



Edwin H. Kolodny, M.D.
Bernard A. and Charlotte Marden
Professor & Chairman
Department of Neurology
New York University School of Medicine

550 First Avenue, New York, NY 10016
(212) 263-6549 Fax: (212) 263-8228

June 30, 1995

Rabbi Josef Ekstein
Dor Yeshorim
160 Wilson Street
Apt 1B
Brooklyn, NY 11211

Dear Rabbi Ekstein:

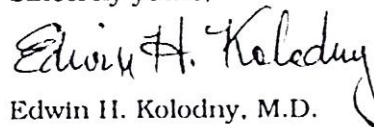
I am writing to express my enthusiasm for the work you and the Dor Yeshorim program are doing to reduce the incidence of Canavan disease and Fanconi anemia among Orthodox Jews of Ashkenazic descent. Canavan disease is a progressive central nervous disorder that causes brain swelling, loss of cognitive and motor skills and blindness within the first two years of life with death in the first or second decade.

Recent studies suggest that the gene causing this disease is nearly as common as the Tay-Sachs trait, that is, about one in thirty Ashkenazi Jews are carriers. By screening for this trait among young people prior to marriage you and your associates in Dor Yeshorim are able to assure matches between couples so that the next generation is free of this debilitating condition.

Your work on the prevention of Fanconi anemia among Ashkenazim is also noteworthy. This disorder causes a marked reduction in white cells, red cells and platelets, short stature, deformities of the thumb and radius, hyperpigmentation and increased susceptibility to cancer. As the mutation responsible for complementation group C is much more common among Ashkenazi Jews, it makes sense to screen for this mutation. I want to commend you for initiating screening for this particular mutation and expect that, as in the case of Tay-Sachs disease and Canavan disease, the Dor Yeshorim approach, based on anonymity and avoidance of stigmatization, will successfully reduce the incidence of Fanconi anemia among the Orthodox Jewish population.

The work of Dor Yeshorim has really only just begun. It requires the dedication of committed men and women, community support and financial resources. I am confident that the program will continue to grow, that it will merit the full backing of the Orthodox community and that through Dor Yeshorim, joy and hope can replace sadness and despair.

Sincerely yours,


Edwin H. Kolodny, M.D.

EHK:pls