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Child Thyroid Victims Face Further Tests of Fallout Link

By Howard Simons
Washington Post Staff Writer

A team of medical experts has recommended that nine Utah children with thyroid gland abnormalities undergo further medical study at the Salt Lake City Medical Center.

The children are among 2000 between the ages of 10 to 18 who are being studied by the U.S. Public Health Service to determine if there is a link between fallout from atomic tests and thyroid gland damage.

In addition to the intensive hospital study of the nine children from St. George, Utah, which received a greater amount of fallout than the average American city, 18 more St. George youngsters will undergo blood tests.

No children in a companion study at Stafford, Ariz., which received less fallout than St. George, have been recom-

mended for hospitalization yet, but 16 of the Arizona children will have their blood tested.

An informal source yesterday said that some of the Arizona children show thyroid abnormalities, too. Hospital study of these youngsters, he said, seems likely.

The recommendations for hospital studies and blood tests came from three thyroid gland experts sent to the two cities by the Public Health Service after preliminary findings showed a disproportionate number of thyroid abnormalities in the Utah children.

The specialists are Dr. Brown M. Dobyns of Western Reserve Medical School, Dr. Raymond F. Keating Jr., of the Mayo Clinic, and Dr. Joseph E. Rail of the National Institutes of Health. They have not yet made their formal report to PHS but it is expected to contain further

recommendations for the Government's fallout-thyroid study.

The thyroid gland is particularly likely to get a large dose of radiation from fallout, especially from radioactive iodine for which the gland has an affinity.

In recent years, atomic experts have accumulated dis-

turbing information linking radioiodine, which falls out shortly after an atmospheric atomic test, with thyroid abnormalities.

The most recent of these findings is a continuing study of Marshall Islanders accidentally bathed in large amounts of fallout in March 1954. The

incidence of thyroid abnormalities among the affected Islanders has been climbing at a significant rate.

Though no such link or incidence has yet been established for American children who have absorbed radioactive iodine in food and drink, scientists have virtually no information on these possibilities.

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