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PC-HB TO TAKE TO Vienna
SENT TO BH 8/24/88

Corresp - Hurley

August 24, 1988

✓ Richard Hurley
Director
Department of Medical Education
American Heart Association
7320 Greenville Avenue
Dallas, TX 75231

RE: Newsletter edits

Dear Dick:

This is in response to the Magee articles received today. Incidentally, do you try to influence his procedures? I notice he plans to interview Koop on the Surgeon General's Report on Nutrition. That is, of course, appropriate but the person really responsible for it and most knowledgeable about it is Dr Michael McGinnis, Assistant Surgeon General and Magee would get a much more balanced picture from a deeper interview with McGinnis and a shorter one with Koop. Magee is obviously an effective science reporter and writer and I'm impressed.

Other than some criticism of the design and author's conclusions about causation in the HDL/stopping smoking study, I think Magee has done a very decent job with a topical subject.

(HB Editorial comment: The stage of knowledge in this issue, of smoking and HDL, is now such that a controlled experiment is indicated. Since a controlled experiment could not ethically induce people to take up smoking it would be a controlled experiment of stopping smoking. It might even include a third experimental group that would replace smoking with nicotine gum, to get an idea of whether it's the nicotine or other

compounds of tobacco that relate to the HDL lowering.

One usually don't speak of a "dose-response relationship" when only two levels of exposure are compared. If the data are available, it would be useful to know whether decline of HDL was greater than 10% in those smoking more than one pack a week, thus giving results for 3 levels of exposure).

Incidentally Dick, since you apparently have experienced reviewers it might be a useful addition to enclose such small editorial comments on Magee's summary articles, I'm always a bit uncomfortable with simply accepting what the authors say directly, transposing it to a newsletter as if it were the whole truth. That may be more than you bargained for!

Regarding the article on "Check out costs", I think Magee has probably done a good job with Marmot's article. I don't know whether you would like to raise with him personally the small issue of an "excessively popular" writing style leading to inaccuracies such as paragraph 1, line 4: "Average family". There is, of course, no such thing as an average individual or an average family. There are average values for families or averages of families, and average values for individuals, and so forth. Speaking of such quantitative things it is probably more correct to say "shopping decisions by most families, on both sides of the Atlantic".

In line 1 paragraph 2 items "like" poultry and to a lesser extent fish is not correct. The author surely means items such as poultry and fish.

(HB Editorial note: U.S. experience would confirm U.K. experience in the importance of economic factors for food choices at the grocery store. This was recently examined systematically in the Minnesota Heart Health Program where it was clearly established that sales price inducements on "heart healthy" items had a greater influence on purchasing patterns than the health messages associated with those products. However, there are considerable differences between the US and the UK in relation to U.S. price supports for milk products and other market factors that usually do not make low fat milk products significantly less expensive than full milk products in the U.S.

Apparently, the great shift to low fat milk products in the U.S. has been increasing health and weight awareness rather than economic

inducements. This editor is a bit skeptical of reports such as "80% of those interviewed made some improvements in their eating habits" if there is no parallel questioning about areas of eating pattern that may have "deteriorated". Bad food choices and faulty eating habits in some areas occur in the same persons making good changes in other areas).

Dick, this is an interesting topic and treated reasonably. But, I don't understand paragraph 4. I would "go back to the drawing board" on the line about "modern lifestyles affecting women's roles as arbiters---". Pretty vague, and also seems contradictory to the next paragraph about more male adults and teenagers doing the shopping.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Henry Blackburn", written in a cursive style.

Henry Blackburn