



BROOKHAVEN NATIONAL LABORATORY
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MEDICAL DEPARTMENT

TELEPHONE: (516) 345-3577

November 25, 1975

403733

Mr. Fred M. Zeder
Director of Territorial Affairs
U.S. Department of Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Zeder,

I have been in correspondence with your office and the Congress of Micronesia concerning thyroid cases in the Rongelap and Utirik populations, accidentally exposed to fallout radiation in 1954, which you might wish to consider for compensation in the bill coming up before our Congress. It was pointed out that though there has been correlation of radiation causation of thyroid tumors in the Rongelap population, such was not considered likely in the Utirik population since the incidence of such tumors in the latter population was about the same (or slightly less) than in the unexposed populations examined. The radiation causation in one case of cancer of the thyroid in a Utirik woman was more questionable. Last month another tumor (possibly malignant) was surgically removed from a Utirik woman. Nine outstanding thyroid pathologists were divided on the diagnosis - 2 favoring benign, 3 cancer, and 4 calling it a premalignant tumor (cancer in situ). We have decided to call the tumor cancer for statistical purposes. The statisticians advise me that it is extremely unlikely that two cases of thyroid cancer would occur by chance in the exposed Utirik population. Therefore you may wish to reexamine the issue of compensation based on this new information.

The incidence of benign tumors of the thyroid in the Utirik population is less than found in the unexposed Rongelap population examined. In addition to the 2 cases of thyroid cancer in this group, there have been 4 benign tumors, 3 of which were surgically removed. In the unexposed Rongelap group there have been 9 benign tumors of the thyroid, 3 of which were surgically removed (see attached tables).

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2.8 MARSHALLESE ISLANDS
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If there are any questions regarding these data, please let me know. I am sending a copy of this letter to the Congress of Micronesia.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Conard, M.D.

RAC:gc

CC: Dr. J. L. Liverman, ERDA
Senator O. T. Borja
Congressman A. Balos
Dr. M. Kumangai, T.T.
Dr. V. P. Bond, BNL
Dr. E. P. Cronkite, BNL.

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