

Lab Worker Infected with AIDS Virus

After a preliminary review of information provided by a worker who became infected with an AIDS virus, a team of virus safety experts has identified a series of occurrences that could have caused the worker to come into direct contact with the virus.

The site at which the exposure apparently occurred was a non-governmental research facility that works with highly concentrated AIDS virus.

The team reviewing the incident included experts from NIH, the Centers for Disease Control, and other investigators. The infected worker—who is currently symptom-free—cooperated fully in discussions with one member of the reviewing team on the condition that the person's identity would not be disclosed.

The worker said that leakage from medical instruments containing the virus had occurred, and that seals for the laboratory's centrifuge rotor had failed on occasion. The outer shells of those rotors could have been contaminated with the virus at times.

The worker carried out a variety of procedures associated with the production of viruses.

The worker reported having worked with the virus in containment facilities during times when skin abrasions, cuts, or dermatitis were present, although gloves were always worn when the virus was handled.

The preliminary opinion of the reviewing team was that the most likely reason for the worker's infection was direct contact with highly concentrated virus. It noted that more than 400 other laboratory personnel who work with highly concentrated AIDS virus have been monitored and none has become infected. The team judged the currently used level of containment in laboratories to be adequate provided there is strict adherence to recommended procedures.

The team is currently visiting NIH contract facilities engaged in the production of the AIDS virus and those engaged in producing the AIDS test kit to review their compliance with the CDC/NIH biosafety guidelines. □

Carotid Endarterectomy Study Announced

The National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Disorders and Stroke has awarded a grant to the John P. Robarts Research Institute in London, Ontario, to assess carotid endarterectomy as a means of preventing stroke.

Carotid endarterectomy is a surgical procedure, popularly introduced in the 1950's, that clears fatty deposits from the arteries that supply blood to the brain.

The multicenter investigation will be directed by Dr. Henry J.M. Barnett, professor of clinical neurosciences at the University of Western Ontario, Canada.

"The common sense appeal of the surgery is strong, but the risk benefit ratio must be evaluated," says Dr. Murray Goldstein, NINCDS director. "The time has come to gather and quantify data on carotid endarterectomies."

With more than 130,000 carotid endarterectomies performed annually in the United States today, investigators now have the database needed for making this comprehensive assessment.

Patients with narrowing of the carotid artery and who are "symptomatic" will be recruited for the first 2 years of the study. Symptomatic patients are those who have experienced a transient ischemic attack (TIA), which is an interruption of the blood supply to the brain that resolves itself quickly.

All participants will receive optimal medical care, including antihypertensive treatment for

those with high blood pressure, and counseling about diet and smoking—recognized risk factors for stroke. In addition, half of the patients will undergo a carotid endarterectomy.

Previous studies have not given definitive guidelines as to which patients are most likely to benefit from the surgery. The new study, with its large number of patients and planned 5-year patient followup, is designed to overcome these limitations.

This is the second major carotid endarterectomy study NINCDS has funded this year. In March, an award was made to the Bowman Gray School of Medicine of Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, N.C., to evaluate the procedure's effectiveness in asymptomatic patients by means of a randomized, controlled clinical trial.—Kathy Kranzfelder □

NIMH Needs Volunteers

The Unit on Anxiety and Affective Disorders, NIMH, is in need of healthy individuals, ages 18 to 60, to participate in various studies. Participants must have no history of psychiatric problems or drug or alcohol abuse, and must not be taking any medications. Participants will be paid.

If interested, contact Dr. Murray Stein or Dr. Manuel Tancer, 496-6825. □



Dr. Hugh Stamper has been appointed chief of the biological sciences review section, Referral and Review Branch, DRG. Stamper will have overall management responsibility for a section composed of 19 initial review groups. He recently received an NIH Merit Award for contributions related to technological innovation and for activities on behalf of the DRG Study Section Seminar Series, a lecture series featuring members of DRG review groups as invited speakers.

Freedom From Smoking

The American Lung Association, in conjunction with R&W, has scheduled the second Freedom From Smoking clinic.

The fee for the 6-week seven-session clinic is \$35. Registration is limited to 25 people and will be handled on a first-come, first-served basis. A refund is available for all participants; they must contact their administrative officer and obtain the appropriate form.

Preregistration will be held at the R&W activity desk. If this session is not convenient, other clinics will be offered later. □

PBS Series Profiles NIH

A four-part series about NIH called "The Health Century" premieres this fall on public television. The hour-long segments run four consecutive Monday evenings at 10, beginning Sept. 21. The Public Broadcasting Service created the series in partnership with private industry to mark the observance of NIH's Centennial.

"The Health Century," a companion book to the television series, has been published by Doubleday and Co. and will be on sale during the Open House.