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Dear Tom,

At the recent ACNP meetings in Maui, Martha and I had a most pleasant time with Ole. He seemed to be enjoying himself (when he wasn't politicking for the CINP or the WPA or the August meeting in Copenhagen).

As he had in Philadelphia, Robert Friedel presented a report on the greater efficacy of the combination of ECT with thiothixene than thiothixene alone in 'therapy-resistant' schizophrenic cases. He reported on nine cases, eight of whom recovered with the combination, and one who was much improved.

In the discussion, Seymour Kety asked what possible mechanism could Friedel suggest for the greater efficacy; and he presented the view that ECT (and ECS) produces greater permeability of the blood brain barrier, thereby allowing greater levels of thiothixene in the brain tissues, for greater efficacy.

I had discussed this theory with Sam Gershon, who quickly suggested that this theory was eminently testable in animal studies. I put together a package of citations from your summary in the Handbook of Biological Psychiatry, my book, and that of Stanley Rapaport (Blood-Brain Barrier in Physiology and Medicine), as well as a citation list for him. He may be able to undertake such a study.

Perhaps you have already done such a study? If yes, have I missed it? Are the data available? If not, perhaps you or one of your associates would be able to undertake a systematic study? If Bob Friedel's idea gets any play at all, there will be a rash of trials of the same suggestion, and it would be nice for CONVULSIVE THERAPY to have a definitive article on this possible mechanism.

Have you organized or will you organize an ECT session for the August WPA meetings in Copenhagen?

My best wishes for a happy and healthy 1986!

Sincerely yours,

Max Fink, M.D.