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Mrs. Brothea P. Seeber
 Independent Cancer Research Foundation, Inc.
 118 West 57th Street, Suite 204
 New York City, New York

Seeber:

Your letter of March 23, 1958, sent to the Director of the University of California Medical School at Los Angeles, has been referred to us for reply.

You requested information about destruction of the pituitary gland with high-energy particles from the cyclotron. A reprint of the preliminary report of these studies is enclosed. A beam of protons was used in this series; in a second series, now in progress, another high-energy source of radiation, alpha particles, is being used.

This work was undertaken to learn if radiation hypophysectomy was feasible. Several groups had previously advocated the surgical removal of the pituitary in certain types of advanced cancer, such as metastatic mammary or prostatic cancer, which seem to be stimulated by hormone secretions of the body. Luft and Olivecrona, in Sweden, were the first to use this form of therapy (see references 30 and 31 in the bibliography of the enclosed reprint), and Drs. Olof Pearson and E. S. Ray, at the Sloan-Kettering Institute of the Memorial Center in New York, have also studied the effects of surgical hypophysectomy in advanced cancer (reference 40). Other groups have used implants of radioactive substances to destroy or inhibit the pituitary gland (see discussion in 4th paragraph of the reprint; recent results of the University of Chicago group were also published in the International Journal of Applied Radiation and Isotopes, Vol. 3, page 83, 1958, abstract 16). In all of these experiments the aim has been to learn if the growth of hormone-dependent cancers can be effectively controlled by inhibition or destruction of the pituitary gland. If this procedure should prove to be effective, radiation would have an advantage over surgery in that operative risks could be avoided.

This form of treatment would probably not now be available to the public. This work is still in the experimental stage, and patients are selected according to rather rigid criteria. Much more data are needed to compare with results following other forms of treatment, and it is now too early to say whether this treatment will prove successful.

Yours sincerely,

James L. Born, M.D.
Assistant Director

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