tion between weight and obesity and the fact that both caloric intake per kilogram body weight and VO₂ max have weight in their denominators.

In contrast to other populations (4, 5), Kromhout et al (1) found that age was not an important predictor of obesity but no data are presented to confirm this statement. Because age tends to be inversely related to both physical activity and caloric intake, age should therefore be considered when studying their relationship.

Further results would be helpful in interpreting the authors' data.

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Reply to Romieu

Dear Sir:

In our paper on the relations between energy balance, smoking, and body fatness we stated in the discussion that energy intake per kilogram body weight may be used as a proxy variable for physical activity (1). Dr Romieu criticized this recommendation because the associations between energy intake per kilogram body weight, physical activity per kilogram body weight, and indicators for body fatness could be due to an artifact caused by dividing both numerators by the same denominator. This could be true. However, Marr et al (2) showed that in civil servants with different levels of physical activity, energy intake per kilogram body weight was related more strongly to physical activity than to energy intake per se. This study can be interpreted as evidence for using energy intake per kilogram body weight as a predictor for physical activity. In our paper we showed that physical activity per kilogram body weight was significantly associated with energy intake per kilogram body weight. We divided the amount of energy spent on physical activity by body weight because the energy expenditure of different types of exercises is directly related to body weight (3). We concluded from the significant association between physical activity per kilogram body weight and energy intake per kilogram body weight that energy intake per kilogram body weight can be used as a proxy variable for physical activity. However, to remove the suggested possibility of an artifact, a regression analysis using physical activity as dependent and body weight as independent variable was carried out. The residual was saved and correlated with energy intake per kilogram body weight. The correlation coefficient was 0.28 ($p < 0.001$). Also the results of this analysis confirmed our conclusion that energy intake per kilogram body weight can be used as a proxy variable for physical activity.

In our data, age was inversely related to the different indicators of body fatness. The correlation coefficients varied between $-0.08$ and $-0.09$. These correlation coefficients reached borderline statistical significance only for Quetelet index and triceps skinfold measurement. Inclusion of age in the multivariate models did not influence the estimation of the regression coefficients of the other determinants of body fatness. This is in contrast with the findings of Romieu et al. They found in a female American population a borderline statistically significant association of $0.16$ (4). The difference between these two studies may be due to the fact that in 1965 the Zutphen men were a homogeneous population.

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References

Book Review

Food Allergy, edited by RK Chandra, 1987, 387 pages, illustrated, US $64.00 or Canadian $86.00. Nutrition Research Education Foundation, St John's, Newfoundland, Canada.

This book consists of 28 papers presented at the International Conference on Food Allergy held in St John's Newfoundland on July 14-17, 1986. The conference was held under the joint auspices of the International Union of Nutritional Sciences and the Memorial University of Newfoundland. The majority of these state-of-the-art papers are multi-authored and include many from investigators who have contributed to our current knowledge in the field of food intolerance and hypersensitivity. The book is divided loosely into topics that include basic concepts, pathogenesis, clinical and laboratory diagnosis, management, and prevention. This volume focuses on adverse reactions to foods mediated by IgE or non-IgE immunological responses. Some authors describe other types of adverse reactions that have not been proven to be immunologic; these include idiosyncratic, metabolic, pharmacologic, and toxic responses to components of ingested food.

A major strength of this book resides in its overview papers. About 25% of the manuscripts provide scholarly up-to-date reviews that deal with the diagnosis of food intolerance, the chemistry of food allergens, the role of gut immunologic immaturity in neonatal food allergy, chemical mediators of allergic reactions, avoidance diets, and the prevention of allergy in childhood. The remainder and majority of papers report original research done in animals and man to elucidate the pathogenesis, diagnosis, and management of food allergy. The research papers are of uneven quality and some are rather preliminary. The two papers on taste and food aversions, for example, are at best only marginally relevant to the subject of food allergy, in part because the authors fail to establish the diagnosis of food allergy in their subjects.

The editor's introduction outlines the orderly scientific approach to the diagnosis and management of food allergy: a meticulous dietary history; a specific immunologic reaction measured by skin-prick test or radioallergosorbent test to a food allergen; an unbiased confirmation of the adverse clinical reaction usually requiring a double-blind, placebo-controlled oral challenge with the suspect food; and finally, successful institution of an elimination diet or use of pharmacologic agents. The reader must sift through each paper on diagnosis and management to determine how it measures up to these objective standards; some papers measure up better than others.

Overlap exists between some papers, and different points of view are presented, all of which is admirable and educational in principle. However, the editor does not alert the uninitiated reader and help guide him or her to what is commonly accepted and to what is controversial, to what is empiric impressionism and to what is scientific. For this reason the book can be read and properly interpreted in all its parts only by those already educated in the field of food allergy. The nonexpert practitioner will benefit more by the review papers on whose merit the book can be recommended for the general audience.

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