TO: Members of the "Panel for Picornaviruses"

Drs. Gelfand
Hammon
Huebner

FROM: Joseph L. Melnick

March 22, 1963

Discussion of recent correspondence

1. It seems that all are in agreement that the panel name should be changed to Panel for Picornaviruses. (Note to Dr. Webb: I hope that you will proceed to take such official action as is necessary.

2. Re: Dr. Sabin's letter. I would be happy to have the new members of the panel appointed through the NIAID immediately and have them sign the statement, if they agree to it, -- as suggested by Dr. Sabin. (Note to Dr. Webb: How long will it take to have the new members appointed?)

I sincerely regret Dr. Sabin's resignation from the Panel. I am grateful to him for his active and productive participation in the past, and for his willingness to sign the statement under discussion before making his resignation effective. Needless to say, we shall miss him on the Panel.

3. Re: Dr. Rosen's letter. I am sorry that we did not have a full attendance at our last meeting and particularly that Dr. Rosen was absent. In order that new types be given a sub-grouping and number, those at the meeting felt that the first suitably worked up strain of new antigenic type (or strains if more than one is known) be classified based on its known biological properties. We recognize that these may vary when the strain on passage is subjected to selective pressures, and that later isolates may have different properties. However we felt that such a policy would have greater universal acceptance than placing viruses in the unclassified subgroup, -- unless the known properties of the strain would indicate that it is not possible to subgroup it. With the limited amount of mouse work being done, this will tend to place new enteroviruses in the echovirus group. The chief difficulty of separating enteroviruses from rhinoviruses apparently has been overcome by the acid test.
I believe that there will be no objection to our assigning numbers to the "true" enteroviruses, as no one else is doing it, and the panel action has the approval of the WHO Enterovirus Reference Centre. Another mechanism for establishing type numbers for the rhinovirus subgroup is now active. As the mechanism is being operated through WHO, our panel should support this WHO activity rather than circumvent it.

In the future I hope that panel members will attend meetings rather than discuss matters by mail. I would have thought that all of you knew that the statement rejected by Virology was to be discussed. It seems to me that any and all matters that pertain to the business of the panel be discussed at its duly called meetings. Otherwise we would not be fulfilling our responsibilities.

I sincerely hope that Dr. Rosen will reconsider, and not appear as a dissenter.

4. Inasmuch as no one (other than Dr. Rosen) suggested changing the body of the report I still favor submitting it to Science at the same time that Chanock and Tyrrell submit their "Definition of Rhinovirus". Before they do so, I hope that their report will be submitted to all members of our Panel. Also, I hope that our Panel can be enlarged to include the new members discussed so that they might also be invited to sign our statement before it is submitted.

5. To those of you who answer this letter, please send copies of your answer to all members of the Panel, to avoid my having to do so.

cc: Dr. Alfred Webb

Dr. Robert M. Chanock