

UNITED STATES  
ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20545

April 24, 1974

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NOTE FOR JOHN WHITNAH

With respect to the enclosed:

We propose a response to inquiry--something in the nature of a talking paper--rather than a public announcement. For that reason, we have no objection to editorial changes, rearrangement of paragraphs or the addition of material. In other words, there is no pride of authorship. In responding, we will talk from the material, not simply read it to the reporter.

But we do need the information necessary to handle press queries on this subject when the queries start arriving. For that reason, we would like restoration of the information which Kornfeld dropped. Whether or not it is restored, we would have to use it anyway if we are asked. The alternative would be to refuse to give it, and I don't think anyone wants to put the agency in that position.

After we get your blessing, I will show the General Manager and the Commissioners.

*John A. Harris*  
John A. Harris, Director  
Office of Information Services

Enclosure

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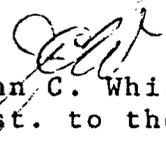
OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER

April 24, 1974

To: John A. Harris, Dir., OIS

Steve Greenleigh, OGC

Dr. Liverman would like your  
review of the attached.

  
John C. Whitnah  
Asst. to the AGMB

Office of the General Manager

GPO 908327

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*Carter - ok*

*WUB - ok*

*Mr Whitnack*

April 17, 1974

Dr. Liverman:

The draft press release you wanted reviewed is altogether unacceptable. I have rewritten it, retaining the intent of the original version as much as possible.

Enclosed is a recently prepared "fact sheet" summarizing the plutonium studies in man. This goes into somewhat more detail than the press release. Additional supplemental information consists of articles by Durbin, Langham, Stone and Bair.

*Doris*

Dr. L. Kornfeld

Enclosure:  
As stated

*Whitnack:*

*John this looks reasonably in order. Ple have Burr, Carter, review and then get to Greenleaf or Rowden for their perusal then to OIS -> then to Chairman for best review in case needed.*

*JL 4/21/74*

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### Response to Query on Plutonium Injection Study

The Atomic Energy Commission is conducting a staff inquiry into a study undertaken by the Manhattan Engineering District near the end of World War II to determine how plutonium, a man-made radioactive material, is deposited and excreted in the human body. The scientific community has been aware of this study for many years. An analysis of the findings may be found in the book, "Radiobiology of Plutonium," published in 1972 by the J. W. Press, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.

In the 1940's it was essential to establish realistic criteria for protecting the health of thousands of plutonium workers who were ~~exposed to~~ <sup>working with</sup> this hazardous material. For this purpose, accurate information on the retention and excretion of this radionuclide in man was required. A great deal had already been learned from experiments in animals, including the fact that the metabolic patterns of plutonium varied from one species to another. Thus, it was recognized that reliable information pertaining to man could be obtained only from persons who had received small but known amounts of this material and the decision was made to initiate studies designed to yield the needed data.

Between 1945 and 1947, 18 hospital patients were injected with varying amounts of plutonium. The subjects selected for the study generally were over 45 years old and suffered from chronic or malignant diseases such that survival for 10 years was highly improbable. All but one of the injections were given before the AEC was established in August 1946. Scientific studies were conducted for about five years after the injections. Much of what is known today about the retention of plutonium in man is based on data from these experiments.

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In 1972 and 1973, an investigator at an AEC contract facility arranged for follow-up studies on three surviving patients and on the body of one deceased patient. A series of papers describing the results of these recent studies will be presented at the International Congress for Radiation Research to be held in Seattle, Washington, in July 1974.

The inquiry now being conducted by AEC staff at the request of the five-member Commission, seeks to establish the circumstances under which this study was done, including whether any of the 18 patients or their next of kin were informed about the nature and purpose of the injections at the time they were given or when the recent follow-up studies were undertaken.

Policy guidelines for the conduct of medical experimentation on humans and the concept of informed consent were not clearly formulated until 1969. Subsequently, the AEC instituted the requirement that its contractors adhere to the 1969 guidelines of the National Institutes of Health. More recently, the revised policy of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, as described in DHEW publication No. (NIH) 72-102, dated December 1, 1971, has been adopted.

The findings of the inquiry are to be reported to the Commission as soon as the investigation has been completed.