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MINUTES

130th MEETING

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR BIOLOGY AND MEDICINE
U. S. ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

September 12, 1969 - AEC HQ, Germantown, Md.
September 13, 1969 - AEC "H" St. Ofc., Washington, D. C.

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- 2 -

The 130th meeting of the Advisory Committee for Biology and Medicine was held at AEC Headquarters in Germantown, Md., on September 12, 1969, and at the AEC "H" St. Office, Washington, D. C., on September 13, 1969. Committee members present were Drs. Cohen (Vice-Chairman), Bale, Haagen-Smit, Moseley, Stout, and Dr. Patt (Scientific Secretary), and Rosemary Elmo (Executive Secretary).

The principal item on the agenda was an evaluation of recent claims by Dr. E. J. Sternglass, of the University of Pittsburgh, regarding the hazards of Strontium 90 fallout. Present during the discussions on September 12 were: Dr. John R. Totter, Director, Division of Biology and Medicine and various DBM staff members; Dr. S. G. English, Assistant General Manager for Research & Development (AEC) and his staff (Dr. James S. Coleman and Mr. Enzi DeRenzis); Dr. Paul Tompkins and Mr. Claire Palmiter (Federal Radiation Council); Dr. N. C. Telles (Bureau of Radiological Health, USPHS); Dr. Ernest Tierkel (Dept. of Health, Education & Welfare); Dr. Emanuel Landau (Consumer Protection & Environmental Health Service, USPHS); Mr. Gordon Facer, Div. of Peaceful Nuclear Explosives, AEC); Mr. Carl Welty and Mr. R. J. Catlin (Div. of Operational Safety, AEC); Dr. John Nehemias (Radiation Protection Standards, AEC). Commissioner Larson attended the first part of the meeting on September 12.

The arguments advanced by Dr. Sternglass and the subsequent analysis by Dr. A. R. Tamplin, of the Lawrence Radiation Laboratory, Livermore, were summarized by Dr. W. R. Bibb, of DBM. This was followed by a review of fallout patterns by Dr. J. H. Harley, Health & Safety Lab., New York Operations Office, and by discussion of relevant studies of the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission by Dr. H. D. Bruner, DBM. The effects and distribution of strontium in mammalian species were then reviewed by Dr. Austin M. Brues, of Argonne National Laboratory. Detailed studies of strontium toxicity in swine and dogs were presented by Dr. W. J. Clarke, Battelle-Northwest, Richland, Washington, and Dr. Leo Bustad, of the University of California, Davis. The formal program was completed with a review of genetic effects by Dr. C. W. Edington, DBM. During the ensuing discussion, Dr. Telles, HEW, advised the ACBM that the Sternglass analysis of fallout radiations in relation to infant mortality and cancer had also been examined by his group.

In the opinion of the ACBM, there is an abundance of pertinent scientific information which indicates that the conclusions of Sternglass, and also of Tamplin, regarding the hazard of Sr⁹⁰ fallout are erroneous and reflect a biased selection and incorrect statistical treatment of data. Apropos of this, it should be noted that similar conclusions were reached independently by the HEW study group and the DBM staff. The Committee expressed the view that presently available data give an adequate foundation of knowledge for setting public safety standards for radiation. Moreover, there is some reason to believe that further research will reveal that present standards are quite conservative. It was suggested by the ACBM that the preface of

1071025

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- 3 -

the forthcoming publication of the recent Hanford Symposium, which contains a paper by Sternglass, should emphasize that the AEC encourages scientific discussion of all issues and that opinions expressed in the various papers are those of the authors.

A film depicting radiation accident emergency planning for hospital and rescue squads was shown to the Committee by Dr. William Doran, of the Division of Operational Safety, AEC.

The ACBM met in executive session on September 13 at which time Dr. Totter presented several items of general interest including: 1) DBM staff changes, 2) the present status of the budget for FY 1970 and 1971, 3) the anticipated conference with Dr. Robert Duffield, Director, Argonne National Laboratory, to discuss possible candidates for the directorship of the Division of Biological and Medical Research at ANL. Dr. Totter noted that the bleak budget picture could result in a reduction of staff which would necessitate some change in the mode of operation of DBM. Since the overall operation has been very effective, the Committee expressed its grave concern over this possibility.

Dr. W. W. Burr, DBM, briefed the Committee on the recent meeting in Burlington, Vermont which was concerned with nuclear power and preservation of the environment. Drs. Totter and Burr also informed the Committee of a recent newspaper article in which Dr. Timothy Merz, of the Johns Hopkins University, emphasized the problem of radioactive tritium from nuclear plants. The ACBM felt that the question of tritium should be discussed in detail at a future meeting. It is planned to do this and also to consider thermal effects at the next meeting, which is scheduled for November 14 and 15, 1969, at Savannah River.

Dr. Cohen was elected Chairman and Dr. Moseley, Vice Chairman, of the ACBM for 1969-1970.

The Minutes of the 129th meeting of the ACBM were approved as circulated.

Respectfully submitted,



Harvey M. Patt, Scientific Secretary
Advisory Committee for Biology
and Medicine

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