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Corresp Abbond

March 22, 1990

Francois Abbond ✓ 3/23
President-Elect
American Heart Association
c/o Howard Lewis
7320 Greenville Avenue
Dallas, TX 75231

re: Science Writers 1991

Dear Francois:

Thank you for your March 15 note and the excellent program of last January's Science Writers meeting.

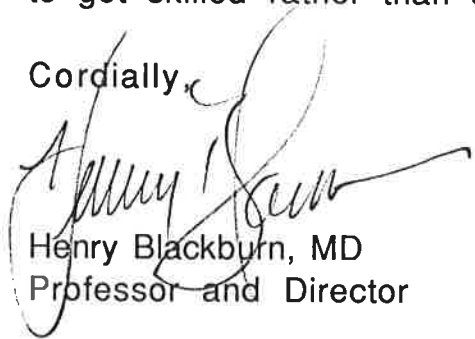
One of the hottest topics in the scientific community in the next period may be the disease correlates of very low blood cholesterol levels. Most of us are not yet convinced that the associations found are causal, but they are impressive. Individual correlations are particularly strong for low cholesterol values and cerebrovascular hemorrhage in Japanese, Hawaiian and U.S. populations (including the huge, 360,000 sample of the MRFIT screenees.) Associations with very low cholesterol value holds up for many diseases and causes of death and therefore may have some general and systemic implications. Much of the data are potentially confounded by alcohol, smoking, blood pressure and other effects now being examined. Some plausible mechanisms exist in regard to cell membrane integrity, angioneclerosis, and so on.

I am convening a group of people at a small NHLBI conference in October to review this evidence and mechanisms and come to some conclusion on present status and further research needed. It would be timely to address this under circumstances in which there can be full discussion with

experienced science writers as next January. It is important this issue not become a "glitch" in NCEP and other prevention programs designed to lower blood cholesterol levels. I would be happy to do this or to involve Dwayne Reed of the Honolulu Heart Program or David Jacobs of the University of Minnesota, co-conveners of these activities.

From my past experience with the Science Writers Forum issues are likely to get skilled rather than sensational treatment there.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Henry Blackburn". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Henry Blackburn, MD
Professor and Director