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FACT SHEET

DOD'S HUMAN RADIATION EXPERIMENTS REVIEW

In response to the President's guidance of late December 1993, the Secretary of Defense charged the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense (Atomic Energy) Dr. Harold P. Smith to lead DoD's efforts to discover the nature and extent of the Department's involvement in human radiation experimentation. In early January 1994, Dr. Smith organized a DoD Steering Committee of top-level DoD officials to oversee the unprecedented records search and review.

In January 1994, Dr. Smith issued a memorandum to the individual Services and all other DoD components providing detailed guidance on locating, identifying, reviewing, and declassifying records pertaining to human radiation experiments. This guidance instructed DoD components to preserve existing records; manage records in accordance with Freedom of Information Act, Privacy Act and security classification procedures. The memorandum directed that records be declassified to the maximum extent. Further, if a question arose on a particular experiment, DoD components were directed to err on the side of inclusion in the initial identification of a possible experiment.

To ensure the quality, comprehensiveness and integrity of the search process, DoD components were directed to submit a report consisting of two parts. In Part I, each agency was required to identify each subordinate organization that may have conducted or sponsored experiments; records storage locations; a description of the efforts undertaken to confirm if records were at the locations identified; and to report if records had been found. Part II of the report required each organization to describe each experiment identified in the search.

(OVER)

A massive records search was conducted involving hundreds of DoD subordinate agencies, organizations and departments and millions of records. To coordinate this massive search and retrieval effort, the Department established a Radiation Experiments Command Center (RECC). The RECC developed two high-speed automated databases to organize and control the information being gathered. One database is designed to monitor inquiries from the public, other Federal agencies and Congress, and to analyze information received from these and other sources. A second database is designed to compile and organize information on possible experiments identified during the records search. The development of these innovative systems will allow reviewers to quickly cross-reference and match files from the two databases and significantly enhance the Department's ability to respond to inquiries from the Independent Advisory Committee, Congress and the public.

The Department's search has thus far identified approximately 1,760 DoD conducted or supported activities from 1944 to the present that may fall within the scope of the Interagency Working Group definition of human radiation experiments. However, it appears that the overwhelming majority of those cases are clinical research activities conducted by DoD medical components since 1974 involving therapeutic investigations in which radiation was used solely in accordance with established, non-experimental diagnostic procedures.

Secretary of Defense William Perry remains committed to a thorough and complete search of all available records and the full public release of the pertinent information in those records. All retrieved information will be turned over to the Independent Advisory Committee for further review.

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Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
ACTIONS TAKEN FOR INVENTORY AND RETRIEVAL
OF RECORDS OF HUMAN RADIATION EXPERIMENTS**

The United States Government conducted and sponsored experiments from 1944 to May 1974 involving exposure of humans to radiation, under a variety of circumstances and for a variety of reasons. The existence and nature of these experiments were rarely publicized; in many cases, the people who were exposed may not have been informed about the purposes and risks of the experiments.

Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary pledged in December 1993 a full review of the scope of the experiments, in line with the Department of Energy's Openness Initiative. President Bill Clinton established an Interagency Working Group in January 1994 to identify and make public the records of Government-conducted or -sponsored radiation experiments, which used human subjects. The Department of Energy is a member of this Working Group.

Recognizing that the Department of Energy is currently responsible for the records of the former Atomic Energy Commission, which sponsored many of the known experiments, Secretary O'Leary directed the Department to set up a telephone Helpline (which later became an Interagency effort, managed by the Department of Energy) and published an address for inquiries concerning the experiments. These actions were complete by January 1994 and the public response was immediate. The Department has established an aggressive program to respond to more than 21,000 Helpline calls and 4,600 letters that have been received to date.

