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Henry Blackburn M.D.,
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Correct

Dear Henry,

Your scholarly and balanced lecture in Berlin was much appreciated by me. But I do not think it is particularly helpful to a mixed audience to assume a gladiatorial role and I did not think that it helped them to distort the quotes you made from my Lancet survey by relating them to distribution curves which are, as you rightly said, ridiculous and which form no part or basis of my argument. Your comments were inconsistent, moreover with your earlier careful analysis (with which I agree) of the possible zero relationship between the first five or six deciles of serum cholesterol and CHD incidence. Let me be clear that I am not with it to 220 mg/dl or any particular figure but I remain to be convinced that much, if any, reduction in incidence or mortality from CHD can be achieved by lowering serum cholesterol below 200 mg/dl as compared to below 220 mg/dl. Please convince me. I concede, however, that it is more pragmatic and practical to advise the whole public to reduce serum cholesterol because of the confusion that that would result if one were to discriminate between the upper and lower halves of the distribution curve.

As always, it is stimulating talking to you and I really did enjoy your lecture which was most carefully constructed and convincingly presented.

Yours sincerely,

Michael