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Reply to H-t Li et al

Dear Sir:

We thank Li et al for their letter and for their interest in our article on cesarean section and the risk of obesity (1). We also want to express that we fully agree with their comment that the short- and long-term effects of the epidemic of cesarean sections that has been described in a large number of countries deserve further research. It is known that high rates of cesarean sections are associated with increased morbidity and mortality (2), and we have long warned about the risks associated with the cesarean delivery epidemic in Brazil (3, 4).

However, we would like to express our concern with the strategy adopted by Li et al of pooling together all of our adjusted prevalence ratios, some of them from the same individuals followed up at different ages. Because the observations are not independent, we believe this strategy is problematic, and this is the reason why we decided not to adopt it. In fact, in their book on meta-analysis, Borenstein et al (5) cautioned that this approach leads to an improper estimate of the precision of the summary effect.

In relation to their pooled analysis of the 4-y-old children from all 3 cohorts, the significant pooled estimate should again be interpreted with caution for 2 reasons. First, the possibility of residual confounding cannot be ruled out. All unadjusted RRs decreased in the adjusted analyses, suggesting a role for residual confounding. Second, the association observed at 4 y of age was substantially attenuated in the 2 cohorts (1982 and 1993) for which measurements were available at older ages.

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Saturated fat and lipemia: importance of study design and triglyceride structure

Dear Sir:

Recent articles on dietary fats and plasma lipoproteins (1–3) may not sufficiently consider differences in study design and methodology and the fact that postprandial lipemia may not reflect long-term lipoprotein metabolism. Tholstrup et al (1) noted that palm olein increased LDL cholesterol compared with olive oil, in contrast to an earlier study (4) that showed that these 2 vegetable oils were similar. Although Tholstrup et al (1) did not discuss the Australian study (4), the 2 studies differ. The Danish study had IJ higher total

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