

Numerous researchers have pointed out for years that chronic mitogenesis is important in carcinogenesis. Our theoretical point is that this is because of effects on mutagenesis. Loss of heterozygosity due to nondisjunction, gene conversion, and mitotic recombination occurring during cell division can be much more frequent than loss of heterozygosity due to an independent second mutation (1). Cell division is important in general for markedly increasing the probability of mutation and, for recessive genes, is likely to be of dominant importance after the occurrence of the first mutation.

Some of the other criticisms of our papers reported by Marx will be addressed in our responses to forthcoming letters in *Science*.

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Primate Research Institute: AIDS Research Program

Karen Wright's article about changes at Primate Research Institute (PRI) (*News & Comment*, 2 Nov., p. 614) contains some statements and opinions attributed to me that distort the present status of research, in particular AIDS research, at PRI. A reevaluation of my conversation with Wright would reveal an upbeat tone and discussion of a healthy AIDS research program that was not conveyed by the article. Three statements from the article are germane.

1) "For the moment PRI certainly hasn't shut down. But it doesn't have much in the way of an AIDS research component." In fact, the truth is the exact opposite as I told Wright. Mika Popovic's group neither brought nor took AIDS research funds. No AIDS projects have been lost or impeded since Popovic, Suzanne Gartner, and Bill Hobson left PRI. Direct cost AIDS funding at PRI has grown this year from \$2,475,051 to \$3,080,713.

2) The article states that I have "not succeeded in filling any institutional vacancies. . . ." This is a distortion, as I told Wright that no positions had yet been listed

or advertised. I had been at PRI only a few weeks when we spoke. Since then, PRI has had a professional position listed that has not yet closed. We have had several qualified applicants apply thus far.

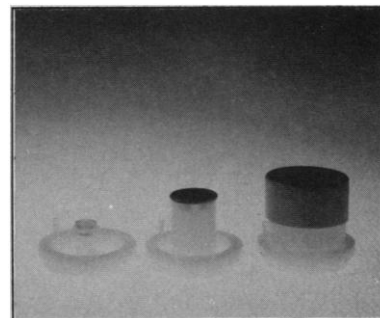
3) The article states that when I was "asked if NMSU will cooperate by producing the financial or moral support needed to make PRI what he envisions," I hesitated and said "I don't know yet . . . I'm just beginning to find out." This statement appears to be worded to imply that I might be dissatisfied with support provided by the New Mexico State University (NMSU) administration. My answer was in reference to understanding the current financial situation at PRI and not to waiting for bailout funds, as implied. I stated very clearly that universities do not normally provide large amounts of intramural funds to primate centers. I also said that NMSU provided more indirect cost to PRI than I had experienced at the University of California, Davis, primate center.

When I became director of PRI in September 1990, I believed that the right changes had been made by the NMSU administration. Everything I have observed at PRI since then has confirmed that belief.

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Response: Marx's optimism notwithstanding, I stand by my original article for the following reasons: (i) The AIDS research component my article refers to is the on-site virology-immunology group conceived by the institute's former director—a group that has dissolved. Therefore the level of PRI's ongoing funding for chimps used by AIDS researchers at other institutions seems irrelevant. (ii) Marx says he had not advertised for replacements for Popovic *et al.* at the time of our interview, but that has little to do with the phrase he quotes from my article saying that he had not yet filled any vacancies. After all, that phrase was still true at press time—well after the interview—and indeed appears from Marx's own letter to have been still true when he penned his critique. (iii) Marx states that my article incorrectly implies that he was "dissatisfied with support provided by the NMSU administration." But in the sentence following the one he quotes above, I wrote: "Marx says he doesn't expect NMSU to subsidize his ambition." Similarly, I later quote Marx as saying that NMSU's support for PRI compares favorably with other universities' support for their primate centers.—KAREN WRIGHT

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