successful use of this tissue processor in preparing pancreases is important because this device is far less expensive than the tissue chopper used by other investigators [6]. Our experimental and clinical data indicates that there are no compromises in the results obtained by its utilization.

Sincerely,
Debra A. Gordon,
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Rapid Glycosylation of Haemoglobin

Sir,

We would like to comment further on the very thorough work on rapid glycosylation of haemoglobin as determined by column chromatography reported by Dr. Svedsen and colleagues in the August issue of *Diabetologia*. Our studies on short term glycosylation in vitro and in vivo fully support those of Dr. Svedsen in demonstrating a rapid rise in levels as detected by Quik-sep column chromatography though not by the Fluckiger technique.

We would like to add some further details. Firstly, rapid glycosylation continues in vitro at 23° C (room temperature) in EDTA blood samples with a high glucose concentration; thus at a blood glucose concentration of 25 mmol/l the HbA₁ level measured by column chromatography increased from 7–9 % in 6 h. Secondly, rapid glycosylation was reversed by incubation of red cells washed in saline at 23° C for 8–12 h, and the %HbA₁ level then remained stable for the next 24 h. This is simpler than 37° C incubation, and avoids another possible source of error. This is that at 37° C, incubation of washed red cells for more than 12 h results in an unpredictable increase in %HbA₁ levels measured by column chromatography, which is associated with denaturation of haemo-

globin shown by change in absorption spectrum and ultimately visible change in colour of the samples.

This means that it is unlikely to be safe to incubate all blood samples overnight at 37° C before measurement of glycosylated haemoglobin. In routine laboratories where overnight preparation of samples (approximately 16–18 h) is more convenient than 7 h incubation, it might be best to keep thoroughly washed red cells at room temperature for 16–24 h before assay. This requires a lowering of the normal range by approximately 1% glycosylated haemoglobin.

Yours sincerely,
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