

April 26, 1962

Dr. D. d'Antona
Istituto Sieroterapico e Vaccinogeno Toscano
Siena, Italy

Dear Dr. d'Antona:

I was away from Cincinnati when your letter of 17 April arrived and I regret the delay in replying to it. I was sorry to learn that you did not find the magnesium chloride method adequate for the elimination of the SV 40 virus and that it also often resulted in a considerable loss of virus. I have also heard from others that there has been a problem of loss of virus activity. I was interested to learn that the photoinactivation procedure that you used was successful in eliminating the SV 40 virus without loss of titer.

With regard to your question about the possibility of using the photoinactivated vaccine for mass vaccination in human beings, I should think that that would be satisfactory only after it had been demonstrated, at least on a small scale, that the virus so treated multiplied satisfactorily in the intestinal tract and produced antibody in children who had no demonstrable antibody for a particular type of poliovirus prior to vaccination. Such information is now available for vaccine treated with magnesium chloride, but I do not know of any such tests with vaccine that has been treated by photoinactivation.

It is very disappointing indeed that the summer is almost again upon us and that Italy, which has the highest incidence of paralytic poliomyelitis in Western Europe, has still done nothing about preventing the additional thousands of paralytic cases that may be expected to occur in the remaining months of 1962.

With all good wishes and kindest personal regards,

Sincerely yours,

Albert B. Sabin, M. D.

ABS:meh