



AMERICAN HEALTH FOUNDATION NAYLOR DANA INSTITUTE FOR DISEASE PREVENTION

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December 19, 1980

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Dr. Ancel Keys
Laboratory of Physiological Hygiene
University of Minnesota
School of Public Health
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455

Dear Doctor Keys:

In THE LANCET, 20 September, 1980, you discussed the important question of nutrition, HDL cholesterol and heart disease.

You also allude to the fact that there may be a reverse relationship between cholesterol and cancer. I am afraid that this concept may lead to difficulties. Indeed cancer cannot be considered a single disease, but many different diseases, each with its own risk factors and modulators. For example, cancer of the lung has totally different risk factors from cancer of the stomach which is, in turn, different from cancer of the colon.

Current views developed rather fully in ADV. IN CANCER RES. 32:237-345, 1980 discuss these matters in some detail. I am pleased to send you some summary papers. I do hope that your insight into nutrition and disease would make you realize the fallacy of relating cholesterol to cancer without specifying which cancer. In fact, it would seem to me the recent report by a committee of the National Academy dealing with nutrition and heart disease run into the same problem and failed to realize that the question of types of cancer needed to be addressed.

I look forward to your further comments.

Sincerely,

John H. Weisburger, Ph.D., M.D.h.c.
Vice President for Research

JHW:hls
Encl.

cc: Dr. Wynder, Dr. Arnold