



University of Cincinnati

Cincinnati, Ohio 45221

SPEECH AND HEARING LABORATORY, DEPT. OF SPEECH & THEATER ARTS
McMICKEN COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

April 24, 1972

RCC1.958212.023

Mr. Robert O'Neil
Vice President for Academic Affairs
101 Administration Building
University of Cincinnati
Cincinnati, Ohio

Dear Bob,

I have given considerable thought to the discussion which occurred during our recent meeting of the sub-committee on human research. I have formed an opinion toward the whole body radiation study which I am sure is not in agreement with those involved with the research and possibly some of the members of the committee. In no way can I condone such a project regardless of whether it is supported by the Defense Department or the University of Cincinnati. My reason for such an attitude is based on the poor way in which the study is designed and the failure of the recommendations of the Susskin Committee to address themselves to the weakness of the design and the composition of the population.

In part I the purpose of the study is presented ambiguously. Question 10 and 13 Section I demonstrate this as presented below.

- 10) Why is it important to know the biological effects of whole body irradiation?

It is vital to the proper management of people involved in industrial radiation exposures and accidents as well as atomic warfare. The identification of biological indicators of radiation dose levels in an exposed person would be very valuable in their management. Additional knowledge about the effects of whole or partial body irradiation would be helpful in developing more effective therapeutic approaches in the management of exposed individuals and groups.

- 13) What are the objectives of the study?

According to the report of December 3, 1971 of Dr. Saenger, the primary purpose of the study is: "To improve the radiation treatment of the patient with advanced cancer and to improve ... his general clinical management. Other considerations were secondary to this goal."

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Question 14, referring to record of formal protocol is not considered in the summary and recommendations.

In Section III the recommendations fail to respond to the manner in which the subjects were selected. The subjects were primarily indigent with limited intellectual capacities. Research which is intended to come up with results which hopefully can be generalized to a total population must be done on a randomized sample. A recommendation which is really concerned with the total population would certainly address itself to this factor.

Also, the recommendation ignored the fact that the people who were studied were all aware of the fact that they had terminal cancer, which carries with it a significant degree of anxiety and depression. I strongly doubt whether the psychological tests used could separate those symptoms which were caused by an awareness of death from those caused by whole body radiation. Further, the report is quite vague in reporting cognitive malfunction. There is no reference as to whether this malfunction occurred in the areas of disorientation, language or performance. I question the tests which were used to assess the psychological functions and especially the Gottschalk Gleser scales since it was administered over a period of five minutes. It is also important to realize that these tests are not culturally free. This is an important variable since 62% of the population was black and indigent.

Nowhere in the report is reference made to the manner in which the data were treated and reported. In a research project as critical as this one is, something more sophisticated than mean scores and percentages should be used to report the clinical findings or observations.

These are just a few of the points I will mention at this time, since it is important to get this to you prior to the President's decision.

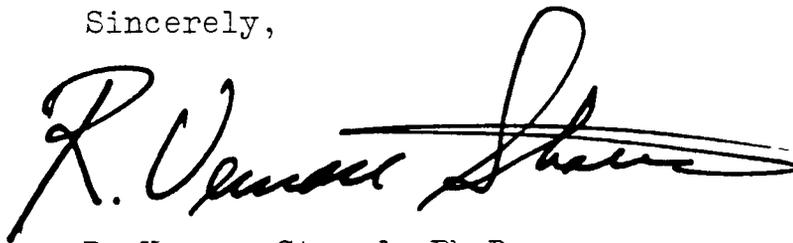
In my own mind, this project borders on what happened at Auschwitz. It differs primarily in that the subjects there were much more sophisticated. Further, I feel that continuation of this project, regardless of the source of funding, can be

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devistating to the University, especially if the composition of the population becomes known to the general public. I discussed this research project with Dr. Effie Ellis of the American Medical Association while in Chicago on April 14 and she feels that we should be concerned over this aspect of the project.

I sincerely hope that Warren will take these matters into consideration before making a decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Vernon Stroud". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping horizontal line at the end.

R. Vernon Stroud, Ph.D.
Program Director
Speech Pathology and Audiology

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