

May 25, 1969

Dear Alex,

By now you should have received my note about my visit to Athens and Drs. Miras and Stefanis. The remainder of my trip was as interesting, if not more so, than the first part. The meetings in Liege were excellent, with some presentations by biochemists and pharmacologists from Scandinavia that were relevant to our interests. Much of the emphasis was on dopamine and noradrenalin, however, and in one discussion, when I asked about the role of acetylcholine, I was told that it was indeed important but that the absence of a suitable biochemical assay had limited the studies to the neurohumors that could be studied easily. (This was also stated by Dr. Bunney of NIMH who spoke at our College this past week.)

I am still interested, however, and am taking the opportunity to enclose some reprints of my studies. It seems to me that the convulsive therapy is the most specific and the best treatment of severe depressions in man; and that the study of its central effects should contribute as much or more to our understanding of depression as the study of other neurohumors affected by imipramine and MAO inhibitors. In my earlier review I was impressed with acetylcholine, but this may have been related as much to the available studies as to any relevant theory. The same study should be applied to the other neurohumors, especially norepinephrine and dopamine.

We are treating depressive patients with induced convulsions, comparing unilateral and bilateral electrode placements. There are significant differences in EEG and in memory effects of the two types of treatment, and while these may be principally matters of degree rather than kind, it does provide the opportunity to study two different CSF patterns. We should be able to obtain CSF before and during the treatment process.

Have a good time in Greece. It is possible, though remote, that I may be back there in August, so please send me your Greek address. If not, perhaps you will write when you return to Chicago and we can discuss this further.

Again, my thanks for your hospitality.

Sincerely yours,

Max Fink, M.D.