Dr. Leroy E. Burney  
Surgeon General  
U. S. Public Health Service  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

April 22, 1959, I mailed to you 60+ graphs which illustrated the writer's study of leukemia mortality by parishes within Louisiana during the years 1949-1957. These data indicated to the writer a possible infectious origin for human leukemia.

The research has continued and now includes 20 case histories of leukemia victims derived from interviews with a member of each victim's family.

Three apparent facts have emerged: (1) The first symptoms of leukemia occurred from May to December, with the peak in December (Fig. One). The entire chart was then moved backward two months, the known incubation period of chicken leukemia. This position on the chart shows a possible connection with summer weather. (2) This leukemia-summer relationship does not now seem related to any other factor except the outbreak of the disease in local areas in epidemic proportions (Fig. two and three.) (3) In 61% of the cases other forms of cancer had afflicted close blood relatives.

The relationship between leukemia and other forms of human cancer is identical to the relationship between chicken leukemia and cancers which result from an infectious agent, probably viral, known by biologists and zoologists as chicken lymphomatosis.

These findings cannot be dismissed as the result of glaring errors in derived data, for while all concerned were aware I am not a physician, each family was most cooperative, each is a hard-working American whose powers of observation and concern for the health of their beloved is proven by the use of a high amount of preventive medicine.

The one valid argument against the worth of these findings is the scant coverage which I hope to increase. Perhaps a more complete study of this type has already been conducted for trained investigators have existed for decades.

Hoping my comments will in some way end the suffering and early death of 250,000 Americans who each year pay the supreme penalty for the failure of past research efforts, I remain,

Yours very truly,

cc: American Cancer Society  
Leukemia Society Inc. of New York
Number of polio cases per month per year in Louisiana from 1950-1955 and average of these years.
TIME OF YEAR FIRST SYMPTOMS OF LEUKEMIA NOTED DURING YEARS 1951-1959

(I - In 2 month periods) and (II - derived from I) and (III - Actual start of disease)
URBAN AREA 'A'
ESTIMATED POPULATION - 3000
1955-1958

Estimated Population - 3000

LEGEND
- Leukemia Death
- Cancer Death

Age - 9

Observed annual death rate against expected death rate in urban area 'A' during period 1955-1958
URBAN AREA "B"

ESTIMATED POPULATION - 4000

1952-1953

Startedin 1957
Died in 1958
Not counted in observed rate.

LEGEND

0 - Leukemia Death
Age - 3

SCALE

½ Mile

Observed annual death rate against expected death rate in Urban Area "B" during period 1952-1953.