

BROOKHAVEN NATIONAL LABORATORY
ASSOCIATED UNIVERSITIES, INC.

UPTON, L. I., N. Y. 11973

TEL. AREA CODE 516 YAPHANK 4-6262

REFER:

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT

January 27, 1972

Dr. Nathaniel F. Barr, Assistant
Director for Radiological Physics
Division of Biology and Medicine
U. S. Atomic Energy Commission
Washington, D. C. 20545

Dear Nat:

With regard to your letter of January 24, 1972 on "Leukocyte Preparations for Bikini Population," I have the following suggestions:

I believe that leukocyte cultures and chromosome preparations can best be accomplished on blood samples in the Marshalls rather than on samples returned to the United States. It is my understanding that blood samples should be relatively fresh for culturing chromosomes. Due to transportation difficulties, both within the Marshall Islands and between the Marshalls and the United States, it seems doubtful that sufficiently fresh samples would arrive in the United States for satisfactory cultures.

Based on our experience with culture and preparation of chromosome smears at Rongelap Island, I do not believe that preliminary sampling at Kili is feasible due to:

1. Difficulties in getting ashore from ship or plane at that island due to lack of lagoon with protecting coral reef. This would be less treacherous in summer months than in winter months.
2. The need for a rather sophisticated laboratory set up for this work including a sizeable generator (to run incubators, centrifuges, etc.) which are essential and we found an air-conditioned room is desirable. It would be difficult to set up such a laboratory at Kili.

To me, the best plan would be to collect samples at Bikini when the people have returned and take them immediately by amphibious

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plane or overnight ship to Rongelap for culture and preparation where we already have available electricity, necessary laboratory equipment and an air-conditioned room. We will be willing to help with this phase of the work but we are not in a position to do the actual chromosome analyses at Brookhaven, and I assume you could make other arrangements for this aspect of the work. Hermann Lisco and his technicians at the New England Deaconess Hospital analyzed the Marshallese chromosome preparations previously, but I don't know if he is still doing these analyses.

It is possible we may run into opposition from the Bikini people to blood sampling, but we could probably overcome this. We could check their blood counts and hematological status from the same sample of blood. Unfortunately when I was at Kili several years ago, I was asked about whether we would be taking blood samples and I stated that we would not plan to do this.

If I can be of any further help in this matter, please let me know.

Sincerely,




Robert A. Conard, M. D.

RAC:ls

CC: Drs. V. P. Bond
E. P. Cronkite
C. Edington, AEC ✓
M. Bender, AEC
Mr. T. McCraw, AEC

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