



ISTITUTO DI GENETICA
UNIVERSITÀ DI PAVIA

PAVIA

VIA SANT'EPIFANIO, 14 - TEL. 23,029

July 18, 1958

Professor Sir Ronald A. Fisher
University of Cambridge
Department of Genetics
Cambridge, England

My dear Professor,

On my return from the States I found your letter of July 8, and was pleased to hear from you. I have had a very hectic year and this may explain my delay in answering my correspondence.

I have spent almost four months in the States with Joshua Lederberg, working exclusively on bacterial genetics and, therefore, developing a great deal of new interest in this subject. Work has continued, however, at Parma in my absence, but it is because of difficulties encountered, about which I will tell you more later, that the research is not yet finished.

The collection of the addresses of twins, in the town of Parma, has been completed with the result that about 245 twin pairs have been found, of which 124 are above 20 years of age. Of these 124 pairs 42 are made up of one male and one female and the rest are approximately in equal numbers of like sexes. The search for twins in other towns, namely ~~Pallesona~~ ^{Pallesona} and Pavia, has been only partially carried out. It is extremely slow work and the estimated time necessary was defective in respect to what it has been in practice, e.g., in Parma, as the detection of twins among people sharing the same surname turned out to be exceedingly tedious for the very common surnames. In Parma the most common surnames ~~were~~ ^{were} not investigated for twins because the work involved would have been tremendous.

The greatest difficulty, however, was encountered when the twins were asked to collaborate in the research. During my absence, a letter was sent to each address collected, asking the twins to come to the department for an examination and, at the same time, an article was published in the local press explaining the importance of research on twins and the beneficial results to the community from this cooperation with geneticists. The response was exceedingly meager, or practically zero. We, therefore, had to start visiting each individual at home, and so far we have

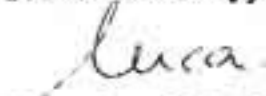
collected data on 10 pairs. On the other hand I think it is a worth while effort to try to convince as large a fraction as possible, in order to avoid selection of pairs willing to cooperate, which might involve some bias. In any case, I think the work will take much more time and effort than I had anticipated, because of the unwillingness of the twins to come to the laboratory and the necessity, therefore, of visiting them individually.

The questionnaire, however, should permit the separation of those reared together and those reared apart, and if the latter category is represented adequately we hope to be able to add significantly to the very interesting results by Dr. E. Slater, about which you wrote me.

I am sorry to hear that you will not be in Montreal, but I hope to have the opportunity of visiting Cambridge next year, and am looking forward to seeing you there.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,


L. L. Cavalli-Sforza

LLCS/rh