

*File
Rongelap*

P

726393

18 April 1961

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Dr. Lee E. Parr, Chairman
Medical Department
Dr. R. A. Conard, Head, Marshall
Islands Medical Surveys
Trip Report, Medical Survey
Rongelap people, March, 1961

The regular annual survey of the Rongelap people was carried out in March, 1961, 7 years after exposure to fallout. The following personnel from the U. S. and the Trust Territory participated in the survey:

people

Physical Examinations

Dr. Robert A. Conard ✓	Brookhaven National Laboratory
Dr. David Karnofsky ✓	Memorial Hospital, New York City
Dr. H. E. Macdonald*	Agana, Guam, Marshall Islands
Dr. W. W. Sutow ✓	M. D. Anderson Hospital, Houston, Texas
Dr. Ezra Riklon, Practitioner*	Ebeye, Marshall Islands
Boon, Interpreter*	Majuro, Marshall Islands

Hematology

Dr. Leo Meyer ✓	So. Nassau Communities Hospital
Emil Adamik, Tech. ✓	Rockville Centre, Long Island, N.Y.
Irving Jones, Tech. ✓	Brookhaven National Laboratory
	So. Nassau Communities Hospital
	Rockville Centre, Long Island, N.Y.
Sebio Shoniber, Tech.*	Majuro, Marshall Islands
Kosang Mizutoni, Tech.*	Majuro, Marshall Islands
William Scott, Tech. ✓	Brookhaven National Laboratory
Nelson, Tech. ✓	Majuro, Marshall Islands

Gamma Spectroscopy

Dr. Stanton Cohn ✓	Brookhaven National Laboratory
Mr. Douglas Clareus ✓	" " "
Ernest Gusmano, Tech. ✓	" " "

Dentistry

Dr. A. A. Jaffe*	Majuro, Marshall Islands
Soras, Tech.*	Majuro, Marshall Islands

*Department of Public Health, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

REPOSITORY Washington National Records Center
 COLLECTION 32681-6
 BOX No. Box-1
 FOLDER _____

1182134

18 April 1961

The medical survey included the following medical examinations: Interval history, complete physical examination with specific emphasis on cancer detection, growth and development measurements in children and aging studies; hematological examinations including WBC and RBC (Coulter electronic counter) and differential counts (phase microscopy), hematocrit, hemoglobin, special smears for alkaline phosphatase and basophils counts and, in certain cases, reticulocyte counts and sera for iron determinations in anemic subjects, blood volume by chromium tagging (in selected American and Marshallese subjects at Majuro), additional sera for later studies; urine, routine analysis and collections for radiochemical analyses; limited collection of food for radiochemical analysis; x-rays (wrists in children) for growth study, chest plates in adults (over 40 years of age); gamma spectroscopy (whole body counts in about 120 people at Rongelap (about half 10-minute counts and half 30-minute counts)).

The following groups were examined at the dates indicated:

<u>Location</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Exposed</u>	<u>Controls</u>	<u>Total</u>
Kwajalein	Mar. 11, 12	9	26	35
Majuro	Mar. 14, 15, 16	7	23	30
Rongelap	Mar. 20 - 31	83*	118	201
				<u>266</u>

*Includes children of exposed.

The examinations at Kwajalein were carried out in the Transport Company of Texas Hospital (formerly the Naval Hospital) and at Majuro at the Marshall Island Memorial Hospital. The medical team was transported from Eniwetok to Rongelap via the Trust Territory ship MV ROQUE for the examinations there. The whole body counts were carried out on board this vessel, and the physical and other examinations at Rongelap village. There was excellent cooperation from Dr. Macdonald and the other Trust Territory personnel. The medical team cooperated and functioned extremely well together. The Marshallese people were most cooperative in submitting to the examinations and the whole operation went off as smoothly as could be expected.

(Control)

① The medical data has not been analyzed yet but it can be stated that there were no apparent illnesses or disabilities related to radiation effects and the general state of nutrition was generally good and about the same as it had been noted in the past years. There had been no deaths during the past year in the exposed population. In the comparison population an anencephalic baby was born which caused quite an impression on the people, and one young boy had died of pneumonia. The people had the usual complaints

1182135

Memo to Dr. Farr

- 3 -

18 April 1961

about various effects of their radiation environment, ^{but} ~~which will be referred to in more detail below.~~ Despite this, their cooperation was excellent.

