



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

National Institutes of Health  
National Cancer Institute  
Bethesda, Maryland 20205

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June 15, 1984

Dr. Jean Claude Chermann  
Institut Pasteur  
28 Rue Du D'Roux  
75724 Paris Cedex 15  
France

Dear Jean Claude,

For your records, we released to you the HTLV-III virus; and much more importantly, the permanently growing HT cell line producing large amounts of HTLV-III; and the only known anti-serum to HTLV-III produced in animals. In the past we provided you with some technical training. We have also supplied you with HTLV-I and HTLV-II, hyperimmune sera to the proteins of HTLV-I, monoclonal antibodies to HTLV-I, cloned probes of the viral genomes of both HTLV-I (shipped on April 19, 1983) and HTLV-II, (shipped on April 25, 1984) and T-Cell Growth Factor (TCGF) necessary for your growth of the cells. What we received from you was minute amounts of extracellular virus on two occasions. The first time there were no detectable virus particles. The second time there were, and we confirmed your transmission of these to fresh T-cells and the ensuing cytopathic effect. We did not "mass produce" these for characterization of them. We assumed that was your job. We also did not want to cross contaminate our lines which, of course, is a real possibility of the putative confirmatory isolates at CDC since they were passing your virus.

You will also recall, that at the beginning, your studies were collaborative with us. The virus, you explained at the time, was not related to HTLV. We now know it is related to HTLV-I and II and clearly belongs to that virus family. Obviously we now know that the material you sent to us was inadequate for comparative studies. We wish you also to know that our first identification of HTLV-III was November 1982. We had several more isolates in February 1983, but did not choose to report on our electron microscopy or reverse transcriptase studies until we had further characterized the virus. We could not carry out detailed analysis until we

were able to grow HTLV-III on a large scale. Only then did we publish our findings. As you know to this date no one else has done this. At least no one else has yet published it. I will ask you to recall that you were not sure that LAV and IDAV were identical. Your April 7, 1984 Lancet paper still distinguishes between the two viruses. Early on in our work we withheld publication of HTLV-III until we could well characterize it. It is not easy or pleasant to go through this, but it seems necessary after the peculiar press treatment we have received documenting the development of the etiology of AIDS and the statements attributed to you, Luc Montagnier, and "unnamed" people at the Pasteur Institute. We trust that this situation is now over, and we can resume normal work.

Sincerely yours,



Robert C. Gallo, M.D.  
Chief, Laboratory of  
Tumor Cell Biology

AHS:tas

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