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Dear Henry,

I have examined with much interest your letter to me and to David Jacobs and the 18 pages of "H. Blackburn responses to Chapter 7 comments of external reviewer. Augmented responses to July 1 comments."

I should be glad to review the material and to join in drafting whatever seems to be desirable about this subject. However, I have seen neither the draft of the National Academy of Sciences Report nor the "external review of our draft". I should mention that I have neither a dictaphone nor a secretary to convert dictated material to a paper draft.

You ask specific questions.

1) Yes, I have taken stearic acid out of the regression equations using the many controlled dietary experiments in metabolic wards at Hastings State Hospital. The difference with and without stearic acid in the dietary data made extremely little difference as we would expect because in none of our diets, and in no natural population diets I know about, is stearic acid a large part of the total fat. On the average, stearic acid makes up some 40% of the saturated fatty acids in beef fat. Suet, a particular kind of beef fat that is not included in ordinary cuts of beef, is very high in stearic acid but few people eat any suet and, in fact, suet is practically indigestible.

2) We never made specific controlled experiments on the effects of hydrogenated vegetable oils on the serum cholesterol concentration. Mattson and Grundy used hydrogenated vegetable oils in their completely unphysiological dietary experiments. I wrote a comment on those experiments and the M and G conclusions and enclose a copy as published in NEJM.

4) You might be interested in the findings in a big diet survey in Belgium. A note about this is in Nutrition Research Newsletter, October, 1987. I have seen the full data and a ms on this study but the article was, unfortunately rejected by the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition because the Editor considered that it contributed "nothing really new". Also, you might profit from examining a bad paper by Reiser, etc in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition 1985; 42 : 190-197.

5) Enclosed is a copy of "Nutrition Classics" published in Nutrition Reviews 1988; 46: 195-197.

7) Margaret has just ordered our tickets for the next trip. We leave here September 9 and return December 12th. Except for a few days for the meeting in Sardinia in mid October, we'll be at Minnelea.

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