



TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
SAPPALE, MARJANA ISLANDS 96950

TABLE A-10000
HIGH COMMISSIONER

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AUG. 8 1979

Mrs. Ruth G. Van Cleve
Director
Office of Territorial Affairs
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Dear Mrs. Van Cleve:

This is in reply to your letter of July 20, 1979, regarding a meeting with Dr. Bruce Wachholz, Dr. Hugh Pratt, Mr. George Milner, and Mr. John deYoung, about the proposed medical survey of the people of Likiep Atoll. I will answer your questions as presented.

We have found nothing to indicate that files containing materials related to Rongelap and Utirik exposed populations have been destroyed, but the Attorney General will be meeting with Anton DeBrum in mid-August, at which time additional information will be gathered and forwarded to your office. Our information indicates the most comprehensive reports on medical information regarding the exposed Rongelap and Utirik people are contained in those which were prepared annually by the Brookhaven National Laboratory, which is in Upton, New York. The Bureau of Health Services has copies of these reports dating back to 1955. The latest report, however, is for calendar year 1975, which reviews the twenty-year medical findings of the people of Rongelap and Utirik. The Brookhaven National Laboratory has not sent us reports for 1976, 1977 and 1978.

Regarding the statement made by Mr. Anton DeBrum that there have been a significant number of medical referrals to Guam Naval Hospital, Tripler Army Hospital, and a special clinic in Honolulu, of people of the Northern Marshalls for thyroid abnormalities and cancer, attached is a record of all thyroid cases which have been discharged from the Majuro Hospital over a five-year period, from 1973 to 1977. The record does reflect an increase in the number of cases from two to four between 1974 and 1975, and a further increase in 1977 to six cases. However, the increase may not be statistically significant because in any community with a small population, as is the case with most groups of islands in the Trust Territory, rates of diseases which are rare and chronic, such as thyroid abnormalities, often fluctuate from year to year. In order to get a more accurate indication on this type of disease, five-year data is usually used for calculations in order to obtain more reliable information.

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Mrs. Ruth G. Van Cleve
Page -2-

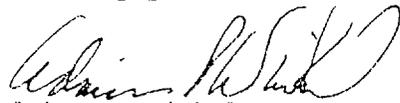
Included in our figures are all thyroid patients referred to Guam and Hawaii. However, we cannot be more specific on the actual number of referred cases as our Headquarters files do not contain this information. We are in the process of obtaining this information from the Marshalls hospital records and we will forward it to you shortly. It should be noted that the actual referred cases will be less than the number indicated in the statistics appended hereto as not all diagnosed cases were referred to external clinics.

Attachment #1 shows the number of cases from the Marshalls from 1973 to 1977. Attachment #2 shows the number of thyroid cases from Ponape District for the five-year period from 1974 to 1978. Attachment #3 is a breakdown by age, sex and home islands of these 16 patients from the Marshalls.

As may be noted in the first two attachments, the number of cases from both the Marshalls and Ponape show a fluctuation during these five-year periods. However, the overall rates during these periods for both areas were almost the same, with a rate of 5.7/10,000 population in the Marshalls, while in Ponape the rate is 6.4/10,000. The rates were calculated using the latest populations for both areas--the Marshalls, 27,880, and Ponape, 21,780. In other words, the comparison of thyroid cases between the Marshalls and Ponape in a five-year period of time was almost the same, with Ponape somewhat higher, although not significantly so. A copy of the Whidbey survey is enclosed.

A point that I feel should be cleared relates to the medical care afforded all the people of Rongelap and Utirik who were exposed to radiation. These people were treated by the Brookhaven National Laboratory staff, and usually thyroid cases were initially referred directly to Tripler Army Medical Center in Honolulu. Many of them then went on to NIH in Bethesda, Maryland, for further treatment. We have found nothing that shows the surgical logs in Majuro Hospital have been "pruned". The Department of Health Services in the Marshalls never handled surgical cases with thyroid problems of the people from Rongelap and Utirik. This area will also be addressed by the Attorney General during his trip to Majuro.

Sincerely yours,


Adrian P. Winkel
High Commissioner

Enclosures


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MARSHALL ISLANDS

DISEASES OF THYROID GLAND
 Five year period from 1973 to 1977
 Excluding cases occurring from Rongelap and Utirik

1973

Thyroiditis	1
unspecified	

1974

Simple goiter	
sporadic	1
Thyrotoxicosis	
Toxic nodular goiter	1

1975

Nontoxic nodular goiter	
nontoxic nodular goiter	2
Other diseases of thyroid gland	2

1976

Simple goiter	
unspecified	1
Thyroiditis	
unspecified	1
Other diseases of thyroid gland	1

1977

Nontoxic nodular goiter	
nontoxic nodular goiter	5
Thyrotoxicosis	1

Total	16
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PONAPE DISTRICT

DISEASES OF THYROID GLAND

Five year period from 1974 to 1978

1974

Simple goiter	
unspecified	2
Thyrotoxicosis	
toxic nodular goiter	1
Thyroiditis	
unspecified	1
Other diseases of thyroid gland	1

1975

Nontoxic nodular goiter	
unspecified	2
Other diseases of thyroid gland	1

1976

Cretinism	1
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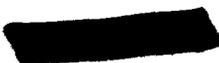
1977

Other diseases of thyroid gland	1
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1978

Nontoxic nodular goiter	
unspecified	1
Thyrotoxicosis	
Toxic diffuse goiter	2
Thyroiditis	
Acute	1

Total	14
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MARSHALL ISLANDS

16 Thyroid Cases - five year period

Excluding cases occurring from Rongelap and Utirik

Year	Hospital Number	Year of Birth	Sex	Home Island
1973	9095	1945	F	Lae Atoll
1974	6880	1920	M	Majuro
	25121	1939	F	Wojei
1975	1582	1923	F	Majuro
	5237	1911	F	Majuro
	5774	1943	F	Maloelap
	1484	1938	F	Likiep
1976	18516	1941	F	Ebon
	13610	1910	F	Jaluit
	13154	1923	F	Jaluit
1977	3119	1943	F	Mili
	31811	1929	F	Kwajalein
	146	1942	F	Ailinglaplap
	22506	1944	F	Namric
	6206	1916	F	Ailinglaplap
	17617	1939	M	Ailinglaplap

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