

Gordon-Singer
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Dear Milt:

It was really a pleasure to have some interesting science to look at. Most of the letters I get regarding recombinant DNA are rehashes of old arguments with no new information.

It seems to me that your findings have two points of relevance to the recombinant DNA debate. First, as you pointed out, your data indicate that the eukaryote/prokaryote barrier is not absolute, as Bob Sinsheimer has argued. You probably are also aware of the isolation, from urines of terminal colon cancer patients, of gram negative bacteria, identified as E. coli, that appear to synthesize human β -choriogonadotrophin. Second, your observations suggest that in at least this one situation, the eukaryote/prokaryote exchange is related to a eukaryote disease. The scenario is more or less what has been imagined as leading to potential hazards from recombinant experiments. You probably know that the NIH Guidelines refer specifically to problems arising from experiments with Agrobacterium tumefaciens.

My own experience with radio and television has not been especially nappy. You would be best off in a live interview, rather than a taping which will then be edited at someone else's pleasure. I have found that listeners appreciate a simple, straightforward description of the science.

Stan Cohen's article more or less reflects my own views on recombinant DNA. I believe that it is especially important, to stress the very stringent requirements in the NIH Guidelines, including the experiments that are prohibited. My own present opinion is that we need to extend the provisions of the Guidelines to all work being carried out in the U.S., regardless of source of funding. And further, that federal legislation is needed to accomplish this and to discourage the difficulties that would arise from differing state and local actions. You will find more detail in the attached papers - one from a Congressional briefing, and one a talk I gave at the Academy Forum. I hope that they are helpful. Good luck!

Sincerely,

Maxine Singer