

November 18, 1969

Mr. Lloyd Shearer
140 No. Hamilton Drive
Beverly Hills, California 90211

Dear Lloyd:

Here are some thoughts on a "Moonshot on Cancer."

Medical and biological scientists tend to be traditionalists and individualists having very little confidence in large scale or "big" science. Most are part-time scientists spending much of their time either in teaching, therapy or university administration, all of which needs to be done. However, with a few notable exceptions, having only part time available for research of necessity means they must limit the scope of their programs. Targeted programs to solve major disease are out of sight and out of mind; moreover, they are also disapproved of for two reasons: 1) they are likely to not succeed in all efforts attempted, a safe assumption since many different hypotheses and leads must be examined simultaneously and many will be found faulty; 2) if it will succeed, in which case the targeted big science program provides too much competition for academe and their modest efforts are lost in the mass of data accumulated.

There are therefore powerful, strongly motivated tendencies in the biomedical scientific community to limit the extent of government sponsored targeted big science programs having sufficient scope to achieve solutions to problems such as cancer, cardiovascular diseases and genetically determined defects in childhood and chronic disease in old age. It should be quite clear that the relatively large scale support of basic biomedical science, which has achieved more in promoting human health in the last 30 years than had been achieved in the previous 1000 years, was the result of strong support by a small number of intelligent Congressmen and Senators and a few knowledgeable and dedicated laymen. Although greatly aided by a few far-seeing medical scientists and educators this movement was not the result of a ground swell support from the generality of biomedical institutions, scientists, educators or practitioners; instead a dog-in-the-manger attitude has prevailed amongst many if not most established scientists and educators. This unfortunate situation is not confined to the Western scientific establishment; if anything, it is likely to be worse in the USSR.

Mr. Lloyd Shearer

-2-

November 18, 1969

Enclosed is a short "Point of View" article for the cover feature of the December Bulletin of the UICC (International Union Against Cancer); also a preprint of my Cherry Hill presentation.

I enjoyed my two evenings with you and our discussions about almost everything. Please give my regards to your wife and son.

Sincerely,

Robert J. Huebner, M.D., Chief
Viral Carcinogenesis Branch
National Cancer Institute

Enclosures (2)