The following is the chronological narrative account of some of the highlights of the survey:

March 10-13 - We arrived in the early morning of 10 March after an all night MATS flight and were met by several representatives of the Navy. I was impressed with the tremendous growth that has taken place on the Island since it has become the Pacific Missile Range Testing Center. In addition to many dormitories and schools under construction, there were many curious-looking structures related to the program there. Previous arrangements had been made with Mr. William White (Trust Territory representative) and Dr. Ezra Riklon, practitioner at Ebeye, to bring the Rongelap people to the Texas Transport Company Hospital the following morning. Dr. S. Shippey, Director of the hospital and Dr. W. W. Fennel were most cooperative in arranging for space and facilities at their hospital for carrying out the examinations. We were surprised to see how many Rongelap people (around 50) had migrated to Ebeye. It had been hoped that the people could all be examined on March 11th but in view of the large number of people there, it was necessary to continue the examinations on Sunday, 12 March. Several of us also went over to Ebeye to examine a few people who could not get over to Kwajalein.

March 13-16 - We left by Navy amphibious plane on the morning of 13 March for Majuro arriving there before noon. We met with Dr. John Iaman and arranged to carry out the examinations at the Marshall Islands Memorial Hospital for the next two days. That afternoon physicians on the team made rounds and carried out consultation services with the medical staff of the hospital.

Previous arrangements had been made with Mr. William Allen (Administrative Assistant) and with _____, one of the Rongelap girls living at Majuro, to locate the Rongelap people living there. As at Kwajalein, we found more Rongelap people living there than we had expected (about 30). We were fortunate in locating nearly all of these people for the examinations. Dr. H. E. Macdonald, Director of Public Health arrived via Trust Territory plane on the evening of the 14th, to participate in the survey.

The following morning Dr. Macdonald, Mr. William Finale, the District Administrator, Mr. Boyd Mackenzie and I held a meeting to discuss survey arrangements on the ROQUE. It was agreed that Dr. Macdonald would act as Field Trip Officer with me in charge of the medical survey. The subject of the letter to the people of

18 April 1961

Rongelap concerning future surveys was discussed, and I was informed that the letter had been only broadcast over the radio. Since only three radios were available on Rongelap it would not seem likely that these people would have heard the broadcast. In view of the request by the AEC Office of the General Counsel, Mr. Finale agreed not to send the letter to Rongelap for publication.

The ROQUE sailed on the evening of 15 March for Eniwetok (2-1/2 day trip) with Dr. Macdonald and the other Trust Territory medical personnel. A Navy plane picked us up the next morning and flew us back to Kwajalein.

March 17-20 - We flew by MATS plane the morning of 17 March to Eniwetok, met with Mr. Thomas Hardison and other Holmes and Narver personnel to check into the rather extensive arrangements which were necessary to outfit the ROQUE on arrival for the survey. The ROQUE arrived the morning of the 18th and the operations for on-loading the ship were carried out in a very efficient manner. The placement of the 21-ton steel room in the hold of the ROQUE was the most ticklish of all of the procedures, in view of the fact the dock was not in the best of condition and that the crane was operating at near-capacity. There was a sigh of relief from everyone when this steel monster was gently and precisely placed in the hold of the ROQUE. The wooden electronics room had been placed in the aft end of the hold space. Other parts of the operation included putting 30 medical boxes and wooden stairway into the hold, and welding of a 230-Kilowatt generator weighing 3,000 lbs. each on to the forward deck, and the unloading of gasoline drums, diesel oil tank and miscellaneous equipment. It was a fascinating sight to see this experienced group of men carrying out this work with such precision and teamwork.

The entire team boarded the ship Sunday morning, the 19th, and we set out in extremely rough seas for Rongelap. Until our arrival at Rongelap lagoon, some 30 hours later, most of the members of the team was confined to their beds with violent cases of seasickness. On anchoring in the lagoon off the village of Rongelap, Emos, the magistrate of the Rongelap people paddled out in his outrigger canoe and we discussed on board the ROQUE the purpose of our visit. We arranged a village meeting for the following morning to discuss with the people the objectives of our visit.

