cholesterol and triglycerides about which she seemed much better informed than any of the doctors. I mentioned that my last cholesterol (which I’d had to insist on being done) was 5.2 with a ratio of 5.5 between total cholesterol and HDL. ‘Wasn’t that a bit high?’, I asked, and did she think I should be on a statin like my boss, old Ferguson? Nurse Katie said that it all depended on my risk factors, and that my risk of a heart attack in the next 10 years was only 3%. She worked this out on her computer screen and showed me the result. Three per cent seemed a bit high to me.

The fact is I told her, I’d really rather not run any risks at all. Safety first has always been my watchword. So perhaps I would take the statin. But she said that wasn’t the view of the NICE guidelines and why didn’t we see what we could do first with a non-pharmacological strategy? So we did diet and lifestyle; we discussed alternative medicines, yoga, and acupuncture. Very intelligent woman. By the time we had finished we were on Katie and Norman terms, as if I had known her for years. She suggested I come to see her again in 4 weeks for a blood pressure and cholesterol review. ‘Unless,’ she added, ‘you would rather see one of the doctors for that’. ‘No, Katie’, I said, ‘I have every confidence in your professional abilities and the pace of life seems much less frantic here than with the doctors. I shall come back to you.’

We are grateful to John Salinsky for these extracts from Norman Gland’s diary.

REFERENCE