

## DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE ACTIVITIES ON HUMAN RADIATION EXPERIMENTS REVIEW

Under the direction of Secretary Perry, the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense (Atomic Energy), Dr. Harold P. Smith, and his Principal Deputy, Dr. Gordon K. Soper, lead DoD's efforts to discover and disclose to interested parties the nature and extent of the Department's involvement in human radiation experimentation. A Department of Defense Steering Committee, chaired by Dr. Smith, composed of high-level Department officials and supported by scores of DoD personnel, has met regularly to structure and guide the Department's efforts.

A 31 January 1994 memorandum from Dr. Smith to all DoD components provided detailed guidance on locating, identifying, reviewing, and declassifying records pertaining to human radiation experiments. This guidance instructed DoD components to preserve existing records; manage records in accordance with Freedom of Information Act, Privacy Act and security classification procedures, directing that records were to be declassified to the maximum extent; and, if there were a question on an experiment, to err on the side of inclusion in the initial identification of a possible experiment.

To assure the quality, comprehensiveness and integrity of the search process, components were directed to submit a report, consisting of two parts. In Part I the agency was required to report: each organization under its control that may have conducted or sponsored experiments; the location(s) where records might be stored; a description of the efforts undertaken to confirm if records were at the location(s) identified; and if records were found. Part II required a description of each experiment identified as a result of activities described in Part I. Each experiment was to be described as follows: identification of experiment or possible experiment; where and when it took place; name of primary researcher(s); DoD organizations grantees, or contractors involved in the experiment; number of human subjects (including available information on subjects); summary of experiment; records location; estimated nature and quantity of records; and whether the records are classified, and, if so, what actions have been or will be taken to review the classification.

A massive search effort has ensued. Following the dictum to err on the side of inclusion, reports thus far have identified approximately 1,760 DoD conducted or supported activities from 1944 to present that possibly fall within the scope of the

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Interagency Working Group definition of human radiation experiments. It appears that the overwhelming majority of these are clinical research activities conducted by DoD medical components since 1974, involving therapeutic investigations in which radiation was used solely in accordance with established, non-experimental diagnostic procedures. These activities will be further reviewed and analyzed and eventually categorized as either clinical procedures, therapeutic programs, research protocols, etc. Additionally, some components reported file volumes in the hundreds of feet, and that there are millions of individual service records at the Military Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, Missouri for personnel that served during the last 50 years.

To coordinate the Department's efforts, a Radiation Experiments Command Center (RECC) was established. The RECC is the Department's central repository and point of contact for matters related to human radiation experiments. The RECC has developed an automated database for information on the status of ongoing actions that respond to inquiries from the public, other Federal agencies, and Congress, and analyze information received from these, and other, sources. A second RECC automated database is the "event file," to capture information on each experiment identified by DoD records search. This will allow reviewers to expeditiously match experiments with inquiries from the Advisory Committee, Congress or the public.

DoD's efforts to date have highlighted several issues on which guidance from the Advisory Committee would be helpful. The major issue is the prioritization of records retrieval and review of the large number of possible experiments that have been preliminarily identified. DoD suggests that pre-1974 experiments not clearly outside the scope of interest be considered for high priority attention. Guidance is also needed on identifying lead responsibility for resolving inquiries from individuals that fall within multiple agency jurisdictions. Finally, we suggest the need for a uniform, responsive, integrated and cost-effective approach to satisfy both near- and long-term requirements to provide information to the Advisory Committee, the Congress, human subjects or their next-of-kin, and the public.

DoD is fully committed to the task of discovering and documenting the extent of its participation in human radiation experimentation over the last 50 years. Carrying out this task will remain a high priority of Secretary Perry and the Department of Defense.