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Dear Tony:

I heard from a few people that you have become interested in the HTLV-1 history, but you should know it well; you were certainly around at that time!

Seriously Tony, if you want a synopsis - it is not hard nor controversial in any way, except from one man, your EBV friend, Yorio Himuna, and perhaps our mutual "on target" colleague, Abraham Karpas.

The Japanese in fact asked me to write a history for the cover of the Japanese Journal of Cancer Research for a 10 year anniversary of ATL some few years ago, and to give the history as the keynote speaker of the Princess Takamatsu meeting in 1984.

The key Japanese people who witnessed these events up close at the beginning of the field were: Takatsuki (who discovered the disease ATL); Miyoshi (whose work was far more relevant, critical, and original than Hinuma's) in that early period; Yoshida (who did most of the molecular biology); Aoki, who collaborated with me; and, Ito who also collaborated with me but as you know, died.

There is no disagreement now - nor was there ever one - nor can there ever be one, even by people who seem bent to stir trouble and to denigrate. The reason is simple, the record is there and clear-cut.

We isolated HTLV-1 three times from the first patient (CR): once from a cell line and twice from blood and lymph nodes. The first isolate was made in 1978, presented at CSH in 1979, published in 1980. We had 5 papers published on HTLV-1 (including isolates from a second patient), before the first Japanese report of their isolate in 1981.

The first time the Japanese even presented data was in March 81 (by Hinuma), at a meeting organized by Ito. After Japanese scientists had come to a conclusion that a parasite (strongy loides) was the probable cause of ATL and after hours of presentations from my group, Hinuma announced he "too had a virus". There were EM and IFA assays, period. The meeting was organized by Ito for me and several co-workers to bring the story to Japan, the story of HTLV-1, and to arrange wide collaborations. We presented roughly 5 hours worth of data,

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including several independent HTLV-1 isolates, serology purification of p24, purification and properties of RT, cDNA clones etc; and note, this was after * five papers came out from my lab! I left cell lines, monoclonal antibodies and cDNA probes in Japan, I got zero in return. Hinuma aggressively attempted to stop any collaborations I might make, but I already established some.

I also presented our linkage of HTLV-1, not only to sporadic adult T4 cell malignancies in the U.S. (called by our clinicians "aggressive variants" of mycosis fungoides or of Sezary leukemia, but in reality later seen as ATL cases), but I also presented linkage to Japanese ATL!

I got material from Ito and Aoki in 1979-80. I reported 8 of 8 or 6 of 6 (I don't remember exactly) ATL's positive for HTLV-1 and that there was a high prevalence of HTLV-1 in southern Japan & Kyushu and far less so in ATL non-endemic regions. I deliberately held publication of this to bring in more * Japanese, as suggested to me by Ito. Most of Japan knows this story. It was clearly witnessed by many, including de Thé of the Pasteur Institute. Blattner knows most of it; so do Yoshida, Takatsuki, Robin Weiss. Further, there is (thankfully), a report of this meeting published in Cancer Research authored by Ito, de Thé and myself. But in any case, what can the problem be? No one on earth can deny that we isolated HTLV-1 long before the Japanese. Indeed, our discovery of HTLV-2 comes close to their first isolate of HTLV-1. What are you concerned or confused about?

I hope we will cross paths in the near future. It would be nice to reflect on old times, for me to hear about what you really are doing, and to be more certain that you do not fall prey to malicious rumor mongering or fail to recognize that some history is clearly recorded.

Best Wishes.

Sincerely,



Robert C. Gallo, M.D.

RCG:w1

* But I have never sought priority for this linkage.

* There were all in very well known peer reviewed journals, such as PNAS, Nature, Science, Virology, J. Virology, J. Exp Med