them from the question of individual significance. Each of our arguments has validity when interpreted within its context. But when you extend your observations to the collective, I believe you err. The observations made in individuals and the action appropriate to

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individuals are not necessarily the ones appropriate to population differences or rational preventive action at the social level, "proved or unproved".

It is thus unhappy to be labeld emotional and fanatical, rather than replied to on an intellectual plane, as I tried to do in my detailed and scientific, if direct and uninhibited, critique of your publication!

Cordially yours,

Henry Blackburn, M.D.

HB:jp

Mayo Clinic
Rochester, Minnesota 55901
Telephone 507 282-2511

July 16, 1976

William H. Weidman, M.D.
Pediatric Cardiology

Reply on Page

file corresp.

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

Dear Professor:

I am enclosing a reprint of an article which you probably glanced at and rejected. I am asking only that you read it as carefully as I did because I was pleased to see that there is one cardiologist somewhere in the world who hasn't allowed his emotional involvement to cloud his thinking.

You, of course, realize that at no time have I detected any tendency in you to have an emotional and fanatical attachment to an unproved hypothesis.

Your obedient servant,

Bill

William H. Weidman, M.D.
Professor of Pediatrics

WHW:crk

Enclosure

Bill
Let's stay friends. This dam is hardly pistified as commentary on my opinion or my analysis of the evidence. I will send you the reply I sent other fanatics to Mike's article. I had a good chat w him about it last week in Amsterdam and have indeed not changed all this

arguments.