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Note to Writers and Editors

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The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) has awarded two new grants for the study of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). The total first-year funding for the two grants will be \$780,639.

AIDS is a critical public health problem because its cause is unknown and mortality is high. The disorder is characterized by a severe loss of natural immunity that predisposes the individual to severe opportunistic infections, such as Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia, and/or unusual tumors including Kaposi's sarcoma. Cases of AIDS have been reported primarily among homosexual men, intravenous drug users, recent Haitian immigrants and hemophiliacs.

The awards, effective May 1, 1983, were made to Arye Rubenstein, M.D., Yeshiva University, Bronx, New York, and John Fahey, M.D., University of California, Los Angeles.

During the past two years, Dr. Rubenstein has identified children with AIDS-like symptoms. The grant will allow him to also study infants born to mothers who were sexual partners of AIDS patients. These children will be followed to see if they develop immunologic abnormalities and unusual, progressive infections. Particular emphasis will be placed on the development of opportunistic infections during the first year or two of life.

He and his colleagues will also study the possible routes of transmission of AIDS among contacts of adult heterosexual patients. These contacts include sexual partners, household members, and intravenous needle sharers.

(More)

This study should yield information on the natural history and incubation period of the disease among newly-developed cases.

Dr. Rubenstein will attempt to isolate viral agents from throat, stool, blood and urine specimens, from AIDS patients. Although the identification of a broad spectrum of viruses, including measles virus, papovaviruses, cytomegalovirus, and Epstein-Barr virus, is proposed, the emphasis will be on the human adenoviruses.

Dr. Fahey was one of the first investigators involved in clinical and laboratory research on AIDS and related illnesses. The new grant will support research in three major areas:

Various chemotherapeutic and naturally-occurring substances will be evaluated for the treatment and prevention of AIDS. Included in this study will be AIDS patients with Kaposi's sarcoma, those with opportunistic infections, including Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia, and patients with prolonged enlargement of the lymph nodes (lymphadenopathy).

In addition immunologic defects in AIDS patients will be studied in order to define more precisely the AIDS syndrome and improve diagnostic methods.

The investigators will also look for cytomegalovirus in Kaposi's sarcoma tissue and define its possible relationship to the cause of AIDS.

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