

*My very warm regards*



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

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Public Health Service

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*→ Double a  
Laurie  
for usage  
over*

Dear Jean Paul:

Thank you for your recent letter. Our data on AIDS are becoming more clear-cut. We have 10-15% incidence of antibodies to HTLV core protein, gag gene products, using p24, p15, p19 (total). Healthy homosexuals are less than 1% positive. We have isolated virus now several times in patients whose sera were negative for antibodies to the gag gene products. The Essex assay score chiefly for a gp 60-66 membrane protein. This protein is very likely an envelope precursor of HTLV. This assay scores positive with IgM in >50% of cases (in at least four labs in the U.S.; some claim as high as 90% positive). The definitive data on gp 60-66 (p61) as an HTLV gene product should be available within three to four months. We still have not seen the Montagnier group's type of virus in a patient here, nor to my knowledge has anyone else, but we will continue to look.

The lack of antibody to HTLV core proteins in a high percent of cases is similar to the HBV story (<10% are positive to core proteins while 70% are positive to surface proteins). In short, the p24 assay is clearly useless by the time frank AIDS has developed, if indeed an HTLV causes AIDS. I heard Barre-Sinoussi in Japan. She didn't present anything new, but a few days later I read another headline from a French collaborator of theirs (?David Klatzman) claiming in the headline etiology of AIDS once again. I believe they have something which merits our interest at this point in time, but this gross playing with the press should be stopped. They still do not show any data on specificity of the p25 assay nor any evidence that p25 is viral. They use exactly the techniques developed in my laboratory for virus isolation with human T-cells, except for the antibody to alpha interferon.

Have you heard anything new?

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Professor Jean Paul Levy

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I'll be in Paris January 7-10.

Hope to see you.

Kind regards.

Sincerely yours,



Robert C. Gallo

RCG:gme