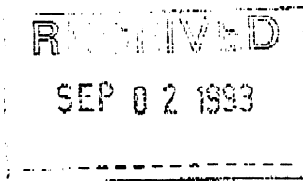




DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

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September 2, 1993

Dr. John Maddox
Editor, *Nature*
Macmillan Magazines Ltd.
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London WC2R 3LF
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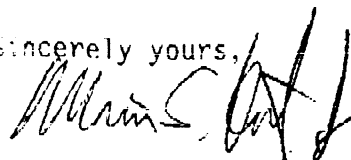
Dear Dr. Maddox:

I read with interest the report by Chang *et al.* that *Nature* recently published, in which they analyzed some of the early AIDS-related samples that our laboratory supplied to the Office of Scientific Integrity (OSI). Although the report did not contain anything new regarding the previously described IIIB/LAV/BRU/LAI serial contamination, the report did add a few points of historical interest. For one thing, it validated the existence of HIV-1(RF) as an independent early isolate of the Laboratory of Tumor Cell Biology (LTCB) growing in a permanent cell line. It also showed that Mikulas Popovic had a number of unique HIV-1 isolates in his patient pool; had this culture not been overgrown by the contaminating LAI, we could well have wound up with a virus other than LAI becoming HTLV-III.

In the interest of responding to the Chang *et al.* report and also of definitively characterizing some of the other isolates that were being grown by LTCB in late 1983-early 1984, but which were not requested by the OSI, we have recently sequenced part of the envelope genes of six of them. These were either referred to specially or mentioned as one of a group of isolates in the 1984 *Science* papers by Popovic *et al.* and Gallo *et al.* Four of them were early examples of HIV grown in T cell lines at about the time that the HIV-IIIB pool and RF were first grown. One (LL) is of interest from two standpoints; it is from an infant with AIDS that was cultured very early (August 1983) and it represents the first reported instance of transmission of AIDS from mother to infant. We have written and enclosed a brief note describing and comparing these sequences, hoping that you will agree to publish it in *Nature*, and in view of *Nature's* publishing the Chang *et al.* paper, we expect a positive response.

While I realize that the characterization of historical HIV-1 samples and the possible clarification of old controversies may no longer be of as great an interest as in the recent past, your publication of the Chang *et al.* report indicates you feel there remains general interest in the subject. I would be grateful for the opportunity to reach a wide audience with a definitive characterization of what are obviously among the earliest reported isolates, and I enclose the notes describing them for your consideration. Please let me know your thoughts on this.

Sincerely yours,



Marvin S. Reitz, Jr., Ph.D.
Acting Deputy Chief



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