

Briefings

edited by CONSTANCE HOLDEN

Zagury in the Clear

The all-clear has apparently been sounded for French AIDS researcher Daniel Zagury—on both sides of the Atlantic. Last year, clinical trials of HIV vaccines in infected and uninfected patients made Zagury, an immunologist at Paris's Pierre and Marie Curie University, the subject of high-powered investigations both in France and the United States.

But last month France's National Medical Order rejected a complaint filed by the country's health minister, Bruno Durieux, (*Science*, 17 January, p. 280). The complaint—which could have led to Zagury's losing his medical license—claimed that his treatment of three patients, who died during one of his vaccine therapy trials, was unethical. Durieux has now announced that he will not appeal the ruling. And at the same time the National Institutes of Health says it has effectively completed its long-running investigation of Zagury, who was charged with violating regulations designed to protect patients in clinical trials.

French embassy official Pascal Chevit says Durieux has decided that further scrutiny of Zagury would serve no purpose. "Everybody was convinced that Dr. Zagury is an honest person," says Chevit. "The issues raised by NIH and the French inquiries led to changes in the way clinical research is done, [and] that was the real goal." Those changes include the fact that the French National Agency for AIDS Research now evaluates all new protocols for clinical trials. In addition, the vaccinia virus, which served as a delivery vehicle in one vaccine Zagury was testing—and was probably the cause of the deaths—can no longer be used in HIV-infected people.

Back at NIH, Charles McCarthy, director of the Office for Protection from Re-

Debut for 425-Million-Year-Old Fossil



One of the world's best-preserved trilobites—a 425-million-year-old fossil arthropod—is on its way to the Smithsonian Institution after being found 2 years ago near the University of Rochester. Technician Gerry Kloc spent more than 100 hours restoring the 6 1/2-inch fossil, which apparently was buried intact while making its way along the bottom of the tropical sea that covered the Rochester area. Riding piggyback on the creature are fossils of brachiopods, shellfish that went along for food and transportation, as well as tiny organisms called bryozoans. The area around Rochester is among the world's best sites for fossils of the Ordovician, Silurian, and Devonian eras.

search Risks (OPRR), says his unit expects to issue a final report on its Zagury investigation within 2 months. He adds that it will be little different from the interim report issued last July, in which OPRR called for stricter evaluations of NIH collaborations involving human experimentation, and tighter control of NIH-supplied biological materials designed for human testing. OPRR also required that NIH establish a new intramural Office of Human Subjects Research.

Zagury's ethics first came under fire in July 1990 when *Chicago Tribune* reporter John Crewdson questioned NIH about the French researcher's collaborations with Robert Gallo and other NIH researchers.

Sarin Indicted

Despite the ongoing investigation into Robert Gallo's role in the discovery of the AIDS virus, it's safe to say that one of his former aides is currently in more

trouble than Gallo himself. On 24 January, a federal grand jury returned a four-count indictment against Prem Sarin, formerly deputy chief of Gallo's Laboratory of Tumor Cell Biology at the National Institutes of Health.

Sarin stands accused of embezzlement, making false statements to the government, and illegally supplementing his income. The indictment alleges that Sarin consulted for Lyphomed, Inc. and tested drugs for the pharmaceutical company Homburg Degussa Pharma at Gallo's laboratory, then lied about his income on financial disclosure forms. All but the illegal income charge are felonies punishable by up to 5 years in jail and fines of \$250,000. The charges arose out of an investigation last year by Representative John Dingell (D-MI). Sarin rejected a plea agreement several weeks ago (*Science*, 24 January, p. 391), and his attorney has indicated he will plead not guilty.

Sarin is the second scientist from Gallo's lab to be charged

with wrongdoing. In 1990, Syed Zaki Salahuddin pled guilty to two misdemeanors—accepting illegal gratuities and conflict of interest. Salahuddin paid a \$12,000 fine and is now a tenured professor at the University of Southern California.

Neuro Nerves Calmed

Neuroscientists' anxiety axons rang off the hook last fall when signals emerged from the National Science Foundation (NSF) that officials there were considering dismantling and dividing up the neuroscience division (*Science*, 1 November 1991, p. 643). From all over the nation, researchers deluged Mary Clutter, NSF assistant director for Biological, Behavioral, and Social Sciences, with letters arguing against fragmentation of their field. Now, it seems, the cries of protest did not fall on unreceptive auditory neurons.

Not only has the dismantling failed to happen, but in an open letter published in the current newsletter of the Society for Neuroscience, Clutter attempts to quiet all those overworked axons. "I was impressed by [the] outpouring of support for the special role you see NSF playing in the neurosciences," Clutter wrote. Calling neuroscience "*the integrative system par excellence*," Clutter said it "will continue as a prominent, unified cluster of programs," within a new division of integrative biology that also contains physiology and developmental biology.

"It's much better than I had



Mary Clutter. Olive branch to neuroscientists.