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HHS NEWS

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The National Cancer Institute and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases today announced awards totaling one-quarter million dollars in direct costs to fund four new studies on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

AIDS is a relatively new, often fatal condition that leads to a breakdown of the body's immune function.

The awards are the first made from research proposals submitted in response to a Request for Applications (RFA) issued by NCI to stimulate studies on possible causal factors for the condition and on its treatment. NCI has allocated up to $1.8 million and NIAID approximately $1 million to support proposals received from investigators in response to the RFA. Additional awards for proposals submitted under the RFA are expected to be made in May. NIH estimated total funding for research on AIDS in FY 1983 is $9.6 million, including $4.4 million through NCI; and $4.0 million through NIAID.

AIDS disorders include Kaposi's sarcoma, a rare tumor that starts in cells of blood vessel walls; Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia; and other opportunistic infections. Cases of AIDS have been reported primarily among homosexual men, intravenous drug abusers, recent Haitian entrants and hemophiliacs.

The research projects to be funded by NCI are:

• John H. Hughes, Ph.D., Children's Hospital Research Foundation, in Columbus, Ohio, will conduct animal studies on the immunosuppressive potential of human seminal plasma and cytomegalovirus (CMV), cause of a type of infection seen in AIDS patients. Seminal plasma and CMV have been suggested by investigators as possible causal agents for AIDS. Dr. Hughes will study whether seminal plasma suppresses immune function, and, in turn may lower resistance to CMV infection. First-year funding is $46,241 in direct costs for the two-year study.

• Martin S. Hirsch, M.D., Massachusetts General Hospital, in Boston, will investigate the possible role of viruses in the development of AIDS. Extensive virological and immunologic studies will be conducted on a group of AIDS patients. The viruses to be studied include CMV, Epstein-Barr virus (EBV), and human T-cell leukemia-lymphoma virus (HTLV). EBV and HTLV have been associated with some rare cancers, but presently the association between these viruses and AIDS is uncertain. First-year funding is $97,983 in direct costs for the three-year study.

NIAID is funding:

• Walter T. Hughes, M.D., St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, in Memphis, Tenn., will study potential drug treatments for Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia in an animal model. Funding is $62,332 in direct costs for the first year of this three-year study.

• Pearl Ma, Ph.D., St. Vincent's Hospital and Medical Center, in New York City, will study Cryptosporidiosis, a recently identified parasitic disease that can cause severe and potentially fatal diarrhea in the immunosuppressed AIDS patients. Dr. Ma will investigate the prevalence and transmission of the parasite in high risk groups as well as the disease process and

possible treatments. Support for the first year of this three-year project is approximately $39,165 in direct costs.

Funding for the four research projects totals $245,721 in direct costs.

Although the deadline for receipt of applications under this RFA is closed, applications for support for research on AIDS may be made through the standard grant application procedures for the National Institutes of Health. NCI and NIAID are part of NIH, an agency of the Department of Health and Human Services' Public Health Service. Investigators may obtain grant application kits from their institutions' application control office, or by writing to the Division of Research Grants, NIH, Bethesda, MD 20205.