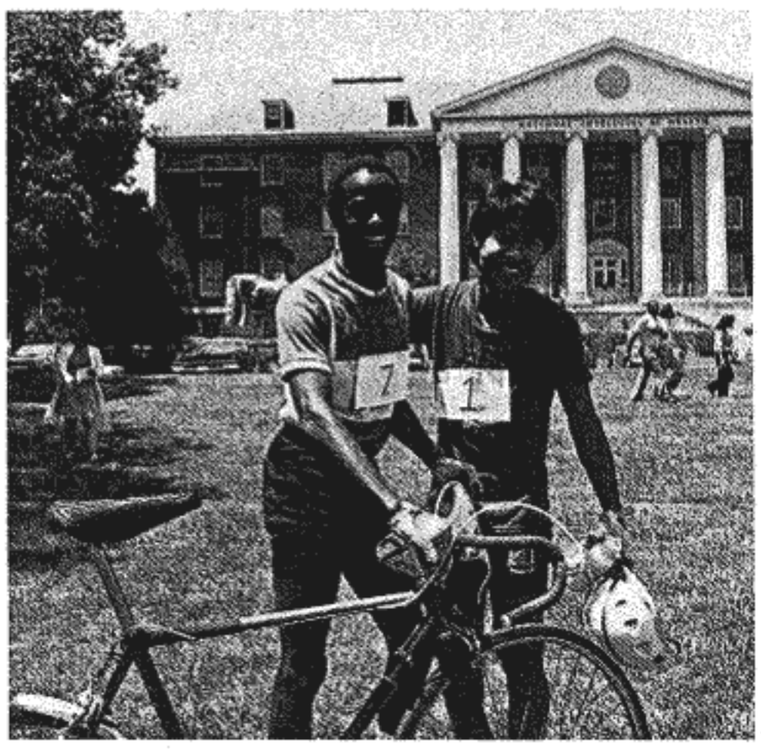
1982 Novice Bicycle Race Results



First-place winner Anthony E. Sloane (l) completed the 4-mile course in 11:28. He is congratulated by second-place finisher Kee Park (12:15) in the men's under 35 category. Don Burstyn came in third (13:25). Wendy Aaronson and Doreen Arion took a first and second with times of 6:43 and 7:22.

Harvey Giller, 62, an NIH retiree took a first in the men's over 35 2-mile race with a 6:43. After winning his event, he came back and pedalled in the under 35 race. Second was W. Lee Moloe and third was Jack Shawver, both only seconds behind. Dittie Stewart finished first in the women's over 35 with a 7:36.

DR. LENFANT

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cular surgery and physiology, and in pulmonary circulation. He has made significant contributions to original science in the major areas of concern to NHLBI—cardiology, hematology and lung diseases.

He has been NIH associate director for international research and Director of the Fogarty International Center since 1981.

Dr. Lenfant came to NIH in 1970 as the first NHLBI associate director for lung diseases and was responsible for developing that program into the Division of Lung Diseases in 1972. For his accomplishments in building the NHLBI lung program, he received an HHS Superior Service Honor Award in 1974.

Before coming to the NIH, Dr. Lenfant was professor of medicine at the University of Washington Medical School, in Seattle, where he was active in teaching, patient care and research.

The author of more than 130 scientific papers and a member of a number of professional societies, he has received several honorary professorships and commendations from abroad. He received his M.D. degree from the University of Paris.□

Nitrite Use May Be Linked to Kaposi Syndrome

Abnormalities in the immune system of 15 healthy homosexual men, who regularly use amyl and butyl nitrites as recreational drugs, were observed by scientists who recently concluded a Kaposi sarcoma and opportunistic infection study.

The scientists suggest that nitrite-induced immune suppression may occur as a result of repeated challenges to the immune system from viral infections, and predispose homosexual men to several other diseases. The nitrites may have also contributed to the recent outbreak of Kaposi sarcoma among homosexual men.

These findings were reported in the Feb. 20 issue of the *Lancet*. Kaposi's sarcoma is a rare skin cancer that usually occurs in the United States among elderly men or, in a severe form, among persons with weakened immune systems.

However, an increasing number of cases have been reported in the past few years among homosexual men. Opportunistic infections are also seen among patients with weakened immune systems.

Microorganisms that would not be able to multiply in people with normal ability to fight infections can become life-threatening when given the opportunity to infect people with diminished immune defenses.

Some investigators have suggested that nitrite inhalants, which have grown very popular among homosexual men as sexual stimulants, may be immunosuppressive and play a role in the occurrence of the cancer and opportunistic infections such as *Pneumocystis carinii*, as unusual pneumonia.

The investigators collected data on 15 homosexual male volunteers and similar data were also collected on two Kaposi's sarcoma patients. Of the 15 healthy men, 8 were regular nitrite users (1 to 20 times per month).

Fourteen of the 15 men had antibody to cytomegalovirus (CMV), a type of herpesvirus, indicating past exposure to the virus. Antibody levels were similar for both nitrite users and nonusers.

These data suggest that CMV infection alone is not sufficient to produce the T cell abnormalities found in this study. Researchers have suspected that CMV may play a role in the occurrence of Kaposi's sarcoma and opportunistic infections.

Homosexual Predisposition Considered

The investigators suggest the data provide preliminary evidence that nitrite-induced suppression of the immune system, together with repeated infections with CMV or perhaps other agents, predisposes homosexual men to the diseases.

The body may become "hyperimmunized" by being repeatedly stimulated to defend itself against viruses, the investigators suggest, and thus susceptible to nitrite-induced immunosuppression.

Both Kaposi's sarcoma patients in the study had used nitrites regularly. They had antibody against CMV and low H/S ratios before treatment with chemotherapy.

The *Lancet* article provides the first immunologic data published on Kaposi's sarcoma patients.

Each of the following contributed to this study: Dr. James J. Goedert, Dean L. Mann, Mark H. Greene, Joseph F. Fraumeni, Jr., and William A. Blattner of NCI; William C. Wallen of NINCDS; Douglas M. Strong and Carolyn Y. Neuland of the Naval Medical Research Institute and Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences; and Christine Murray of Biomedical Research Institute, Rockville, Md.

Several aspects of the study should be noted: First, the study group was extremely small. Second, other studies have suggested that frequency of nitrite use may be correlated with number of sexual partners. The potential significance of this association for development of Kaposi's sarcoma and opportunistic infections could not be definitively studied here. And, third, this study, like others, focuses on immune dysfunction as a key factor in the development of the cancer.

It is possible that some other unknown factor associated with nitrite use, but not the drugs themselves, causes the immunosuppression and leads to the development of cancer and opportunistic infections.

A summary of the research is available from the Office of Cancer Communications, 496-6641.□

NIH Director Dr. James B. Wyngaarden (l) and channel 7 newsman Paul Berry became acquainted prior to graduation ceremonies at the Eighth Annual Honors Convocation held in the Masur Auditorium, June 4. Nine NIH employees received college degrees from the University of the District of Columbia through NIH's Career Education Institute.