As the Helpline was being activated, the Department also established a Records Inventory and Retrieval Coordinating Committee to facilitate the collection and dissemination of all Departmental records on human radiation experiments. Each element of the Department of Energy was directed to start identifying any records that might be pertinent; elements include operations offices, field offices, area offices, and Headquarters organizations. Assistant Secretary for Environment, Safety and Health Tara O'Toole issued strict guidelines to assure that no information would be lost, overlooked, or otherwise excluded from the process.

Departmental elements have identified approximately 2,500 records of human radiation experiments and placed them in public reading rooms throughout the country. The Department has also established a centralized Information Center at its Headquarters in the Forrestal Building in Washington, D.C. The Forrestal Information Center holds copies of all records of human radiation experiments identified by the Department of Energy, along with a large number of additional records that will facilitate the identification and analysis of relevant records. These additional records include 270,000 records on nuclear testing and some 7,000 records on human experiments that may or may not involve radiation.





Search for Records of Human Radiation Experiments

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is actively participating with the other Agencies of government in the search to discover all instances in which human subjects have been experimentally exposed to ionizing radiation. The identification of all relevant documents and their public dissemination has been given high priority.

On January 27, 1993, Secretary Shalala instructed all components of the Department of Health and Human Services to identify all records related to experimental human exposure to ionizing radiation conducted between 1944 and 1974. Since most of these experiments were funded by the Public Health Service (PHS), PHS established a working group to coordinate the DHHS records retrieval effort. This working group is co-chaired by Dr. D.A. Henderson, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health--Science, and Dr. Wendy Baldwin, Deputy Director for Extramural Research, NIH, and includes representatives from the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Indian Health Service, and the Food and Drug Administration. The working group is responsible for providing ongoing guidance and oversight for the search activities to assure the quality, comprehensiveness, and integrity of the records collection process.

The working group is pursuing several strategies to identify relevant records, including:

- 1) All records of all PHS agencies are being carefully and systematically scrutinized for relevant information.
- 2) Past and present PHS employees are being interviewed for their recollections of this type of experimentation.
- 3) National Library of Medicine staff are searching the medical and scientific literature for articles involving the experimental use of ionizing radiation on humans.
- 4) PHS staff are contacting people who have either written the government or called the toll-free hotline with information related to possible PHS funded studies.

Each of the principal PHS agencies has established special search strategies tailored to the types of research activities and records maintained by each agency. For those experiments conducted by PHS employees, the records that exist are likely to be found within agency files. However, because much of the research supported by the PHS is conducted by research institutions located throughout the United States, the majority of the records of special interest -- research protocols, documents related to informed consent, and identities of research subjects -- will be located at awardee institutions. On March 7, 1994, HHS sent a letter to 27,000 research institutions asking that any records related to human exposure to ionizing radiation not be destroyed, even in the course of routine records destruction. Methodologies are now being developed to identify individual institutions or investigators involved in human experimentation with ionizing radiation.



U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20530

HUMAN RADIATION EXPERIMENTS HUMAN RADIATION INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE SUMMARY

The Department of Justice did not conduct nor sponsor human radiation experiments. Nevertheless, it is participating in the work of the subcommittees of the Human Radiation Interagency Working Group. The Department shares the Administration's commitment to conduct an open and thorough inquiry of Cold War-era government sponsored human radiation experiments.

The Department provides the Working Group with legal advice and counsel on a broad range of issues. That counsel rests on the Administration's commitment to make public the greatest amount of information at the earliest possible time, while mindful of the personal privacy of those involved in the experiments and their families.

The Working Group is developing a broad range of potential responses for those who may have been affected by human radiation experiments. It is reviewing existing compensation programs as potential models, including several administered by the Department, in the event legislation is proposed after the facts have been determined. The Department's current programs include the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act, the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program, and the Civil Liberties Act of 1988.

It should be emphasized that each of these programs was carefully designed and tailored to provide efficient, appropriate compensation for the carefully defined injuries Congress intended to address. Great attention was paid to defining an appropriate recipient population, setting eligibility standards, assessing the availability of relevant evidence, and determining the propriety of monetary and other forms of compensation. The Department, with the same attention to detail, is approaching the challenge of crafting an appropriate framework for the Administration's response to the subjects of human radiation experiments should it become appropriate to consider compensation.

