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Dr. David V. Becker
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Dear Dr. Becker,

Mrs. Vitta Hertz has written to me concerning the address you gave to the American Thyroid Association on the early history of radio-iodine. She seems to be somewhat troubled about one or two points in it and has asked for my opinion. Since I have not seen the manuscript I wonder whether it is still intended for publication; if so, I would appreciate the opportunity of seeing it and perhaps clearing up any possible misinterpretations.

She also sent me a reprint of Robley Evans' paper on the early history of nuclear medicine in thyroid studies at MGH, which appeared in Medical Physics, May/June 1975. This is the first time I have seen the paper, and I found only two points to which I would take serious exception. One is the statement that at the lecture of Karl Compton on the possible uses of radioactive indicators, it was Dr. Means who first inquired about the possible use of radioactive iodine. It was, in fact, Saul Hertz who made that inquiry, and I am amazed that Evans should have forgotten it. Vitta Hertz has a letter to Hertz from Compton answering his question.

The other point is Evans' claim that the results from the initial series of patients treated by Hertz and myself are ambiguous because the radioactive treatment was followed by the administration of Lugol's solution (to reduce the BMR), thus introducing an ambiguity. Since it was well known that the use of Lugol's solution alone produces only a temporary remission, this point seems to me labored, and an attempt to give the Chapman-Evans series of patients more novelty than it merits.

In general, the whole paper emphasizes - not surprisingly - Evans' role, in what seems to me a somewhat unjustified way. In all the five years I was there, he never took any part in the planning, execution or writeup of any of the animal or clinical experiments; in fact, he required monthly written reports from me to keep informed. His role was entirely executive, and he filled it admirably. His insistence on his name appearing on all the papers was always a sore point with Hertz and myself; Dr. Means made no such demand, though his contributions were similar to Evans'. The statement "Livingston ...joined Jack Buck and me in the cyclotron construction" is a similar unjustified emphasis of his role; it was Livingston who was the cyclotron expert, having built the first one under Lawrence's direction.

Sincerely yours,