clinical CHD might be candidates for treatment.\(^1\) Approximately 13 people would need treatment for five years to prevent one coronary event, at a cost of £36 000 per event prevented. The number needing treatment would increase substantially if treatment were extended to patients over 70 or to those with serum cholesterol > 5·5 mmol/l.

**Conclusion**

There is no evidence from clinical trials either to recommend treatment of raised plasma cholesterol concentrations in healthy individuals over 65 years, or not to do so. Perhaps those at very high risk might be treated but these are rare. As one who has reached this age and beyond and remained healthy, my inclination is not to treat and not to worry them by frequent blood analyses.

As for patients over 65 with CHD, I conclude on balance that it is uneconomical to introduce any policy for screening or reduction of plasma cholesterol. The majority of these patients do not have raised plasma cholesterol concentrations and do not need treatment on that account. It is best for each patient over 65 to be assessed individually. Those found to have cholesterol concentrations above—for example, 6·5 mmol/l should be offered a diet with marked enrichment of unsaturated fats. If they are unwilling to change their eating habits, a statin should be considered but such treatment will have to be life long.

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**STAMPS IN CARDIOLOGY**

**Joseph Skoda (1805–1881)**

This stamp is part of the Austrian Welfare Funds set issued in 1937 and carries a charitable surcharge for the funds. Early charity surcharges were usually overprints but specific designs were commissioned when charity issues became planned as part of the stamp issuing policy for individual countries (rather than for raising funds for unforeseen disasters).

Joseph Skoda, an Austrian physician and son of a locksmith, developed systems to describe percussion and auscultation in an attempt to provide more precise terms. He described four types of percussion—full-empty, clear-dull, tympanic-non-tympanic, and high-low. He described the hyperresonant percussion note above a pleural effusion (Skoda’s sign, skodasic resonance). His terms for the sounds heard on auscultation were based on pitch and tone and he was one of the first to distinguish between heart sounds and murmurs. He correlated cardiac murmurs with the pathological changes seen in the valves and studied in detail pericarditis and pericardial friction rubs. He had two brothers one of whom, Johann, founded the Skoda

works famous for the manufacture of locomotives and armaments and now cars.

M K DAVIES

A HOLLMAN
Joseph Skoda (1805-1881).

M. K. Davies and A. Hollman

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