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## Response From: I. Rajower, A. J. Sasco and P. Kleihues

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WE THANK Dr Weisburger for reminding everyone of the importance of diet in the aetiology of breast cancer. It is unfortunate that this aspect was not mentioned in the brief commentary which appeared in *International Cancer News* of the *European Journal of Cancer* [1]. We can only refer readers to our brochure in which this aspect is extensively discussed in the chapter on primary prevention by Levi and associates [2]. We discuss the increased risk of postmenopausal breast cancer linked to increased weight and a hypercaloric diet rich in animal fat with a low intake of fresh fruit and vegetables. We also discuss the effects of fibre intake, alcohol and a potential beneficial effect of phyto-oestrogens. In our synopsis (on page 10), we write that "westernized diet plays a role" and we recognise the need to "conduct more prospective studies on dietary factors". As a practical recommendation for general health promotion, we write (on page 11) that one should "... reduce alcohol consumption ...", "... promote a healthy diet and physical activity starting in childhood ..." and "... avoid obesity" [3].

The above-mentioned comments should make it clear that we fully concur with Dr Weisburger on the importance of diet in the occurrence of cancer and we agree with him that this aspect should have been included in the summary.

The brochure "Breast cancer. Basic facts and need for action" can be obtained from the Swiss Cancer League at the following address:

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 Swiss Cancer League  
 Effingerstrasse 40  
 3008 Bern Switzerland  
 Fax: (41) 31-389-9100  
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1. International Cancer News. Swiss Plan Fight Against Breast Cancer. *Eur J Cancer* 1996, **32A**, 1830-1831.
2. Levi F, La Vecchia C, Birkhäuser MH, et al. Primary prevention and early detection. In Rajower I, Sasco AJ, Kleihues P, eds. *Breast Cancer: Basic Facts and Need for Action*. Bern, Swiss Federal Office of Public Health and Swiss Cancer League, 1996, 8-10.
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## Primary Treatment in Stage II Non-seminomatous Germ Cell Tumours of the Testis: a Matter of Scalpel or Drug Infusion?

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I WOULD like to comment on Culine and Droz's article [1]. It is disappointing that a firmer conclusion was not drawn as the data is in the literature.

Please note the logic of the Indiana experience of RPLND which they quote extensively. The operation produces the best results in node-negative cases when it is not needed. Once it really does remove disease, the failure rate is so high that chemotherapy is essential to make RPLND look at all useful. It is all very well to say that 65% of pathological stage II disease were cured by RPLND alone—but which 65%? To increase that figure to a respectable 95%, postoperative chemotherapy was required. If the patient really wants an "event-free survival", chemotherapy is needed in the postoperative phase whatever stage is found.

Why subject patients to a potentially fatal (surgery of this extent, especially in non-expert hands, cannot be expected to have a mortality rate of 0%) and a probably morbid procedure (dry ejaculation rate 86% and unstated impotence rate, if the more complete operation is used) when all that is needed is a reliable prediction of relapse. The Indiana ex-