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~~Barrett Connor~~
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Elizabeth Barrett-Connor, M.D.
Department of Community & Family Medicine
School of Medicine
University of California, San Diego
La Jolla, CA 92093

Dear Dr. Barrett-Connor:

I am happy to reply to your September 3rd request for an external critical evaluation of Dr. Criqui's research, teaching and professional standing. I am happy to respond and to recognize an outstanding researcher and teacher. Dr. Criqui's training and credentials are impeccable, with an uncommon combination of internal medicine, cardiological and epidemiological preparation.

I am familiar with Dr. Criqui's researches and have been exposed annually and in depth to his teaching competence. I also feel able to speak of his comparative status and reputation nationally and internationally with my responsibilities and contacts in the field.

Dr. Criqui's research is characterized by solid methodology, high productivity, wide curiosity, and important contributions to new knowledge and to methodology. His hands-on experience has led to mastery of the concepts, designs, methods and analyses of epidemiology, while his work on error and bias is a continuing and useful theme. He has made major contributions in reviews of the area of alcohol and cardiovascular diseases and has contributed centrally to thinking on the important issue of clustering of heart disease risk factors. He has constantly sought the connections between mechanisms and events of certain populations and has developed innovative strategies of investigation of metabolic, hormonal, enzymatic and immune phenomena in the genesis and prognosis of cardiovascular diseases. He has aroused major new interest in the causes and prevention of peripheral vascular disease. His interests in causes and mechanisms of disease have expanded to involve the risk of colon cancer. He has been centrally involved in the longstanding researches of the Lipid Research Center and its special population in San Diego.

An example of his attempts to tie clinical and population observations with mechanisms is his population study of immunoglobulins, demonstrating a positive and independent association of IgE with cardiovascular disease in men and not in women. He has attempted to tie that in with IgE-mediated events involving platelet function and arterial spasm, enhancing cardiovascular disease susceptibility in men versus women. This sort of study and thinking adds a crucial dimension to epidemiological studies, which in themselves may be sterile,

even if they effectively test hypotheses. His epidemiological skills and recognition of the need for population-based studies to reduce bias and misinterpretation add a large dimension to abilities in clinical investigation, combined abilities that are extremely rare in modern medical research and thinking. Similarly, instead of being happy with the demonstrated association of alcohol and cigarette smoking and cardiovascular disease mortality, Dr. Criqui has very effectively tied together the relationships with alcohol intake and cigarette smoking to different effects on lipoprotein fractions, finding that the relationship with alcohol is independent of an LDL pathway and the effects of cigarette smoking independent of LDL and HDL pathways. His conclusion is that we must find alternative biologic mechanisms for the risk from both of these characteristics.

This combination of soundness, depth and breadth of researches, along with the enthusiasm and productivity, which he brings to these efforts, recommend for him special and early attention and appropriate academic rewards.

As for teaching, Dr. Criqui is widely sought after and widely experienced. He is routinely rated solid and inspirational by students at all levels of sophistication. His presentations are thoughtful, yet rigorous and rapid-fire. In addition to the excellent understanding he shows of his subject, and a high level of evident curiosity, there is also an evident maturity of analysis and synthesis. His students become aware of interconnectedness and implications of the information over which he ranges. On occasion, when he is called upon to discuss public health implications of scientific evidence, he is capable of developing well thought answers and guidelines with adequate criteria and justification from the evidence.

Dr. Criqui's high standing and competence are manifest in his wide professional activities, his heavy responsibilities related to analyses in collaborative national studies, his regular critical review of journal articles, his regular status on major faculties in the fields of epidemiology and prevention, and his successful competition for NIH grants, including the prestigious Preventive Cardiology Academic Award.

All of this put together points up a remarkable younger investigator with such skills and productivity that it is a pleasure to review and recognize such a career.

It is not possible to find major weakness in this exceptional and productive career. There are sufficient and interconnected themes to his work so that its wide variety suggests more an active curiosity than dilettantism. It would, of course, be nice to see one central work in the form of a monograph or book that would totally embody the various excellent characteristics of this academician. But who is to say that a career of a multi-position infielder and switch-hitter is any better or worse than that of the specialized lonely giant on the mound, or in the batting box.

Cordially,

Henry Blackburn (mf)

Henry Blackburn, M.D.
Professor and Director
Professor of Medicine

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