Rates of suicide and of death by accidents or violence in the Seven Countries Study. This study was done in 16 cohorts from Finland, Greece, Italy, Japan, USA, Netherlands, and the former Yugoslavia to make a total of 12,763 men aged 40-59 at baseline, who were followed for 25 years. Serum cholesterol concentrations at entry ranged from 4 mmol/l in farmers in Japan and Serbia to 7 mmol/l in eastern Finns. There was no relation between the average initial serum cholesterol per cohort and 25-year death rates from suicide, accident, or violent death (r = -0.27). The highest rate was seen in the cohort from Slavonia (Croatia) and the lowest rate in Zutphen (Netherlands).

We conclude that, in these men, large cross-cultural differences in serum cholesterol did not lead to measurable differences in the death rates from suicide, accidents, or violence. Pekkanen and co-workers also did not find an association between serum cholesterol at baseline and 25-year mortality from accidents and violence within the Finnish cohorts of the Seven Countries Study. These results suggest that in observational epidemiology, serum cholesterol seems not to be related to long-term death from suicides, accidents, or violence.

Divisions of Public Health Research, National Institute of Public Health and Environmental Protection, 3720 Bithoven, Netherlands
Department of Human Nutrition, Wageningen
Laboratory of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, National Institute of Health, Rome, Italy
School of Public Health, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, USA
Department of Epidemiology, National Institute of Public Health and Environmental Protection, Bithoven

Clinical outcome of Borrelia burgdorferi related dilated cardiomypathy after antibiotic treatment

Sirs,—Dr Gasser and colleagues (May 9, p 1174) report an improvement with ceftriaxone in 8 of 9 patients with dilated cardiomyopathy seropositive for Borrelia burgdorferi. They do not mention duration of heart disease, or provide conclusive evidence for actual presence of chronic B burgdorferi infection, such as endomyocardial biopsy findings, silver stain, or culture. We have investigated 72 consecutive patients with chronic dilated cardiomyopathy (mean duration of disease 5 years, range 0.5-25 years) for the prevalence of serum antibodies to B burgdorferi. Evidence of chronic infection with B burgdorferi was found in 10 of these patients by means of endomyocardial biopsy silver staining or culture. We have investigated 72 consecutive patients with chronic dilated cardiomyopathy...