

THROMBOSIS RESEARCH UNIT

Background

The Thrombosis Research Unit (Head of Department Professor V.V. Kakkar MB FRCS, FRCSE, Vikram University and Irwin Hospital, New Delhi, subsequently Oxford, London, Harvard, recreations Golf, Skiing, Cricket, member of Athenaeum, age 49) is situated at King's College School of Medicine and Dentistry, Denmark Hill, London SE5. The unit has a grant from the M.R.C. (grant 7307561) to study "Mechanism, Prevention and Treatment of Thrombotic Disease". The value of this contract was stated (Sept. 1985 meeting, discussed below) to be around £1,000,000 per annum until 1989. 32 staff are employed in the unit.

In September 1985 Mr. Bruell, Mr. Heard and Dr. Thornton attended a meeting at Sir Emmanuel Kaye's London house, arranged by the Thrombosis Research Trust (see note 1) an organisation which promotes the unit. A presentation was made, mainly by Prof. Kakkar, the salients point of which were:

1. Prof. Kakkar had been invited to take a leading position at the Bob Hope Cardiovascular Unit, U.S.A. at a salary of \$200,000.
2. But he preferred to stay in the stay in the U.K. if a suitable new purpose built unit could be set up.
3. Costs for the proposed unit were estimated as:

Building	:	£1,500,000 - £1,750,000
Equipment	:	£1,900,000
Annual Running Costs	:	£1,200,000
Staff	:	65 (doubling of existing unit)

4. Funding position (as of 24.9.85)

Building	:	Nil
Equipment	:	£400,000
Annual Running Costs	:	£200,000

Note

- (a) Presumably the existing M.R.C. Contract continues until 1989 regardless of whether the new unit is built and this may account for the £400,000 and £200,000 above. Apparently the MRC do not fund buildings.
- (b) There is a suggestion, no more, that U.K. Government would match running costs £ for industry £ up to £500,000. Apparently a similar presentation was made to the Prime Minister.

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5. The scientific aspects appeared sound but the presentation was geared to the assumption that smoking caused cardiovascular disease. This was challenged and the presentation changed direction.

B.A.T.'s response then was that we might just be interested, but only as part of a wide-ranging industrial consortium supporting the unit.

It is not known how successful Sir Emmanuel Kaye and colleagues have been in obtaining funding in the period September 1985 - July 1986. However it is worth noting that the trustees represent three specific U.K. Industrial concerns.

6. Existing Industry/B.A.T. Funded studies into circulatory disorders are listed in note 2.

Relationship between Smoking and Thrombosis

The 1979 U.S. Surgeon General's Report attempted a comprehensive review of all papers associating smoking with various diseases. They concluded, "From the limited data available, smoking does not appear to enhance venous thrombotic disease".

There are of course many papers associating smoking with various forms of circulatory disorders but there are many anomalies in such data, e.g. we have observed that birth cohort trends in heart disease in the U.K. are identical for men and women, pointing perhaps to diet as important cause.

Questions and Answers

(Based on previous dialogue with the Thrombosis Research Trust.)

- Q.1. Since I last approached B.A.T. in 1985 six* of Britains' largest companies have agreed to finance the Thrombosis Research Unit. Are you now able to join these six?
 - A.1. We are prepared to consider an application for funding a specific research project at the new unit.
- Q.2. Would you be prepared to fund a research project at the existing unit?
 - A.2. We are always prepared to consider applications for the funding of appropriate research projects.

Being an international company, our research is planned and carried out on an international basis. For this purpose we have our Scientific Research Group which is run by Dr. Thornton of BATCo., to whom any applications for projects can always be addressed.
- Q.3. When I last approached B.A.T. in 1985 you said that you might be interested in funding us if other companies also did so. Unfortunately they have all taken a similar view. Someone has got to start the ball rolling, why not B.A.T.?
 - A.3. Funding new buildings is not within the domain of B.A.T.'s research funding, although, as I said earlier, we do fund specific projects.

* Hypothetical

Q.4. But the medical authority just don't have enough money. Surely your company with profits of over a billion pounds could afford a small fraction of its profits on such an important project.

A.4. The external scientific research we already fund relating to smoking and health issues is about £1,500,000 worldwide, (the industry spends about £6,000,000).

In terms of research relating to heart disease and circulatory disorders the figure is some £200,000 (out of industry funding of about £500,000).

In addition the U.K. industry covenant funds to the Independent Scientific Committee at the rate of £1,000,000 per annum. They fund various studies, most of which involve diseases of the circulatory systems, e.g. a study at Oxford called "Isis-2".

Perhaps there is a case for altering the priority in medical funding so that research on circulatory diseases is supported to a greater extent. For example, of the (577,890) deaths recorded in England and Wales in 1981 (last available year for data) some 50% were given on death certificates as diseases of the circulatory system whereas less than 25% were ascribed to malignant neoplasms or cancer.

(As far as we are aware the funding does not reflect these proportions.)

Q.5. Surely in view of the effects of smoking on heart disease you feel under some moral obligation to support the proposed institute.

A.5. While there is an association between smoking and various circulatory disorders the interpretation of this association, which is often weak, is still under discussion. As regards any association between smoking and thrombosis, the U.K. Surgeon General, in his 1979 report, could not make his mind up on the matter.

NOTE 1

Chairman

Lord Goodman (Life Peer) - Master of University College, Oxford, etc.

Vice Chairman

Sir Emmanuel Kaye - Joint Founder of Lancing Bagnall etc. Trustee,
Glydenbourne.

Lord Kissin (Life Peer) - President Guinness Peat Group.

Professor G.V.R. Born FRS - Professor of Pharmacology, King's College,
London. Previously Professor of Pharmacology, Cambridge and fellow of Gonville
and Cains.
(N.B. Unusual to move Cambridge - London.)

Dr. D. Jackson - Director Clinical Pharmacology Beecham Pharmaceutical.