



THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY

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JOSHUA LEDERBERG

July 30, 1981

PRESIDENT

↙  
Dr. Maria New  
Pediatric Endocrine Group  
The New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center  
525 East 68th Street  
New York, New York 10021

Dear Maria:

My own experience would not lend much support to your speculation about correlating precocity in physical, vis-a-vis intellectual, development; although I recognize that there were some overtones in that direction from the early Terman studies. However, my own speculations aside, I was thinking of where you could find a good cohort for such a study; it occurred to me that the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics might offer you a nearly unique opportunity to examine a collected cohort as early as the 11th grade. I don't know of anything else quite like that, so readily assembled in one place, for earlier ages; but the various societies interested in gifted children might offer far better advice than I could.

Do you know the Barany brothers who raced through school and the Rockefeller Ph.D. program? It might be best to attempt to develop case controls on the basis of intra-kindred comparisons; but I don't know what fraction of the youngsters of interest are going to turn out to be only children.

If you did not wish to go so far afield, it is possible that some of our special high schools -- like Bronx High School of Science or Stuyvesant High School -- might offer a somewhat less stringently selected group, from which you could still harvest enough instances of what you are seeking. But I expect you would face a lot of political problems trying to do this in N.Y.C.

but

The 1932 composition that I sent you I owe to my mother's saving habits; those genes may have been passed on, but with later onset: I have very few papers that go back before 1940. But since 1947 - to the dismay of many people who have to help me manage those files - I do have 99% of my correspondence and this is an archive of some interest far beyond my own autobiographical curiosity.

Yours sincerely,

  
Joshua Lederberg

JUL 30 1981  
P.S. Birth weight + intelligence

In 1963, I was intrigued by the excess of heavy babies in the Flemish sample. This was correctly traced from the original records, but not such association of Hi-BW/Hi-IQ was found in more contemporary populations.

I think it may have been a social-economic incentive before prenatal dieting was fadish (perhaps one should look again now.)

Sincerely,  
