

Corres - Stallones



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August 25, 1981

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Dear Stoney:

This note refers to your very appropriate questioning of my data on salt and hypertension as presented to the Tahoe group. I accept your contention that many people don't accept Dahl's idea, but I didn't quite understand the strong challenge, other than to point out that the diagram itself, which I should have pointed out, is mainly of interest for historical value. On the other hand, in a fairly exhaustive review of the literature recently, I found no great inconsistencies in the population evidence. Many of the studies, as we both recognize, are technically weak, but I have the distinct impression that, as studies are stronger technically, the relationship becomes clearer. Can you cite other evidence specifically rather than your general disclaimer?

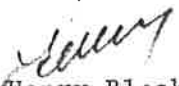
Another of your remarks was more puzzling. Instead of regarding the improved techniques of measuring sodium and blood pressure, and new looks for correlations as normal steps to reduce variance and as appropriate ways to test hypotheses with greater possibility of finding true effects, you responded strongly suggesting that these were misguided attempts to find something which didn't exist. Have you made similar remarks concerning Shekelle's efforts on individual diet and serum cholesterol? What's the difference? I think this is very appropriate hypothesis testing and there is certainly sufficient evidence to test the hypothesis. I would understand your point if this were simply a fishing expedition.

I would appreciate your getting me back on base if you feel that my enclosed anthropological-sociological contributions to the epidemiological evidence are inappropriate. I find them part of a legitimate search for "plausible mechanisms" rather than mere padding for skinny data.

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On the other hand, I'll probably go over the enclosed in the light of your Tahoe comments. Most of this is old stuff to you and not recommended, but you might be amused by the anthropological and historical sections which I enjoyed putting together.

Cordially,

  
Henry Blackburn, M.D.  
Professor and Director

MB:blh

Enclosure

Rome ms.