

USTUR Newsletter

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY/TRI-CITIES
PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES
COLLEGE OF PHARMACY

Message from the Director

Over the past year, we have had many calls from USTUR Registrants and their families regarding the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program. Recently, we made contact with the newly established local (Hanford) office that is part of the administration of that program and they have asked us to pass on some contact information to our Registrants, which we are pleased to do. Although this is a local office, there are 10 such offices throughout the U.S. and, regardless of your place of residence, you may call the listed toll-free number and they will give you contact information for the office nearest you. Please note that the USTUR is not involved in the administration of the Compens-

ation Program; we are simply providing the information as a service to our Registrants and their families.

The USTUR has had to make some difficult decisions and take steps to reduce the number of Registrants in the program by approximately 50 individuals. This was especially difficult because a number of those 50 persons have been committed to the program for decades. The reasons for the reduction are explained in another section of this Newsletter. There is some "good news" associated with this action. If you are not asked to renew your donation agreement, it will probably be because you are

not likely to have much uranium, plutonium, or americium in your body organs.

We, at the USTUR, extend our greatest appreciation to those Registrants (and their families) who have made the ultimate donation to the program and to those Registrants who have remained with the program for so many years. Thank you all.

Dr. Ronald E. Filipy

Director



Washington State University
Tri-Cities Campus

Advisory Committee Meeting

The annual USTUR Advisory Committee meeting was held September 21st and 22nd at the Doubletree Hotel in Pasco, Washington. The meeting was attended by the USTUR Advisory Committee: Joe Aldrich, Ron

Brosemer, Kathryn Paxton-George, Dennis Mahlum and Robert Thomas. Committee members Isabel Fisenne and Mark Griffon were unable to travel due to the events of September 11 but participated via

College of Pharmacy, Raymond Quock; Department Chair of Pharmaceutical Sciences, and Barbara Brooks, Department of Energy Program Manager. The Advisory Committee, which is comprised of 7 individuals, provides an independent review of the activities and progress of the program. The meeting was very positive and provided significant guidance for the Registries.

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Prioritizing Resources

During the next few months, approximately 50 long-time USTUR participants will be notified that they will not be asked to renew their autopsy agreements with the USTUR even though they have been renewed as participants many times during the past 30+ years of Registries operations. The reasons for this notification are as follows:

1. Financial support from the U.S. Department of Energy has been at a constant level for the past several years and the expenses of the USTUR continue to increase. This obviously cannot continue so the USTUR administration has taken a hard look at ways to stretch the available funding. Two large expenditures that increase each year involve the performance of autopsies and the radiochemical analyses of the samples collected at those autopsies; therefore, reduction of the number of autopsies performed would ease the financial crunch.
2. The actinide elements such as uranium, plutonium, and americium are gradually lost from the body over

long periods of time, primarily by urinary excretion. This is the very reason that analysis of urine for its content of actinide elements has been the most reliable means of confirming the intake of those elements into the body. A review of radiation exposure records indicated that many participants in the USTUR had experienced very small intakes of the actinide elements and, for the majority, it has been more than 25 years since they had any possibility of additional intakes. As a result of the small intakes and the times since intake, samples collected at many recent autopsies contain such small amounts of uranium, plutonium, or americium that those elements have become difficult to measure, even with very sophisticated instrumentation.

3. The USTUR has collected tissue samples from more than 300 individual registrants over the past years and now has a large database containing the exposure histories of those individuals as well

as the analyzed contents of actinide elements in their bodies at the time of death. In fact, for certain kinds of exposures to certain actinide elements, it was concluded that the USTUR now has sufficient information to fulfill its original mission.

For those three reasons, approximately 50 USTUR Registrants were selected for non-renewal in the program, on the basis of their work histories and dosimetry information. It was estimated that tissue donations from those individuals would contain undetectable or marginally detectable amounts of the actinide elements. There are still approximately 150 USTUR participants who will be asked to renew their autopsy agreements because their donations are expected to provide information that has not yet been accumulated in sufficient amounts. The long-term loyalty that all USTUR Registrants have shown for the program made this selection process very difficult, even though it was necessary if the USTUR is to continue to provide service to the remaining participants.

World Wide Web

After surviving the Y2K scare and several staffing changes we decided to bring our website into the 21st century. The USTUR logo was updated and animated. New backgrounds, graphics, animation and links were added and a complete overhaul was performed on the USTUR homepage with the addition of over 3600 links. The goal of the USTUR website is to inform the public about the Registries, what we are currently working

on and what we are planning for the future. Also included is a complete listing of publications and abstracts, annual reports, policies and procedures, information about and examples of our database system and information pertaining to the NHRTR and NRA. Publication requests and direct contact with faculty and staff can be obtained via the e-mail links on the site. The website gives a very in-depth look at what the USTUR is and



We're on the Web
www.ustur.wsu.edu

what valuable and unique resources are available for research collaborations.

Staffing Changes

The Registries is proud to announce several additions/changes to our faculty and staff.

Mrs. Tawnya Brumbaugh, Secretary, joined the Registries in February. Mrs. Brumbaugh worked previously for WSU in the computer lab on the Tri-Cities campus and came highly recommended.



T.L. Brumbaugh

Dr. Alan Birchall, Adjunct Professor, became a member of the Registries' faculty in April. Dr. Birchall specializes in the develop-



A. Birchall

ment of mathematical methods and software tools to solve complex problems in internal dosimetry and biokinetic modeling.

Dr. Anthony C. James, Adjunct Professor, became a member of the Registries' faculty in October of this year. Dr. James specializes in the development and application of dosimetry of the respiratory tract and other body tissues in order to assess health risks from environmental or occupational exposures.



A.C. James

Mrs. Gail Deckert resigned her Jr. Radiochemist position at the end of August 2001 and *Mr. Michael Aman*

accepted the Jr. Radiochemist position and began training in November. It is anticipated that Mr. