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Radiation Test Is Criticized

3 Inmates Regret Paid Participation

From News Services

WALLA WALLA, Wash., Sept. 26—Three state prison inmates who took part in radiation experiments in the 1960s and 1970s say they did it for the money, but would not have done so had they known the dangers.

"When they offered you money it was a very large incentive," said Patrick Sweet, 46. "They led us to believe they knew what they were doing. There wasn't any question as to aftereffects or side effects. They pretty well had the program under control."

Another inmate, Mike Briggs, said prisoners were told they would make \$500 to \$600 if they participated.

"I was facing a 99-year sentence at the time," Briggs, 46, said at a news conference Thursday. "Under those circumstances you don't feel you're ever going to get out anyway, so you don't care."

Inmate Gary Nettleton, 48, said he, too, participated for the money.

Documents released by the Department of Energy this week revealed the use of Washington state and Oregon inmates for studies of the effects of X-rays on testicles.

Experiments were conducted on 64 prisoners from 1963 to 1973 by officials from the Hanford nuclear reservation and a University of Washington researcher. Tests also were performed on 67 Oregon inmates from 1963 to 1971.

The documents were released at the request of Centers for Disease Control (CDC) scientists studying the health effects of 40 years of operations at the Hanford reservation in Richland, Wash.

Briggs said officials told him the experiments were conducted to determine whether sperm could be produced after cobalt radiation was administered to testicles. "They wanted to know if the world could be repopulated again safely" after a nuclear attack, he said.

The inmates signed consent forms before the experiments and agreed to undergo vasectomies afterward to prevent the birth of possibly damaged offspring.

Meanwhile, the scientific panel established by the CDC to study the health effects of the Hanford operations said today that new studies are needed to determine how nearly 40 years of radiation releases there have affected the area.

The Hanford Health Effects Panel, a 13-member group of experts that listened to two days of testimony earlier this week, recommended further epidemiological studies on the community and work force in the Hanford area, specifically the establishment of a health surveillance system using existing data on known exposures to radiation and hazardous chemicals, tumor registries, health insurance records, hospital discharges and laboratory pathology reports.

THE WASHINGTON

Inmates Exposed to Radiation In Study on Reproduction

U.S.-Funded Tests Used Volunteers

Associated Press

RICHLAND, Wash., Sept. 23—Radiation experiments funded by a federal agency were conducted on more than 100 prison volunteers in Washington state and Oregon during the 1960s and early 1970s, according to newly released documents.

"Effects of Radiation on the Human Testes" describes experiments in which the volunteers' testicles were irradiated by X-rays to study effects of radiation on reproductive function.

Mike Lawrence, operations manager of the U.S. Department of Energy's Hanford nuclear reservation located here, released the summaries of Atomic Energy Commission projects Monday to the Hanford Health Effects Panel, established by

the national Centers for Disease Control.

The experiments were funded by the Atomic Energy Commission, forerunner of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and the Energy Research and Development Administration, the documents said.

An employe of Battelle's Pacific Northwest Laboratories conducted the test on 67 prisoners at Oregon State Prison between August 1963 and May 1971. A University of Washington researcher conducted similar tests on 64 Washington State Penitentiary inmates between June 1963 and February 1973.

In the Washington study, vasectomies were performed before the end of the study "to eliminate the possibility of defective offspring," the summary noted. Although only

men desiring a vasectomy were accepted for the study, several changed their minds and did not want the surgery, it said.

The tests were conducted to study ways of protecting radiation workers, medical treatments and to study health effects, said Paula Clark, a Hanford program administrator.

Protocol for the experiments was approved at hospitals before the

"We're not talking about human experiments in terms of Nazi Germany...."

—Mike Lawrence

tests were conducted, she said.

"We're not talking about human experiments in terms of Nazi Germany in World War II," Lawrence told reporters.

Hanford no longer is involved in human experimentation.

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