

# Homosexuals' Predisposition To AIDS, Possible Causes To Be Studied Under Five New NIAID, NCI Contracts

Five institutions will study the epidemiology of AIDS in homosexual men under contracts awarded Sept. 30 by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases in conjunction with the National Cancer Institute.

Total cost of the 4-year project will be \$15,326,703, with most of the first year funding coming from the \$12 million FY 83 supplemental appropriation for AIDS research.

Participating institutions are the School of Public Health, University of California at Los Angeles; the School of Public Health, University of California at Berkeley; Howard Brown Memorial Clinic, Chicago; Graduate School of Public Health, University of Pittsburgh; and Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore.

AIDS is a complex disease characterized by defects in the victims' immune systems which result in a variety of rare illnesses. More than 2,200 cases of AIDS have been reported, primarily among homosexual or bisexual men with multiple sex partners, intravenous drug abusers, Haitians recently arrived in the United States, and hemophiliacs. A small number of cases have also developed in persons whose only apparent source of disease has been through blood transfusions.

Although the cause of AIDS is unknown, scientists think that it may be due to an agent

transmitted by sexual contact and perhaps by transfer of body fluids such as blood.

A large epidemiologic study will help define the factors that predispose homosexuals and others to AIDS, as well as provide materials that can be used to test theories about possible causes.

All five contracts call for long-term followup of large numbers of currently healthy homosexual males at risk of developing AIDS.

Information obtained by regular physical examinations, collection of blood specimens and other body fluids, and detailed histories will be assembled in a national repository to be coordinated by NIAID.

The repository will provide scientists throughout the country with data and specimens that can be used in future studies on AIDS.

The institutions participating in the study are located in geographic areas that, currently, represent a wide range of risk for AIDS.

Both California contractors are in areas reporting relatively high numbers of AIDS cases and where many new cases are likely to occur. The study at the UCLA School of Public Health will be coordinated by Dr. Roger Detels, head of the division of epidemiology and dean of the school. Dr. Warren

Winkelstein, professor of epidemiology, will head the study at the University of California at Berkeley.

The third contractor is the Howard Brown Memorial Clinic in Chicago, one of the largest sexually transmitted diseases clinics in the nation. The number of AIDS cases in Chicago has been relatively low, but seems to be increasing.

The principal investigator for the study is Dr. David Ostrow, research director of the clinic and assistant professor of psychiatry and behavior at Northwestern.

The remaining contractors are in cities that presently have low rates of AIDS. At the University of Pittsburgh, scientists headed by Dr. Charles R. Rinaldo, Jr., assistant professor of clinical pathology and assistant director of clinical microbiology, will screen several thousand male homosexuals.

On the basis of initial questionnaires covering such things as medical history and sexual activity, about 1,500 men will be selected for more extensive evaluation over a 30-month period.

In Baltimore, at Johns Hopkins University, Dr. B. Frank Polk, an internist trained in infectious diseases and epidemiology, will head a similar study recruiting approximately 1,000 male homosexuals for long-term followup. □

## Dr. Murray Shear Dies; Father of Chemotherapy

Dr. Murray J. Shear, 83, a biochemist whose study of the relationship between chemicals and cancer helped advance chemotherapy as a treatment for the disease, died Sept. 27 at Suburban Hospital. He had Parkinson's disease.

