

**THE JOSEPH STOKES, JR., RESEARCH INSTITUTE**  
**THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF PHILADELPHIA**  
**34th STREET & CIVIC CENTER BOULEVARD**  
**PHILADELPHIA, PA. 19104**

**WERNER HENLE, M.D.**  
Professor of Virology,  
Director,  
Division of Virology

(215) 596 - 9435  
(215) 387 - 6180

May 10, 1985

Harold E. Varmus, M.D.  
School of Medicine  
Dept. of Microbiology & Immunology  
University of California  
San Francisco, CA 94143

Dear Harold:

Your letter of April 26, 1985 reached me only yesterday. That left little time for reflection for a proper name for the species of virus now variously called LAV, HTLV-III or ARV and to get my answer to you by May 15.

My wife and I have debated this problem in some detail and we both feel that:

- (1) abbreviation used already for other viruses should by all means be avoided.
- (2) AIDS as part of the designation also ought to be out because:
  - a. not everyone becoming infected by the virus will develop AIDS
  - b. the public has been made so afraid by the news media that infection by the virus under the name of AIDS or AIDS-associated virus would be considered a death sentence.
  - c. it is not yet 100% certain that the virus per se is the cause of AIDS or whether or not other factors (viruses) have to act in concert.
- (3) HTLV-III is to us an incorrect designation because:
  - a. the acronymes initially stood for human T-cell leukemia and are still taken as such for HTLV-1 and HTLV-2;
  - b. HTLV-1 and HTLV-II do not belong into the same category as HTLV-III, they are C- and not D-type viruses, are lymphoproliferative and not lymphocytocidal, etc.
- (4) LAV seems to us the most acceptable name because:
  - a. it historically was the designation of the first virus isolated;
  - b. lymphadenopathy is clinically "neutral", appears to be a transient response in primary infections by the virus as recently reported from Australia\* and may become persistent and generalized whether or not the patient subsequently develops AIDS.

*\* perhaps prematurely, see Faucet, April 20*

cont'd....

- \*lyus
- (5) A decision should be made as soon as possible because once a designation has become solidly entrenched in some parts of the world it will be difficult to change. We ought to know because the Epstein-Barr virus, used\*as a temporary name, should really have been renamed infectious mononucleosis virus (IMV) because practically all herpesviridae are named after the major diseases they cause. By the time the causal role of EBV in IM was generally accepted, it was too late to make the change which also would have complied with rule 8.

I know that our recommendations will not please some of our colleagues but here they are for what they are worth.

With best wishes I am

Sincerely yours,



Werner Henle, M.D.

WH/rp