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TWIN CITIES

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*Corby - Manton*

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→ June 2, 1986

Dr. Kenneth Manton  
Center for Demographic Studies  
Duke University  
Durham, NC 27706

Dear Dr. Manton:

I enjoyed reviewing your interesting proposal for a symposium at the AAAS meeting next year and even more hearing you at the Brookings Institution and reading about your analytical models.

We have carried out one of the more extensive studies of trends in mortality here, with simultaneous analysis of risk factors and risk behaviors from population-based surveys. We have addressed a number of methodological problems and have made some progress in assessing trends and their component changes. But it seems to me we could have a much richer time of it if we could involve you in our thinking and wonder if you would be amenable. I do not want a top heavy or tiresome conference, but would like to get together with you for at least a day and a half in which we could present the nature of our data and findings on trends in the seven-county metro area and in other upper midwest areas. We should consider issues of time-series analysis, community component of variance (within community, between year, variability from the risk factor surveys) and predictive modeling. It would be fun to get you together with James Vaupel, the population mathematician with the Humphrey Institute here, Robert Kane, the new dean of the School of Public health, and our people who get their hands dirty daily in issues of defining, measuring, explaining and predicting population trends of disease. These include David Jacobs, statistician, Aaron Folsom, Stan Edlavitch, myself, and Ron Prineas as epidemiologists, Richard Crow, Russell Luepker and others as physician-epidemiologists and Gestur Davidson, health economist.

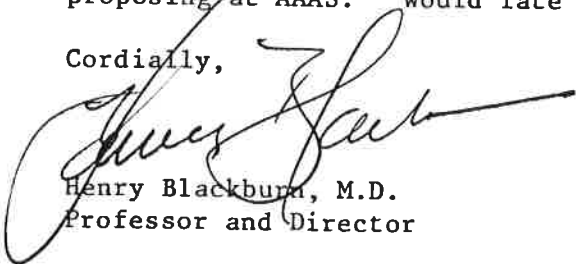
I am sure you could put together a better agenda than I, but these are the sort of issues I would like to see treated:

Scientific questions and hypotheses about disease trends and their cause.  
A model of coronary heart disease surveillance.  
The components of mortality trends.  
The components of risk factor and risk behavior trends.  
Issues in analysis of time trends.  
Causal inference for ecological associations, etc.

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At the moment, I am not terribly clear on the outcomes we need from such a consultation, but it should stimulate interest and activity in the data available to us, new consideration of cost-effectiveness analyses and more effective communication across disciplines in approaching major issues of disease trends and preventive effects. I would like us to concentrate on the data and on modeling and point up issues of methodology to be considered for another type of symposium such as the one you are proposing at AAAS. Would late August or early September be possible?

Cordially,



Henry Blackburn, M.D.  
Professor and Director

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Enclosures: Brookings Summary  
Division of Epidemiology Reprint List, 1984-1985