

# Effects of Radioactive Fallout Still Appear Among Islanders

U.S. Post 11/3/65

Kyralio Wade, right, a member of the most interloper who accompanied Wade.

Dr. Howard S. Gardner, a member of the most interloper who accompanied Wade.

A significant number of Marshall Islanders are only now—15 years later—beginning to show thyroid gland damage after being accidentally drenched with radioactive fallout from an American hydrogen test in the Pacific.

The finding of latent damage, according to the Government doctor in charge of treating the islanders, for thyroid damage, means that atomic experts now must revise upwards their estimates of the hazard from short-lived radioactive debris. This is the kind of fallout, such as radioactive iodine, that occurs mostly near an atomic blast and gets into the human body through food and drink.

Moreover, said Dr. Robert Conrad in a telephone interview, there is some evidence that fallout damage to the thyroid gland might also be the cause of an observed uptick among some of the children exposed to the fall-out. Dr. Conrad is the leader of medical survey teams that

commutes between Brookhaven National Laboratory, an island in the Marshall Islands, and Rongelap, the island in the Marshall Islands. The team's most recent report, which is being circulated this week to members of the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy. What this report shows is this:

Between March and October of this year 10 new cases

been found among the 100 Marshall Islanders who were exposed to fallout in the first week of March, 1954. This group of 100 is the first group of that fall-out-drenched natives who show thyroid gland abnormalities.

Most of the abnormalities are thought to be benign tumors. But at least one has turned out to be a cancer of the thyroid gland.

Significantly, in a control group of Rongelap natives who escaped the 1954 fallout—including some near relatives of those not as lucky—there had been no evidence of thyroid disease.

Six of the thyroid victims have undergone successful operations. Three, with benign tumors, underwent surgery at the U.S. Naval Hospital on Guam in 1964. Three other, two with benign tumors and one with a cancerous thyroid gland, underwent surgery at the Lobery Clinic in Boston in July of this year after tests at Brookhaven.

Dr. Conrad said he was hopeful that additional cases of thyroid tumors among the islanders can be averted through treatment with a thyroid hormone.

It is believed the hormone can avert the development of the tumors and possibly even cause their regression.

The Brookhaven medical scientist also is anxious to learn whether the hormone

in the experimental between radiation-damaged thyroids and the retarded growth seen among some of the exposed children.

In Dr. Conrad's view, the immediate and external effects of radiation now must be balanced with a new appraisal for the latent, internal effects that can be caused by radioactive matter get into the body. Radioactive selectively concentrates in the thyroid gland.

The Rongelap findings reported this week to the Joint Committee follow a U.S. Public Health Service report last week of a tenuous link between fallout in Utah and Arizona and the incidence of suspicious thyroid nodules or small lumps among children there.

The Utah report, actually a preliminary report of a special medical study, is drawing heavy criticism from other Government agencies. The criticism point out that there was no real agreement among the non-thyroid experts who performed the physical examinations. There is virtually no data from other areas for judging the Utah-Arizona findings. And many of the children examined were born after most of the fallout fell.

The Rongelap report is being circulated, too, at a time when France is preparing an atmospheric test of an H-Bomb in the Pacific over the vigorous protests of islanders there.

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