February 12, 1968

Dr. Salvatore Fina
c/o Salvi
Viale R. Sansio 19/1
Trieste, Italy

Dear Dr. Fina:

Your letter of January 25 arrived while I was absent from Cincinnati and I regret the delay in replying to it.

It has been known for a long time that a very large number of viruses can destroy cancer cells in tissue culture in vitro. There have also been many experiments in which at least partial destruction of experimental tumors in vivo has been achieved. Obviously the individual to whom various viruses are administered for the destruction of a tumor must be free of antibody for the particular virus that is used and that, of course, is rarely the case in people as regards both the polioviruses and the herpes simplex virus - even if there were a properly attenuated herpes virus that could be used and I know of no such virus at this time. Experiments have also already been carried out in which certain viruses (adenoviruses, Coxsackie viruses, ECHO viruses) have been administered by intraarterial injection in the hope of having the largest amount localized in the tumor - but this also has yielded only limited results because the tumors were only partly affected and the remaining tumor tissue quickly resumed its growth. I have often thought that if one had a battery of "harmless viruses" for which a given patient would be without antibody, one could perhaps try administering them sequentially in the hope that finally the entire tumor might be destroyed but this has not as yet been done.

With best wishes.

Sincerely yours,

Albert B. Sabin, M. D.