

son Hughes-funded laboratory was transferred back to Stanford when Hughes phased out the funding it was giving Stanford for the lab. A Stanford statement prepared at the time (but never released until requested by *Science*) stoutly supported Weissman: Hughes and Weissman were severing their relationship "to resolve concerns arising out of differences between Stanford and [Hughes] Institute policies relating to consulting activity and intellectual property," the statement read. It concluded: "Dr. Weissman's activities have at all times been consistent with the university's policies on these subjects."

Confusion at UCSF

In the wake of the Weissman case, could some of Hughes' scientific giants conclude that corporate ties just aren't worth the trouble—or that Hughes' own munificence comes with too many strings? Take UCSF cell biologist Williams: "Hughes is on the side of being extra careful about interactions with for-profit companies, to the extent that it is not worth it for us to do it."

And he's not just sounding off. For the last year and a half, the Hughes investigator has been negotiating with a large pharmaceutical company that wants to set up an

independent research center at the university. Williams would be the chairman of the institute's scientific advisory board, but no company funds would go to his Hughes lab. It seemed to all parties like a sound deal, and Williams says his initial check with Hughes last year indicated no problems.

Yet as the arrangements neared completion earlier this year, Hughes refused to allow Williams to participate in that capacity. "Their concern is that I'm working for the pharmaceutical company," says Williams. "That couldn't be further from the truth." The company's money, he says, will go straight to the university to distribute to the institute as it sees fit.

"I told them about [the deal] a year ago," says Williams, "but I didn't know it was going to be a problem until we got to the final stages of discussion," with the pharmaceutical company. By that time, he felt he was already in too far to back out. So Williams, like Weissman, may have to give up his enviable Hughes connection. "There's a good possibility I'll have to resign," he says.

Dingell on the warpath

Hughes' tough stance in these two cases may not be too surprising in view of the political

climate surrounding conflict-of-interest issues. Congressional watchdog John Dingell (D-MI) is just one of several legislators sniffing around this issue, for example, and Dingell is asking two federal offices—the inspector general of the Department of Health and Human Services and the Defense Contract Audit Agency—to launch investigations of "profiteering" by academic researchers. He is planning a hearing this summer that will focus on several specific cases.

The last thing Hughes needs is a scandal involving one of its researchers. Yet Hughes' caution in the face of that threat imposes some of the nation's toughest conflict policies on its investigators. "Hughes has the best and brightest scientists in the country. It's got to expect them to be entrepreneurial," says Karl Hittelman, associate vice chancellor for academic affairs at UCSF. Many Hughes investigators are willing to accept the rules, as long as they know what exactly they are and that they won't change. But at the moment, that's not the case. And with the Weissman affair a reminder of how things can go wrong, Hittelman says, that's something Hughes will have to think about soon.

—Christopher Anderson

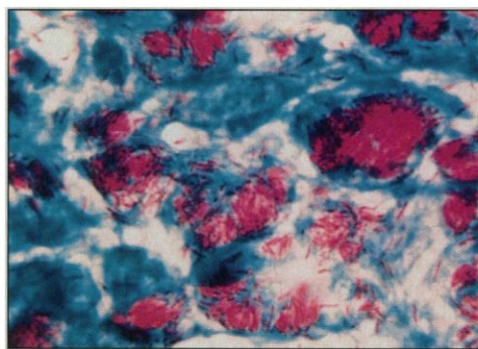
BIOMEDICAL FUNDING

A Shot in the Arm for TB Research

Almost 10 years after tuberculosis (TB) began making a comeback in American lungs, the disease is also regaining its place on the government's list of high-priority research topics. In one measure of concern, National Institutes of Health (NIH) Director Bernadine Healy plans to give the disease a quick funding boost by exercising for the first time her authority to reallocate money among the NIH institutes. In a letter to the Clinton transition team last December, Healy wrote that in 1993 she will devote \$12.5 million more than planned to research on the TB mycobacterium and on new diagnostic techniques and therapies, obtaining \$9.2 million of it by trimming other NIH research programs.

That will raise NIH's total spending on the disease to \$37 million in 1993—still too little, Healy thinks. To supplement that relatively small sum and help lure more researchers into studying TB, Healy also hopes to lobby Congress for millions of dollars in emergency funds to be spent this year. But

congressional staffers say that will be a tough sell at a time when Congress is likely to be facing numerous budget-busting measures in President Clinton's upcoming economic stimulus package. And TB researchers, while grateful for any windfalls, say that the emergency funds won't address a need for sustained funding.



A mycobacterium rises again. And so does TB funding—at least for now.

Healy's willingness to press the issue reflects health officials' increasing alarm over the disease, which is rising not only in incidence—the number of TB cases in the nation grew 18% from 1985 to 1991—but also in potency as new, drug-resistant strains appear. NIH officials are also

feeling political pressure to devote more money to TB: Over the past year, several members of Congress have called for increased spending. At a congressional hearing last week, for example, Representative J. Roy Rowland (D-GA), a physician, tacitly accused Healy of neglecting the disease after it had become a public health emergency.

Healy's reallocation authority allowed her

to take unilateral action. This power, which Congress granted to the NIH director 2 years ago, allows her to skim up to 1% of the budget from each of NIH's constituent organizations and direct it to other programs. In this case, the \$9.2 million will come from across the board; the TB programs it will support are concentrated in the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

After years of receiving skimpy funding, TB researchers were quick to praise the increase. But many told *Science* that they are dismayed that at least some of the money will come at the expense of research in other areas.

Researchers would have fewer reservations about the still-undetermined sum that Healy hopes to get from Congress. But even if Congress responds to her plea, the emergency funds, like the transfer money, would apply only to 1993. Researchers worry that TB programs would be left high and dry after the emergency funds are depleted. "One hundred million or \$1 billion is not going to turn this problem around," warns Barry Bloom of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. TB researchers, he says, need "funding continuity and not some political fix." In light of this widely echoed view, Healy's efforts to win TB funding in 1993 may mark the beginning of a yearly struggle to fund research on a disease that, 10 years ago, seemed a quaint illness whose day had passed.

—Traci Watson