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April 4, 1988

Christopher Howson, Ph.D.  
Project Director  
National Academy of Science  
Diet & Health Study  
2101 Constitution Avenue  
Washington, D.C. 20418

Dear Chris:

Here are my suggestions for the next draft of Chapter 28. I have extensively edited the competing risk section, pages 4-33. I think it can "fly" with some minor editing at your end, but I expect more serious editing from others during the formal review process.

I've edited some of the issues we identified in the section on the Prevention Paradox, to where it's now reasonable, I think. The feasibility paragraph on page 40 is not exactly "on", but I didn't touch it.

I enclose a copy of Dewitt Goodman's edits of the Chapter 28 Recommendations, just in case you didn't get them.

I am most impressed by your (?) review of the recommendations of other expert groups. It is very well done and useful. I have made a few suggestions including an important one on page 59 that I think is a misquote of AHA recommendations.

Throughout, I find the missing touch of a good behavioral scientist, especially in discussions about youth and about changing public eating patterns. It could be much stronger without being much longer. I'll have some names to suggest, if you like, and think we need a couple of social behavioral people, with eating pattern experience, to review our report, as well as to participate centrally in the Implementation Report.

To the section on Public Health Impact starting on page 72, I have added some quantitative estimates from my own calculations on the estimated effect of the recommended diet change on population cholesterol level (about -20 mg/dl) and then effects on disease rates and also two tables of estimates from The Carter Report (Closing the Gap).

I suggest removing table 28-11 to page 80. I suspect you like this sort of summary, but I'm uncomfortable with plus-minus charts. They may oversimplify and confuse when we have elsewhere summarized well.

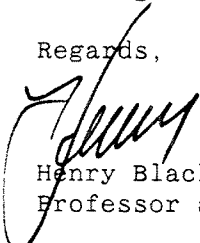
I hope I've not been too negative about the section on Implications for Society starting on page 81. It appears to me negative in places, a bit discursive, and very speculative, raising many questions that we can't treat adequately here. I had earlier commented (with much support at the March '88 meeting) about the confusion when relating recent diet changes all the way back to the turn of the century. I think the section would benefit from a rethinking and rewriting in a positive, more direct style, to put forward some of its very good points and maybe to let some minor points go without a discourse. I would be happy to see it shortened and tightened, but am afraid I was mainly negative in editing rather than attempting rewrites and hope it is not too offending of anyone.

The Research Recommendations are in pretty fair shape.

A final comment is one of overall organization of Chapter 28. I wonder if we have too many disparate things in this chapter. It needs a more detached editor than I am, at the moment, to determine this.

My personal priorities are Chapters 5, 7, and 19 in that order, estimating about 2-3 nights (otherwise our days are very busy here) for each.

Regards,



Henry Blackburn, M.D.  
Professor and Director

/nmf

Enclosure

pc: S. Palmer

bpc: R. Shekelle  
D. Goodman  
A. Motulsky  
H. McGill  
J. Bailar

(letter only)