The Department will join its fellow members on the Working Group in making recommendations to the President and the Congress regarding these matters.

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Department of
Veterans Affairs

VA Fact Sheet

April 1994

RADIATION RESEARCH IN THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) responded swiftly to reports that government-sponsored research involving human subjects and radioactive materials may have been conducted in an inappropriate manner in the '40s and '50s. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jesse Brown immediately ordered VA medical centers to begin a comprehensive search for records on radioisotope nuclear medicine or radiation research that may have involved human subjects between the years 1947 and 1980. VA asked veterans service organizations to help the department raise awareness in the veteran community and urged concerned veterans to call its general toll-free number. VA regional offices began tracking those calls as well as calls to its special radiation helpline for veterans who were exposed to ionizing radiation during military service. In addition, VA began working with the Department of Energy (DOE), which is referring to VA veterans' calls received on its radiation hotline.

Status of VA's Response

VA medical centers were asked to search records for information about radioisotope and other nuclear medicine and radiation research between 1947, the year the radioisotope/nuclear medicine program was begun in VA, and 1980, when institutional review procedures for the protection of human subjects were well established. VA's emphasis on radioisotope/nuclear medicine research resulted from an initial search of historic records indicating that this was where VA research using ionizing radiation was focused. Of VA facilities with nuclear medicine capability between 1947 and 1980, 49 have located some protocols used during that period for radioisotope research, 24 have names of patients who participated in at least some research projects and 54 have some publications available on specific research projects done during that period. No medical centers found any evidence of research involving plutonium, nor had any contracted out any research.

In addition to the searches, VA's Nuclear Medicine Service is reviewing the licenses issued for radionuclides by the Atomic Energy Commission (now the Nuclear Regulatory Commission) for cross-referencing with research information. VA's Office of Research and Development reviewed protection of human subjects in VA research and reaffirmed the vigorous enforcement of policies and procedures in place to assure that all VA patients who participate in research are fully informed, consenting subjects. VA also is continuing to investigate the activities of the Atomic Medicine Division, established in the '40s but not in existence today.

VA's next step is to retrieve and inventory these records prior to review. A rigorous "chain of custody" is being established. An additional search for records on research involving ionizing radiation also will be done, and medical institutions affiliated with VA are being queried about the availability of records related to radiation research involving VA patients but not done at VA facilities. Procedures are being developed for the inventory of records, which will begin in the near future. All federally sponsored research will be reviewed by the Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments, made up of nongovernmental scientists, physicians and ethicists.

Of the 800 inquiries DOE has forwarded to VA, some 650 are related to ionizing radiation exposure during military service. Some 150 are related to possible radiation research or treatment in VA facilities. Since mid-January 1994, VA regional offices have taken approximately 8,117 calls from individuals concerned with radiation exposure either while on active duty or at a VA medical center. Approximately 800 were concerned with possible radiation exposure at a VA medical facility. VA is in the process of reviewing these cases and will contact each individual. Inquiries related to radiation exposure during military service are being referred to the Department of Defense and the Department of Health and Human Services, or will be handled by VA.



13 April 1994

The Central Intelligence Agency's Search for Records on Human Radiation Testing

On 4 January 1994 the Central Intelligence Agency began searching for records relating to any experiments that used ionizing radiation on human subjects. As this search nears completion, CIA has found no evidence that the Agency ever deliberately exposed anyone to toxic radiation.

The Agency's search took its initial guidance from statements made in the reports of two probes of CIA conducted in the 1970s. The Rockefeller Commission (1975) and the Church Committee (1976) discussed the Agency's testing of drugs on unwitting subjects in the 1950s and 1960s, particularly the MKULTRA program. MKULTRA, according to the investigators, authorized Agency officials to explore "additional avenues to the control of human behavior," including "radiation, electroshock, various fields of psychology, psychiatry, sociology, and anthropology, graphology, harassment substances, and paramilitary devices and materials" (emphasis added).

