

# 1999 Science in Society Journalism Awards

Magazine

## Gary Taubes

“The (Political) Science of Salt”

### [Science](#)

Part Seven: Touchstones of the salt debate

- Dahl et al., 1972. Clinical, ecological, and rat studies supporting salt-blood pressure link.
- Gleibermann et al., 1973. Review of 27 ecologic studies suggests a direct linear relationship between salt and blood pressure.
- Cooper et al., 1979. Intrapopulation study of several hundred schoolchildren suggests "not wholly negative" relationship between salt and blood pressure.
- McCarron et al., 1984. Analysis of the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey database suggests that salt is harmless and that calcium and potassium protect against hypertension.
- Smith et al., 1988 (Scottish Heart Health Study). Study of 7300 Scottish men finds no relationship between salt intake and blood pressure.
- Intersalt, 1988. Study of 52 200-person populations shows weak or no relationship between salt and blood pressure but infers a relationship between salt and the rise in blood pressure with age.
- Intersalt Revisited, 1996. Statistical reanalysis of the original Intersalt data now finds strong, consistent positive association between salt and blood pressure.
- Cutler et al., 1991. Meta-analysis of 27 clinical trials finds that salt reduction lowers blood pressure in both hypertensives and normotensives.
- Law et al., 1991. Review of 24 ecologic studies, 14 intrapopulation studies, and 78 clinical trials finds that salt-blood pressure link is "substantially larger" than generally appreciated and increases with age.
- Midgley et al., 1996. Meta-analysis of 56 clinical trials concludes that benefit from salt reduction is small and does not support current dietary recommendations.
- Cutler et al., 1997. Meta-analysis of 32 clinical trials concludes that benefit of salt reduction is larger and does support current dietary recommendations.
- Trials of Hypertension Prevention Collaborative Research Group, 1997 (TOHP II). Clinical trial in 2400 subjects indicates that long-term reductions in salt intake are hard to maintain and result in little or no reduction in blood pressure.
- Appel et al., 1997 (DASH). Clinical trial of 459 people shows that dietary factors other than sodium have a much greater effect on blood pressure.
- Graudal et al., 1998. Meta-analysis of 114 clinical trials does not support a general recommendation to reduce salt intake.
- Part One: The salt controversy
- [Part Two: Crystallizing a debate](#)
- [Part Three: Intersalt tries again](#)
- [Part Four: Trials and tribulations](#)
- [Part Five: Poles apart](#)
- [Part Six: Picking your battles](#)
- [Part Seven: Touchstones of the salt debate](#)