

MINUTES

NCAB Ad Hoc SUBCOMMITTEE ON NUTRITION

Date: April 23, 1981
Place: NIH Building 31, Room 9, C Wing
Time: 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Present: Dr. Maureen Henderson, Chairperson
Dr. Harold Amos
Dr. Henry Pitot
Dr. Philippe Shubik (NCAB Observer)

NCI/DNCP Staff
Members of the Public

Dr. Henderson convened the meeting at 8:00 a.m. in open session. She indicated that the Committee's task is to learn what is going on in Nutrition research sponsored at the NCI and elsewhere at the NIH, and advise the National Cancer Advisory Board on ways in which it can best facilitate nutrition research as it relates to cancer.

Dr. Artemis Simopoulos presented an overview of the role and function of the NIH Nutrition Coordinating Committee. She summarized the distribution of the nutrition research among the various federal agencies as well as within the NIH. She indicated that the Department of Health and Human Services assumes the major federal role for nutrition research support, and within the department, NIH is the major component which supports extramural research; the USDA has the largest government intramural research program. NIH nutrition research programs are developed and expanded within the individual Institutes through the use of RFA's, RFD's, and Program Announcements.

Dr. Jack Bieri described the NIAMDD intramural nutrition research program. He addressed the area of basic animal nutritional requirements. He also addressed the problems of commercial animal diets and the interaction between chemicals in these diets. His laboratory has been active in providing vital information on this topic. He surmised that the intramural research program is healthy, pointing to the Clinical Nutrition Research Units that are being funded. Dr. Bieri indicated that he will be retiring shortly and it is not clear what the future of his laboratory will be.

The next three speakers discussed nutrition related research within the intramural programs of the DCCP.

Dr. Michael Sporn presented a concise overview of chemoprevention research in his laboratory. He focused on the role of retinoids which have been shown to be active in inhibiting tumor growth. Because these compounds are also toxic, various analogs are being synthesized and tested in an effort to improve the therapeutic index. He indicated that a clinical

trial for cervical dysplasia has been implemented in DCT. He briefly reviewed studies on cancer prevention in animal models. The mechanism of action of retinoids was briefly presented. Potential applications in man were discussed and it was indicated that responsibility for applied work will reside within DRCCA.

Dr. Regina Ziegler presented epidemiologic data implicating various nutritional factors with particular cancers. She summarized the nutrition related research that she is conducting in the Environmental Epidemiology Branch. Generally, this research is directed at testing hypotheses derived from animal studies in human populations, examining unusual geographic patterns, studying nutritional data resources, and studies on migrants and their life styles.

Dr. Lionel Poirier discussed his research in the Nutritional Metabolism Branch. He is studying the role of metals, particularly the antagonism of divalent carcinogenic cations by calcium and magnesium. He also discussed studies directed at the hypothesis that methyl insufficiency may promote hepatocarcinogenesis.

Dr. William Terry presented a short report on chemoprevention activities in DRCCA. The Division's Board of Scientific Counselors has formed a chemoprevention subcommittee which will survey the state-of-the-art and make appropriate recommendations. A workshop will be held on May 21-22 to consider four substances (beta carotene, alpha-tocopherol, vitamin C, selenium) with respect to their clinical feasibility. A second workshop will be held on June 25-26 which will consider classes of chemopreventive agents, and animal models for screening. Consideration is being given to a third workshop on diet modification and its potential impact on cancer incidence.

Nutrition related research in DCBD was presented by the next two speakers. Dr. Seoras Morrison discussed the problem of cachexia and the cancer patient. His laboratory is conducting animal studies on the mechanism of cachexic depletion focusing on nonspecific impairments. He is studying such factors as food dilution, motor activity, temperature effects, etc. and their relationship to tumor growth, and tumor burden.

Dr. William Kidwell discussed dietary lipids and cancer (primarily breast cancer). He discussed possible relationships between fatty acids and cell division.

Dr. William DeWys briefly commented on some of the nutritional assessment studies supported by DCT.

This was followed by a brief discussion which identified some of the problems the Subcommittee may wish to address in terms of developing nutrition related activities at NCI. This includes quality of grant applications, the problem of review of grant applications, the possible use of planning grants, training grants, and the need to identify qualified people recognizing that there are few in the field. These issues were identified but not discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:00 p.m..