Agency officials tried to determine whether MKULTRA researchers actually experimented with radiation. No one associated with MKULTRA or the investigations of the 1970s recalled why the word "radiation" was used by the Rockefeller and Church reports. We found no documents indicating MKULTRA researchers used ionizing radiation on human subjects (most MKULTRA documents have been in the public domain for over a decade). Both reports used language from the CIA Inspector General's 1963 investigation of MKULTRA, and we believe the language might have originated in early documents mentioning radiation as a potential research field for Technical Services Division (which ran the MKULTRA program).

CIA officers in all the directorates are searching relevant Agency records for any evidence of radiation experiments. Throughout this search, CIA has based its inquiries on the broadest usage of the term "radiation." CIA officials have queried dozens of current and former employees, ranging from former DCIs to scientists and medical personnel most likely to have conducted or been aware of radiation testing, if it occurred. Without exception, Agency veterans knew of no such experiments or operations. No documents found to date suggest that CIA conducted experiments or operations using ionizing radiation on human subjects.

Since the 1970s, all Agency research involving human subjects has been conducted in accordance with all relevant guidelines issued by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and the Department of Health and Human Services.



NASA REVIEW OF HUMAN RADIATION EXPERIMENTS

NASA is continuing its review of human radiation experiments involving NASA investigators or NASA funding. Dr. Harry Holloway, Associate Administrator, Life and Microgravity Sciences and Applications, has been appointed to oversee this review. Dr. Earl W. Ferguson, Director, Aerospace Medicine and Occupational Health, will provide Headquarters coordination of the review. Dr. Donald E. Robbins, Acting Director, Space and Life Sciences, Johnson Space Center, is leading the team conducting this review.

Daniel Goldin, Administrator, and Dr. Holloway have each issued guidance to Directors of NASA field centers instructing them to direct all NASA employees to take all necessary steps to locate, safeguard and report all records and other documentation related to human radiation experimentation. In addition, Mr. Goldin has sent a letter to all current and retired NASA employees requesting that any relevant information that they have be conveyed to Dr. Robbins.

Dr. Robbins and his team are conducting a search of NASA records concerning human experiments involving humans. This search includes a search of the Federal Records Centers data bases. The team has also contacted current and retired investigators, research managers, and program managers at NASA Headquarters and NASA field centers who would have knowledge about previous radiation research and radiation research funding. The latter efforts are particularly important because most official documents covering research efforts during and prior to the 1970s have been retired and destroyed in the normal course of documents management. A computer search of published scientific literature related to radiation research is also underway. The computer search initially identified 1777 articles for screening, 384 articles were selected for further review and 50 of those articles have been selected for detailed analysis.

NASA has thus far received less than 20 Helpline calls, FOIA requests and other inquiries related to its radiation review.

- More -

Our review is on-going, but thus far the following studies which fall under the purview of this review have been clearly identified as involving NASA:

1. Oak Ridge Institute for Nuclear Research: NASA contributed to the funding of both a retrospective study and a prospective study of human effects of radiation exposure in individuals who were exposed to whole body radiation for medical treatment or who were accidentally exposed. NASA provided less than 10% of the funding for these Atomic Energy Commission studies. The data on approximately 3000 human subjects from 45 different institutions were reviewed (approximately 100 subjects from the prospective study at Oak Ridge itself).

2. Two studies involving low levels of whole body radiation in experiments to measure total body calcium.

3. Studies in which investigators put their own heads in high energy particle beams to observe visual light flashes like those experienced by astronauts.

4/13/94

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Editor's Note: Questions should be directed to Michael Braukus, NASA Headquarters at 202/358-1979

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