

April 22, 1986

Shervert Frazier, M.D.
Director, National Institute of Mental Health
Bethesda, Maryland 20205

Dear Sherv,

It was good to hear your optimistic talk at the Arbour Conference in Boston, and to discuss ECT issues.

The NIH sponsored Consensus Conference on Electroconvulsive Therapy concluded that while the treatment was controversial, its continued use and study was indicated. The panel recommended further research, particularly a survey of the practice of ECT in this country, both as a follow-up of the 1976 survey of the American Psychiatric Association and with the techniques which were so successful in the 1980 British survey by Pippard and Ellam. They also recommended special attention and study of ECT in patients with schizophrenia and mania.

I am writing to enquire whether any office or officer of the National Institute of Mental Health is following-up on these recommendations. Is the Institute preparing any proposal for a survey? Or, any specific efforts at research into the mechanism of action?

Convulsive therapy will remain controversial so long as our information as to its usage and mode of action remain scanty. Your encouragement of research, both within the intramural and extramural research programs, is sorely needed.

Separately, I have written to Dr. Regier as you suggested.

My best regards.

Sincerely yours,

Max Fink, M.D.
Professor of Psychiatry