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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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The National Institutes of Health today announced six new grants for studies on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

The grants, from the National Cancer Institute and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, total more than \$2 million for the first year of research. The awards were effective May 1, 1983.

The NIH will spend an estimated \$9.6 million in FY 1983 for AIDS research, including an estimated \$4.4 million by NCI and \$4.1 million by NIAID.

AIDS is a relatively new, often fatal condition characterized by a severe loss of natural immunity that predisposes the individual to severe opportunistic infections and other disorders. These include Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia and Kaposi's sarcoma, a rare cancer that starts in cells of blood vessel walls. Cases of AIDS have been reported primarily among homosexual men, intravenous drug abusers, recent Haitian immigrants, and hemophiliacs.

NCI has awarded grants to R. Gordon Douglas, M.D., of Cornell Medical Center, New York; James Mullins, Ph.D., of Harvard University; Frederick Siegel, M.D., of Mt. Sinai Medical Center in New York; and Paul Volberding, M.D., of the University of California at San Francisco.

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N.R. 8305-001587

- Dr. Douglas will conduct immunologic and virologic studies to identify and characterize the similarities and differences among AIDS patients who belong to different groups at risk of developing the disease. Funding for the first year of this three-year study is \$243,271.
- Dr. Mullins will conduct genetic studies of specimens from AIDS patients to look for viruses and cancer-related genes that may play a role in causing the disease. Funding for the first year of this three-year project is \$143,699.
- Dr. Siegel will begin a three-year study of early defects in the immune function of AIDS patients that might permit early diagnosis of the disease. He also will conduct laboratory studies to see if alpha-interferon, an antiviral agent that is produced by the body, might be a diagnostic indicator for AIDS. Laboratory cultures of blood cells of AIDS patients fail to produce normal amounts of alpha-interferon for unknown reasons. First-year funding is \$289,011.
- Dr. Volberding will begin a five-year study to develop immunologic profiles of AIDS patients and apparently healthy individuals at risk for the disease. He will examine the occurrence of persistent lymphadenopathy (lymph node enlargement) as a possible precursor of AIDS. In laboratory studies, Dr. Volberding will search for a possible viral cause of AIDS. First-year funding is \$526,229.

The awards from NIAID were made to Arye Rubenstein, M.D., of Yeshiva University, Bronx, New York, and John Fahey, M.D., University of California at Los Angeles.

- During the past two years, Dr. Rubenstein has identified children with AIDS-like symptoms. This grant will allow him to study infants born to mothers who were sexual partners of AIDS patients. These children

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will be followed to see if they develop immunologic abnormalities and unusual infections, particularly during the first two years of life. He also will study the possible routes of transmission of AIDS among contacts of adult heterosexual patients. These contacts include sexual partners, household members, and intravenous needle sharers. Dr. Rubenstein will attempt to identify and isolate viral agents from AIDS patients. Although he will be looking at a broad spectrum of viruses, the emphasis will be on the human adenoviruses. First year funding is \$530,134 for the three-year study.

- Dr. Fahey was one of the first investigators to conduct clinical and laboratory research on AIDS and related illnesses. His new grant will support research on various chemotherapeutic and naturally occurring substances for the prevention and treatment of AIDS. In addition, he will examine immunologic defects in AIDS patients to define the AIDS syndrome more precisely and improve diagnostic methods. He also will look for cytomegalovirus in Kaposi's sarcoma tissue and define its possible relationship to AIDS. First-year funding for this three-year project is \$273,954.

The awards are being made from research proposals submitted in response to a 1982 Request for Applications issued by NCI to stimulate studies on AIDS. The deadline for receipt of applications under this RFA has past. However, NCI and NIAID have published in the May 20 NIH Guide to Grants and Contracts a new Request for Applications for additional research on AIDS. Applications for research funding under this RFA are due August 1, 1983. Inquiries about this new RFA may be directed to both institutes.