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11 December 1946

Dr. Lee A. DuBridge, Chairman
Interim Advisory Committee on Isotope Distribution Policy
California Institute of Technology
Pasadena, California

Dear Dr. DuBridge:

In compliance with a communication received from Dr. Paul C. Aebersold relative to the future status of the Advisory Committee on Isotope Distribution and my position as Chairman of the Sub-Committee on Human Applications, I wish to advise you as follows.

I shall be glad to continue in my present capacity providing you and the remainder of your Committee do not have anyone else in mind. However, if you would rather select someone else to fill the position, I shall not feel embarrassed in the least. The various committees to date have done an exceptionally good piece of work, and I wish to commend Dr. Aebersold for the excellent job which he has done.

I feel that the isotope program has gotten underway better than could have been anticipated a year ago. The only difficulty at the moment seems to be in some irregularity in supplying the various isotopes when needed. However, I am sure that this is to be anticipated and probably results from difficulties experienced in separation and purification methods.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON ISOTOPE PROGRAM

1. I believe that the isotope distribution program should not only continue but perhaps should be elevated to the position of a primary program. It is my feeling that isotopes in basic and fundamental research are extremely important and will lead to a much better understanding of normal and pathological physiology. I am not particularly optimistic about the use of radioactive isotopes as therapeutic agents in their present state except in such cases as P 32, I 130, and I 131. This does not mean, however, that fundamental research will not lead to their successful application in the therapeutic field. The perhaps relatively limited use at the present time results from insufficient instrumentation, lack of experienced workers, and somewhat sporadic distribution intervals. It is my understanding that a number of these isotopes can be used extensively in the chemical industry which will greatly facilitate a number of production methods.

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2. I believe that the Commission should entertain the idea of subsidizing institutions for educational programs relative to isotope techniques. The training at these centers should include both practical and theoretical applications of isotopes. The training should be so conducted that suitably qualified candidates could work towards a degree in Biophysics in one to three years depending upon their entrance qualifications. Secondly, such centers should be equipped to train for a shorter period of time technicians in the various techniques required for both therapeutic and investigative purposes. Short courses of three to six weeks for M.D.'s and Ph.D.'s to learn specific isotope techniques should be made available. The extent of the support required from the Commission for such an educational program should cover the necessary salaries of a competent staff, equipment, and a certain amount for overhead to the educational institution.

3. I would recommend making available the greatest number of radioactive isotopes possible.

4. Steps should be taken to secure the cooperation of commercial laboratories and interested universities for the synthesis of C 14 into various organic chemicals. Doubtless, Eastman Kodak Company, DuPont, and American Cyanamid would be interested in such an undertaking.

5. Within the next eighteen months I believe that a handbook on radioactive isotopes should be published and made available to interested groups. This handbook should contain as much fundamental material on radioactive isotopes as possible, including purification, assay, calculation of therapeutic and tracer doses, and health protection. Material for such a volume should be presented in a concise and easily understandable form.

Very sincerely yours,

Andrew H. Dowdy, M.D., Chairman
Sub-Committee on Human Applications
INTERIM ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ISOTOPE DISTRIBUTION

AHD:JW
CC: Dr. Aebersold

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