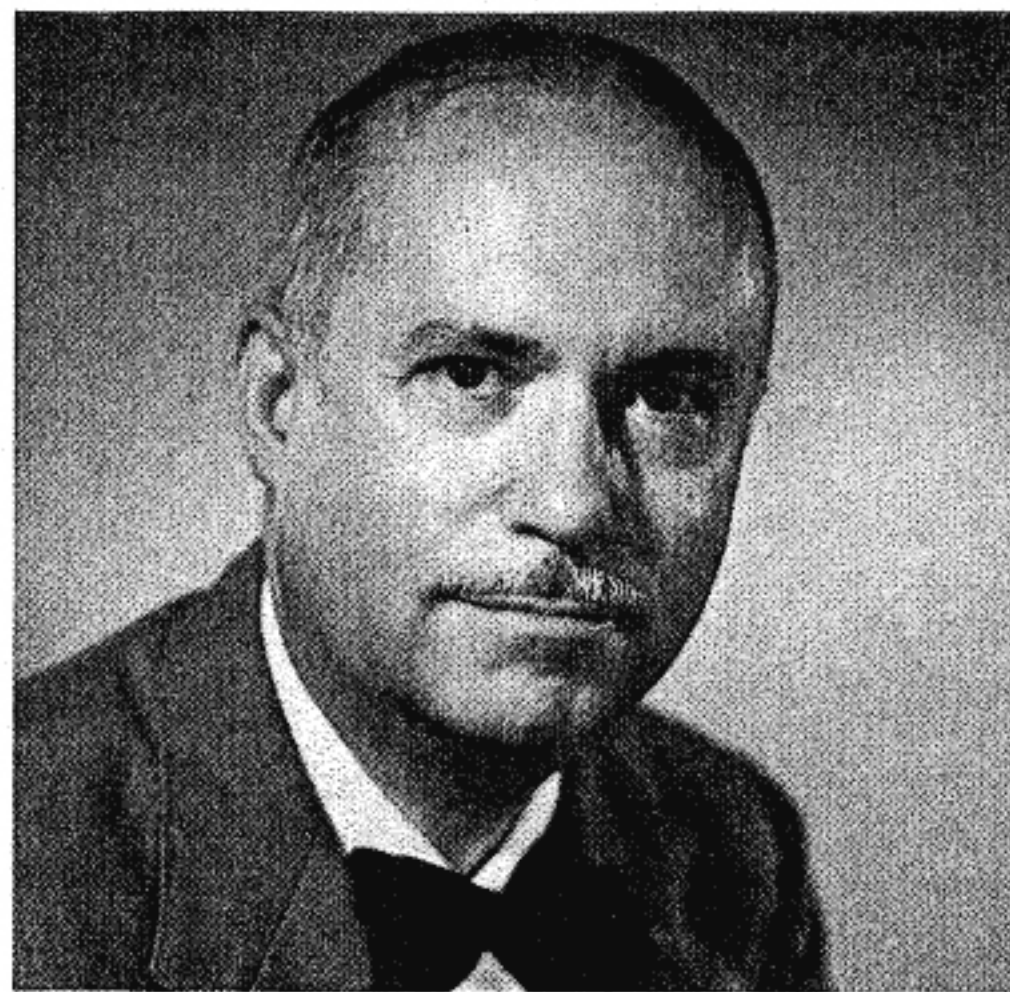
Dr. Shear, a resident of Bethesda, worked for the National Cancer Institute for 30 years before retiring in 1969. He was laboratory chief of chemical pharmacology from 1951 to 1964. Colleagues called him "the father of chemotherapy."

He was a past president of the American Association for Cancer Research and a former secretary general of the International Union Against Cancer. He also served as chairman of the International Union's chemotherapy committee.

In his search to control cancer, Dr. Shear said that history and knowledge from disciplines other than medicine should be examined. His particular interest was in chemistry, which, he believed, could add to the existing techniques of radiation and surgery. He went so far as to track down old wives' tales.

"Most of them are rubbish and the pathetic stirrings of superstitious peoples," he said in 1957. But he maintained that the effort was worthwhile because "every nation, color, creed and culture suffers from cancer. The ancient Chinese, the Greeks and Romans, the Egyptians of the pyramid era and the Assyrians had it. . . . we hope some old-home remedy may provide a clue to curing cancer."

During the 1940s, he and his associates turned up 100 chemicals that could cripple



**Dr. Shear**

cancer cells in mice.

They spent years testing those chemicals to find out which could destroy tumors without harming normal tissue. Today chemotherapy is one of the standard ways to treat cancer in humans.

Dr. Shear began his cancer research more than 50 years ago as a biochemist with the U.S. Public Health Service working with the Harvard Medical School. In 1939, he moved here and joined the National Institutes of Health.

During World War II, he worked on the development of a vaccine for typhus, and is considered to have played a crucial role in the success of that work.

He was born in Brooklyn, N.Y. He earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry at the City College of New York and took master's and doctoral degrees at Columbia University. He

taught at Columbia and worked at the Jewish Hospital in Brooklyn before joining the Public Health Service.

Survivors include his wife, Rose, of Bethesda; three sons, David Ben of Columbia, Md., Jonathan of Richmond, and Victor Henry of Lafayette, Calif.; a brother, Nathaniel of Silver Spring; two sisters, Ada Meiselman of Brooklyn, and Helen Warm of St. Petersburg, Fla., and three grandchildren.

## Basic Needlepoint Classes Scheduled

A basic needlepoint class in which you will learn the basics of needlepoint stitches, types of canvas, threads, needles, and other items to be utilized, will be held in the Westwood Bldg., Conf. Rm. D, Monday evenings beginning Oct. 17 and continuing through Nov. 21.

This class will start beginners in the world of stitching and will help intermediate stitchers solve problems they might have with stitches or a project.

Classes will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. and cost for this 6 week session is \$20. Sign up at the R&W Desk in Bldg. 31, or the Westwood R&W Gift Shop, Rm. 10. □

## NIH Ski Club Meets Oct. 13

The NIH R&W Ski Club preseason meeting will be held on Thursday, Oct. 13, at 7 p.m., in the Bldg. 10 cafeteria.

Trips to Mont Tremblant, Canada, and Greek Peak, N.Y., have been planned and details will be announced at this meeting. Weekend and day trips are also being planned.

All skiers—downhill and cross-country—are welcome to attend. □