



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
TWIN CITIES

Division of Epidemiology
School of Public Health
Stadium Gate 27
611 Beacon Street S.E.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455
(612) 624-5400

August 1, 1988

A.S. Dontas, M.D.
1, Stesichorou Street
10674 Athens, Greece

Dear Andy:

How delightful to hear from you. We did miss you in Finland. It was about as successful a small conference as one can image, both in general tone and social activities and in presentations. I think Martti must have enjoyed it and we all did.

With Kromhout's increasing activities and funding I wouldn't despair that things will move ahead. In fact, he had people in the field in Crete last summer at the time that I was there. At any rate, the new group of junior investigators, Menotti, Kromhout and Nissinen are ambitious and hard working folks.

You mentioned Ioannides. Paul disgraced himself at the Santa Fe conference. He made comments on virtually every paper presented and most were uncomprehending, inappropriate, sermonizing, unscientific and opinionated. I really felt very sorry for him because he seemed to have so little insight into the foolishness he was creating. I trust you to keep this confidential, but hope that you will act on it and not encourage him.

We will find funds for a programmer for your visit next June. It would be much better for you to telephone Dave Jacobs and see about the state of the data. Most of these sorts of things now, with a relatively small database, it's best to put on personal computers and do the analyses oneself.

The World Congress of Preventive Cardiology will hold forth the whole of the week of June 17th and so it sounds like you have picked a good time. I will discuss this promptly with David Jacobs and think you should go ahead with planning. I will also discuss with him your housing for that period. It would be nice if you could spend some of the time with Stacy and myself in our new home. We are now suburbanites. You also might want to think of stopping down in Washington, D.C. for the opening session and first two days of that meeting from the 17th to 19th.

Cordially,



Henry Blackburn, M.D.
Professor and Director

/nmf

Enclosure

pc: K. Ramel
D. Jacobs
D. Surbey

24 August 1988

H. Blackburn, M.D.
Division of Epidemiology
School of Public Health
Stadium Gate 27
611 Beacon Str. S.E.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455
U.S.A.

Dear Henry,

It was nice and warming to receive your letter of August 1st and I wish to thank you for all your suggestions on future work. I will write shortly to David Jacobs so I can estimate the time required to compile the remaining necessary data. I had hopes to receive these items in Athens shortly after I left in the Fall of 1986 and complete the paper here, but apparently Peter Hannan got tied up in other business (see copy of letter 6 October 1986).

Your suggestion about stopping down in Washington D.C. for the World Congress of Preventive Cardiology is seriously considered. I would very much like to take part to it and our group has collected interesting data but it is very likely that we will have our national elections on the 18th of June, and I cannot afford not to vote for the change of this government. Further, in Greece, voting in national elections is compulsory and travelling on the eve of the elections might be taken as a punishable act.

My intension for the V.C. and FEV data is to assess their strength as predictors of death in the two Greek cohorts in the successive four quinquennia of follow-up in amultifactorial analysis of risk factors, since the strength of most accepted factors appears different in Southern Europe than in Northern Europe or the U.S.A.

The remaining tasks, including the period of warming-up and bringing the manuscript(s) to a final state should not take more than four weeks, of which approximately two might be used for the analysis proper.

In this respect I would like to draw your attention to a subject, about which I spoke to Dean Surbey during my last visit in Minneapolis. I am missing some Social Security quarters which I will require to have completed in order to receive even a partial pension eventually. Is it possible to obtain some type of partial appointment with minimal or no payment, which would hold for e.g. one or two quarters a year for two to three years? During these periods I could give lectures, take part in seminar teaching, as well as work on data of the Seven Countries study. I could even reimburse the Department from private funds in case the entire period is not worked out; the object is to add some covered earnings of social security which would be added to my present ones, so I can get nearer the necessary 30 quarters of coverage which I will require for retirement benefits, if I ever decide to "retire".

I have hopes that some sort of local support can be obtained relatively easily for a repeat survey of the original Cretan cohort of 1960, so we can examine the 30-years' survivors of this group. This will have to be planned for November 1990, after the tourist season is over (end of October).

Thank you for your precious reprints; I am enclosing herewith an address given earlier this summer on a bioethical subject.

Greetings to all good friends and Stacy, and hope to see you again soon,

As ever,

A.S. Dontas, M.D.

ASD/zk

Corresp: Dontas



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September 7, 1988

9/8/88

A. S. Dontas, MD
1, Stesichorou Street
10674 Athens
GREECE

Dear Andy:

Thanks for your nice letter and your marvelous essay. I passed it on to Jim Vaupel, our specialist in aging, who is really a profound thinker and researcher in the area. I enjoyed it very much. I don't fully accept your point #C in Page 5 that, "no elderly subject is directly productive prior to his illness" depends on how you measure productivity. As economists is one way and for human values is another. I fully supported my father's continued attempts to survive because of the marvelous psychological support he gave to my mother, that in turn reduced the economic burden to society that would have obtained if she had been on her own. So, not all resources are irretrievable after restoring a disabled patient to another state. Keep in touch.