The following morning a Navy plane arrived with five riggers from Eniwetok Island, furnished by Holmes and Narver to offload the 10 Killowatt generator and transport it to the village. They carried out this difficult maneuver on the ship's small motor launch very efficiently. Following this, the boxes of medical equipment were carried ashore and laboratory and examining facilities were set up in the village and on the ship.

1182137

Memo to Dr. Farr

- 5 -

18 April 1961

*The following is an excerpt from Dr. Conrad's
mail trip report.*

2 In the meantime, Dr. Macdonald and I attended a meeting with the Rongelap people in the Counsel House and we told them about the intended examinations. The people voiced continued concern about the effects of fallout on their Atoll and on themselves. I did not feel that their concern was any greater this year than expressed in similar meetings with the people during the past years. A chief complaint was that they were not getting enough to eat and felt weak. Dr. Macdonald told them that the Trust Territory policy was, "--No work, no eat--". This matter was not pursued since it concerned administrative policy of the Trust Territory. Some of the other complaints concerned poisoning by fish (an old complaint). They claim that certain fish have a black spot in their abdomen which they believe is related to radioactivity and causes the sickness. They are still disgruntled that they are not allowed to eat the coconut crabs which is forbidden because of the high concentration of Strontium⁹⁰. They complained that the coconuts were small and referred to certain changes in the coconut and pandanus trees which they believe are due to fallout. There was a complaint that I had not heard before, that several people had gotten inflammation and blistering of the mouth from eating arrowroot flour. This latter complaint was probably due to improper preparation of the flour which is known to produce such symptoms. I heard no mention of the suit against the United States Government. (Dr. Macdonald had showed me a report of the United Nations team's visit to Rongelap. The complaints voiced to this group were about the same as described above).

The people were very friendly and cooperated well in carrying out the examination. Every exposed person on the Islands submitted to the examinations and only a few of the control population did not appear. The survey went very smoothly and the Trust Territory medical personnel and our personnel worked well together. The examinations were completed 31 March and that afternoon a party was held for the Rongelap people in a palm grove behind the village. Lemonade, cookies, and ice cream were served and small trinkets were given to the people, to show our appreciation for their cooperation. The Marshallese sang several songs and their clear voices and close harmonizing style was, as always, most pleasing to hear. We put on several humorous skits, takeoffs on the medical examinations of the people in which we examined each other. They were somewhat slapstick but the people seemed to enjoy this a great deal.

Several old Western movies were brought along and shown the people on several nights.

We loaded the ship the morning of 31 March and sailed for Eniwetok. We were all quite happy that the return sea voyage was relatively

1182138

18 April 1961

smooth and there was very little seasickness on the return trip.

April 1-5 - We arrived at Eniwetok on the afternoon of 1 April (with the feeling that we were getting back to civilization!). On 2 April most of the team departed via MATS to return home. On 3 April the ship was off-loaded and the following day the boxes of medical equipment were banded and readied for shipment to the U.S.A. On 5 April the remainder of the team departed for the U. S.

I discussed survey plans with Dr. Macdonald for next year. In view of the fact that it was not likely that whole body counts would be necessary, the survey would be greatly simplified and the use of the ship would not be necessary. The survey team, if necessary, could be flown in from Kwajalein by Navy amphibious plane (or planes). An even better plan would be to plan the survey to coincide with one of the usual Trust Territory field trips so that the team and necessary equipment could be transported from Majuro and Kwajalein to Rongelap on the ROQUE. This would simplify bringing in water and fuel. The team would then live on the Island for approximately the two-week period necessary to carry out the examinations. Dr. Macdonald agreed to investigate various aspects of the living and feeding arrangements for the group on the Island. We could procure our own food at Kwajalein and it was felt that a Marshallese cook would be desirable to prepare the meals. The 10-Kilowatt generator that is now set up on the Island would furnish the necessary electricity for all of the examination procedures. The completion of the field trip of the ROQUE might coincide with the completion of the survey on Rongelap, and if so, the team could be transported back on this ship. If not, it could be arranged for the Navy to airlift the group back to Kwajalein. In view of the changing administrative setup in the Trust Territory (Mr. Goding to be the new High Commissioner, and Mr. Coleman to be the new District Administrator of the Marshall Islands), Dr. Macdonald agreed to keep me informed about the general situation.

aeg

1182139