Dear Dr. Sabin:

Thank you so much for your letter of October 15 and for the Okinawa strain of Japanese B encephalitis, which I have immediately inoculated into mice. I am sorry to tell you, that the slide of spinal cord from a human case of Japanese B encephalitis was not enclosed.

I was glad to learn from your letter, that the hemagglutination phenomenon with Japanese B encephalitis infected mouse brain has been confirmed in your laboratory. Dr. Buescher is right, that optimum results are obtained when keeping the virus-sheep cell mixture for 4 hours at room temperature or for 2 hours at 37°C, and in the refrigerator overnight. Nevertheless we do obtain pretty good results when kept the mixture only in the refrigerator.

The Japanese B encephalitis virus does not agglutinate red cells of our adult chickens, but we shall repeat the test with chick cells.

Concerning the mechanism of hemagglutination, I am inclined to make the preliminary conclusion, that the hemagglutination is not due to the virus itself. We are making egg passages with Col3K, MM and Japanese B viruses, and found so far, that the hemagglutinating ability of allantoic fluid does not run parallel with the virus concentration as determined in mouse potency tests. These experiments, however, are still going on, and I shall not make a definite conclusion before we have finished them.

The August issue of the proceedings has not yet reached me, but I have already been informed about the positive results in hemagglutination with the Columbia SK group of viruses, reported by Ohtake and Yager.

Part of our work, that is the part concerning the haemagglutination of Col3K, MM and Japanese B encephalitis virus by sheep erythrocytes, has been presented by me last May in Paris on the European International Conference for Poliomyelitis, and, on Lépine’s request, been sent to the Annales de l’Institut Pasteur, in which, as far as I know, shall be published in the October issue. I expect to have sent you a reprint before your report is presented. In that case, you may refer to that paper, but yet I should appreciate that you indicate that your work has been carried out after a personal communication before our paper has appeared, because of the fact, that a quick publication in a European Journal is very difficult, even impossible.

Since you visited me, we have obtained sheep cell agglutination with some so-called High Lansing strains, which cross with Col3K virus, and which are, to my mind, not true Lansing strains. The original Lansing strain, which has initially given some slight hemagglutination, failed to agglutinate sheep cells later on, so that we regard this strain as negative now. I am not quite sure, that the Lansing strain does not possess a hemagglutinating ability, or that the negative results are a
consequence of the low potency of the virus. I think, that the High 
landing strains have to be regarded as belonging to the ColSK group of 
viruses. In our hands, hemagglutination of sheep cells has been positive 
too with the MM and EMC viruses, like in Olitsky's experiments, though 
with Col.SK and MM we obtained titers that were considerably higher than 
with EMC virus. Hemagglutination with Yale SK is doubtful and this shall 
be repeated. Furthermore, we too obtained hemagglutination of human O 
erythrocyted with the 0DVII strain of mouse encephalomyelitis and with 
the FA strain as well. These strains did not agglutinate sheep cells. 

As to the hemagglutination inhibition by sera, we have thus far ob-
tained no inhibition with normal rabbit sera, and with sera from rab-
bits immunized with normal mouse brain, whereas sera from rabbits immuni-
zed with ColSK, MM and Japanese B encephalitis virus did inhibit the 
hemagglutination. Yet I am not quite convinced of the actual specificity 
of the inhibition test, and these experiments are to be repeated on a 
larger scale in the coming weeks.

I shall be glad to keep you informed about our work, and I hope you 
will do the same with yours.

With kind regards and many thanks for the "bottle" you left in your 
sleeping room in my home,

Sincerely yours,

(Prof. Dr J. D. Verlinde)