Regards,

Henry Blackburn, MD
Professor and Director

/tmw

Friday, February 5, 1988

AT
9/1/1
to Katia

Corresp - Dostas

Dear Katia,

This a much belated answer to your nice letter of November 5, which was followed by a similar one by your father. My grief stemmed from my unsuccessful attempts to reach you both, despite several phone calls to a series of hotels in Crete, as my daughter did not keep the name of the hotel you stayed in. As for the Plaka hotel, this is one very near our home, with excellent facilities and relatively modest prices, as well as centrally located and in a very quiet area, about 100 yards from the house ^{where} Lord Byron lived in, and within the recently excavated modern Athens area, which disclosed an amazing amount of Roman, Neohellenistic, byzantine, and postbyzantine findings, some of which are kept in our home...

I hope that on your next trip you give us plenty of warning time, so that your Athens' stay may be more profitable.

As for ourselves, this is my wife's last pre-retirement year, and there are a lot of problems associated with her new type of life. Our family is growing, we have one grand-daughter from each one of our daughters (Cleo and Cookie) and we keep busy. I am very much involved in several projects, in addition to trying to run my private office, because I (and several other physicians heading Departments) were expelled without pension, through a legal jerk of the Papandreou Government.

It is possible that I will visit the Twin Cities in early fall, if something can be arranged and I can have some computer and statistical assistance from the Division. Your father will, however, have the last word.

Say hello to your mother, I will write directly to your father, you should both be here at this time, it has been an incredible mild winter, so far,

Sincere regards,

Alex Dostas

corresp. Dontas



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611 Beacon Street S.E.
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August 1, 1988

8/2 ✓
A.S. Dontas, M.D.
1, Stesichorou Street
10674 Athens, Greece

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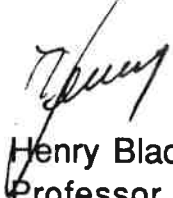
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Henry Blackburn, M.D.
Professor and Director

/nmf

Enclosure

✓ pc: K. Ramel
D. Jacobs
D. Surbey
A. Keys

AEC folder

*pc missing to D.S.
file A. Jacobs*

14 August 1988

H. Blackburn, M.D.
Division of Epidemiology
School of Public Health
Stadium Gate 27
611 Beacon Str. S.E.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455
U.S.A.

*Jan S. This looks
rough, considerable
the large amt. of
corrections
required.
alderas!
H.B.
will need
to reply
formally.*

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As ever,



A.S. Dantas, M.D.

ASD/zk

ATHENS HOME FOR THE AGED
CENTER OF STUDIES
OF AGE - RELATED CHANGES IN MAN
137 KIFISSIAS AVE. TEL 692 3258
115 24 ATHENS - GREECE

File Jan 88

Dr. Ancel Keys
Minneapolis 8406-Pioppi (SA)
Italia

July 21, 1988

Dear Ancel,

This is in reply to your recent note of July 6, as well as to that of January 10 from Minneapolis. The delay in answering the earlier letter has been due to the uncertainty about my plans for this summer-fall which only now are clear.

It now appears that I will not be able to squeeze out the necessary three weeks to complete the respiratory paper and alter it by including the deaths from Crete and Corfu. I have therefore decided to make this period coincide with my next year's trip to Mexico (Acapulco, June 19-23, 1989) to attend the International Congress of Gerontology. I will write in the interim to Rose Hilk and David Spain, so that on the basis of the 20-year (or 25-year) deaths' records, available on Alessandro Menotti's master tape from the Seven Countries, an analysis of V.C., vs. deaths in Crete and Corfu can be carried out, if Rose can find some time for it. For this purpose, I am sending a copy of this letter to Henry Blackburn as well.

With regards to Alessandro's recent correspondence, I have not received the manuscript, nor the letter from Alessandro, which was brought to my attention only through your recent letter. About three months ago, a similar letter and a manuscript were received from Alessandro (20-year mortality in 12 cohorts of six countries) which he planned to present in Ilomantsi. I made several suggestions and returned the manuscript to Alessandro, along with an indication that it would be impossible for me to attend the meeting because of simultaneous occurrence of the Rumanian Gerontological Association's meeting to which Dr. A. Aslan had invited me (she died suddenly just two weeks before the meeting).

With regard to the questions one would like to concentrate on and work up to, the Greek situation is complex. To begin with, for the past ten or fifteen years there is no proper Greek team working coherently on a targeted project. The causes for it are manifold: the absence of a central unit where records can be stored and studied, the absence of facilities for real in-depth analysis, the concentration of Christ's activities in his hospital and private practice, while my increasing responsibilities at the Home for the Aged opened up an entirely new set of data; finally, gross lack of funds locally.

Nevertheless, there is usually one junior doctor visiting the island of Crete once a year and my daughter Cleo or myself in Corfu update the death records there. As a result, death records from Crete and Corfu are complete for 25 years and in the hands of Dr. Menotti in Rome.

