

TECHNICAL REPORT

for the period 1 April 1998 to 30 June 1998

“Epidemiologic Studies of Radiation Induced Thyroid Disease in Belarus (BelAm Thyroid Project) and in Ukraine (UkrAm Project)

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1. BelAm Thyroid Project

Official Progress Review Site Visit took place 7 June-11 June 1998. There were no new appointments in the organization during the past quarter. The move to another location continued to be “imminent”, while the staff of the Institute continues working in cramped quarters. The clinical moiety of the group is still operating in the old Dispensary but they too are scheduled to relocate to a new location. Exact time for this could not be established.

A disturbing development surfaced during this visit showing a type of “turf battle” between the screening group and the DCC staff concerning the data entry operations. According to the original plans the DCC staff was identified for computerization of the data. Presently the screening group holds unto all hard copies of the forms which, at present, are incomplete due to the unavailability of the clinical laboratory input. Also, the screeners show interest in entering the data directly into the computers at their location. This development was discussed during one of the working sessions on quality control aspects but no firm resolution has been reached. We will need to address this topic again to prevent an over-accumulation of non-computerized data material.

An interesting development was reported to us as we were leaving, namely, the thyroid hormone analysis apparatus - the IMX from Abbott - broke down and the repairs would cost around \$4,000.00. At present we are trying to determine whether Abbott will take care of this. We never bought this equipment; on the strength of ordering reagents from them, Abbott supplied us with the instrument.

Arrival of equipment and supplies is not as complicated as in Ukraine. but from time to time, the documentation from the vendors is inadequate from the point of view of the customs officials and we have to write explanatory letters.

2. UkrAm Thyroid Project

The Progress Review Site Visit preceded the Minsk Trip (3-6 June 1998). Organizationally, there were no changes in personnel during this quarter.

Monthly meetings with the representatives from Ukraine's Ministry of Health continued and their interest seemed to have a positive effect on the staff.

After some last minute technical difficulties, the local support funds were finally transferred to the STCU accounts and the Institute staff received individual allotments for the past two quarters.

Reagents and equipment continued to arrive. Clearance through the customs varied. On one hand timely notification by us of their arrival to the Institute and the Agency for Reconstruction and Development facilitated the process of clearance; the customs officials, on the other hand, were often requiring clarification of various points. For example a microscope was purchased and its anticipated arrival reported. However, the vendor identified all individual component parts on the invoice rather than just stating that it is the microscope. This then needed to be verified by us before the customs officials released the instrument.

On the positive side, all the computers, FAXes, printers and copiers along with the necessary supplies, programs and some services ordered through Computerland-Kyiv were delivered towards the end of June and cleared through the customs.

Technical quarterly progress report for this quarter has not yet been received as of this writing. As soon as it arrives, I will forward it to you.

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“Study of Leukemia and Other Hematologic Diseases Among Cleanup Workers in Ukraine Following the Chernobyl Accident (UkrAm Leukemia Project)”

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The official Project Review Site Visit was held during 16-21 May 1998 week with a short follow up session during the June trip to the Institute of Endocrinology and Metabolism (UkrAm Thyroid Project). The May visit was preceded by a conference in Paris between the NCI and the French Institute of Nuclear Protection and Safety (IPSN) staff. The summary of this session is attached.

The highlight of this visit was a field trip to Dnipropetrovsk and Kryvyi Rih Medical facilities where the study subjects will be enrolled. While the clinical and epidemiologic representatives traveled south, the dosimetrists worked with their counterparts in Kyiv. The summary of the Dnipropetrovsk-Kryvyi Rih visit is attached.

The flow of reagents and equipment increased markedly during this quarter and the problems with the customs were, if anything, even greater than those experienced by the UkrAm Thyroid Project staff. However, it was partially due to a lesser involvement of the Center representative that led to some unnecessary delays. In both locations the difficulty often arose from the fact that various vendors who shipped directly to Kyiv did not include the simple statement on the invoice: “Technical assistance for joint Ukraine-USA Studies”.

As in the case of the Institute of Endocrinology and Metabolism, all computers, copiers, FAXes and printers and accompanying supplies ordered through the Computerland-Kyiv have been received towards the end of June. The still outstanding orders of specialized equipment are on track.

The big concern of ours is that relocations are planned for several teams from the Sviatoshyn site of the Center of Radiation Medicine to various less satisfactory locations. This will affect the epidemiologists and dosimetrists primarily and will undoubtedly set them back during the summer months because the new facilities will have to undergo construction changes.

Technical report for the quarter is attached.