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August 4, 1983

Dr. S. Sprecher
Department of Virology
Institut Pasteur du Brabant
Rue Engeland, 642
1180 Bruxelles
Belgium

Dear Dr. Sprecher:

I was extremely interested in your letter of May 31 and the previous contacts from you and your colleagues. We are indeed interested in helping you and your co-workers in all of which is related to the study of HTLV in Africa. I believe this to be one of the most important epidemiological studies for the future regarding HTLV. In fact, it is the current focus of the epidemiological portion of our group.

As you know, Paul Jacquemin is visiting with us now and he is already started into the methodology for isolating HTLV from varied cultured cells. We are glad to help in any way possible. We now have approximately twelve isolates of different types of HTLV from AIDS cases. Most of them fall into what I call HTLV class I. If HTLV is ideologically related to AIDS (the data continues to get more interesting), then I believe it can be due to any number of classes of HTLV isolates but will require some specific alterations at the three prime end of the HTLV genome. The various classes are determined by the internal core protein products in genes which are at the five prime end of the genome and I think are irrelevant to the type of disease associated with HTLV. Paul Jacquemin can tell you more about my ideas when he returns.

It is most important to get a number of isolates of HTLV from Africa in association with AIDS and to obtain sera from areas where AIDS may be endemic in Africa. We would be happy to help in every way possible including provision of reagents for the work to be done by you and your colleagues but also for verification of some of the assay results (serum antibodies) and for molecular analysis of virus isolates once they are obtained in Belgium. This could perhaps be the most useful part of the collaborative effort. Paul can explain this in more detail because they relate to very specific hypotheses that I am currently testing, relating to HTLV and leukemia versus HTLV and immune suppression.

I hope you can visit sometime so we can discuss this in more detail.

Kind regards.

Sincerely yours,

Robert C. Gallo, M.D.
Chief, Laboratory of Tumor Cell Biology

RCC:tas
cc: Drs. Jacquemin, Sarin, Sliski, Popovic, Markham, Guroff