Now, future analysis: unless a direct, easy access to data from other areas of the Study becomes available (and proper help in organizing and presenting the material) no really basic material can be produced and presented from this end, in the fear of special joint papers; this is the reason for my travels to the U.S. to compile and present at least one set of data within one country (respiratory function, Greece). Since Dr. Menotti has apparently secured a first-class programmer I see no obstacle in his presenting data from the Greek study, which would otherwise lie dormant here. A prerequisite for this would be the previous circulation of the manuscript for comments. With regard to authorship, several former members of the Greek team took part in the early surveys and are rarely, if ever mentioned; Drs Paul Joannides and Adrian Corcondilas have taken a longer part than most of others, and should be mentioned in some of the more broad reviews.

From your notes of December, I see that you state as my present interests the determination of physical and mental abilities and self-care capacity. This is true, but it is a topic which can not be answered from the original set of data which did not test mental capacity, nor can it be answered on the basis of the available survival data. Further, mental capacities were not tested at the outset of the study and it will require a good-sized team to carry out even a gross evaluation of cognitive or psychomotor function. These questions can be tackled only within a "captive" population followed over time, and I include herewith a manuscript presently under scrutiny, which has attempted to answer exactly this problem.

What I would like to do on the basis of the Greek data is to identify the determinants of survival (or longevity?) for specific temporal end-points, i.e. at 10-, 20- and 25-years within and between the two Greek cohorts. These factors may differ with the length of follow-up and age at entry: we have recently completed such a study in our material at the Home for the Aged (400 women followed up for 6 to 10 years); age appears as the most important factor, then self-care inability, low Ht, bacteriuria, low blood pressure, elevated blood urea, and smoking, in this order. Cholesterol, ECG evidence of CHD, diabetes, social status and other factors were not important. High blood pressure was found to be a protective factor in this group (see attached diagram).

Christ and I have high hopes of obtaining some financial support from some of the largest local olive oil producers to study the physical and other aspects of survivors of Crete in 1990, i.e. thirty years after the initial study. It will be a much simpler affair than applying to formal sources of support and we hope to know about results well in advance.

I wish you and Margaret and your large family the best for this summer and look forward to meet you next year in Minneapolis, or earlier in Minnelea.

Sincerely yours,
A.S. Dantas, M.D.

C.C. A. H. Blackburn ✓

A.S.

A. S. DONTAS, M. D.

1, STESICHOROU STREET
106 74 ATHENS, GREECE

TEL. 722-8289

July 19, 1988

Dr. Henry W. Blackburn
Division of Epidemiology
School of Public Health
611 Beacon Street S, E.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455
U. S. A.

Reply on tape

Dear Henry:

This is a long overdue letter in reply to your long letter of last November and to a recently received card from Katia. It is always refreshing to hear from you both.

A series of impediments prevented me to be present at Martti Karvonen's meeting last month: I had been invited by Ana Aslan to give a lecture on that same week in Bucharest, and her death about 10 days before the meeting converted the meeting into a grandiose memorial celebration. This was further, my first invitation to Rumania after several promises these last years.

You must have heard from Menotti and Kromhout about the meeting in Minnelea. After all the talking I doubt that acting will amount to much—at least for Greece. We have no facilities for central analysis at this time, and are thus dependent on computer times and programs from external sources. Christ is too busy to get actively involved, and of the younger collaborators only Paul Joannides might have some time. I have just recently installed a good-sized computer at my Lab in the Athens Home for the Aged and if everything goes smoothly we will be running some local programs as of the end of the summer. It is already a big improvement as far as filing and manuscript editing is concerned.

This summer appears to be quite tight, I therefore do not see how I can manage to squeeze the two to three weeks necessary to complete the respiratory paper and to insert the Crete/Corfu deaths in the Discussion. Further, the trip to the U.S. is not as cheap as it used to be, and I plan to make it coincide with other scientific visits. Next June there will be the 14th International Congress of Gerontology in Acapulco, Mexico, which I plan to attend. I think that I could combine to that my long-postponed visit to the Twin Cities, especially since there will be opportunities to stop in one or two places after the Congress and give lectures. The Congress will run from 19 to 23 June, so that, e.g. a 2½ to 3 weeks stay in Minneapolis following this period appears suitable, especially since most of the absences will materialize after the 15th of July. It would be ideal if a programmer could spend, e.g. 4 to 5 hours weekly for two weeks

so that I can tidy up this long-standing manuscript. I would be grateful to you to hear your views (and help) on the above.

I have just received your 1986-87 list of publications and I am awed at the amount and quality of published work; you should feel quite proud about the evolution of this Department. Is it possible to receive xerox copies of articles 1285, 1329 and 1364, which are totally unavailable here?

It was bad that we missed each other last fall, despite several attempts on my part during the days of your stay in Crete. In retrospect George Arnaoutakis and his wife were on the same plane with you on the return trip Crete-Athens, but they did not recognize you...

Hoping to hear from you soon and with best wishes for a productive year,

As ever,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "A. S. Dontas".

A. S. Dontas, M. D.