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James F. Haggerty, Medical Research Branch
Division of Biology and Medicine

VISIT REPORT TO MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL
DR. WILLIAM SWEET, JUNE 19, 1959

SYMBOL: BHM:JFH

July 10, 1959	
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On Friday, June 19, 1959, a Task Force visit made up of Drs. Van Cleave, Henshaw, Spikes and Haggerty, and Mr. Stanwood, visited the research programs under the over-all cognizance of Dr. William Sweet at the Massachusetts General Hospital. This visit really covered three contracts, the first of which is under the immediate direction of Dr. Fernandez-Moran. Dr. Moran's primary interests are presently focused on electron microscopy of nervous tissue. To say we were quite amazed at the accomplishments, imagination, skill and competence of Dr. Fernandez-Moran is an understatement. We came away feeling that this man is positively a genius. He alone has done in a period of relatively few months what others have attempted to do over a period of years. He not only has an agile mind as far as research investigation is concerned, but he likewise has the capability of not only developing but actually building intricate electronic and tissue handling equipment. Each one of us was amazed at the accomplishments this man has made.

Dr. Sweet, in course of our visit, discussed his research concerned with brain tumor localization in patients and mentioned the increasing success he has had in detecting and delineating intracranial lesions. Though the majority of his scans have been accomplished with the use of AS 74, he has used a good deal of CU 64. Both he and Dr. Brownell definitely favor the use of arsenic. The coincidence counting apparatus has been functioning very satisfactorily and Dr. Brownell continues to improve its resolution.

Dr. Sweet's work with boron in relation to brain tumor therapy has had some rough going. He has been pushing hard on the chemical side of boron containing organic compounds and Dr. Albert Soloway brought us up to date on the compounds he has been working with. I might point out that this is one instance where a one-day conference has borne fruit. Dr. Soloway has established some very productive contacts as a result of the meeting held in Chicago, September 1958, sponsored by the Division of Biology and Medicine through AIBS.

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Dr. Sweet took us through the MIT reactor which has a medical port at the base of the reactor. We detected considerable disappointment with respect to ultimate functioning of the port for Dr. Sweet indicated it would be several months before he could treat his first patient in the reactor. Though the first patients will be brain tumor patients he mentioned he is thinking toward the possibility of irradiating the pituitary for total ablation in certain advanced breast cancer patients. By inserting a needle containing a boron solution through the patient's nose, it is a fairly simple matter to hit the pituitary. Dr. Sweet gave us a very vivid demonstration on a cadaver.

We completed our visit here with the feeling that this is an excellent research program and deserving of Commission support at the present level or possibly at an increased level.

cc: Dr. Shilling
 Betty Hower
 New York Operations Office

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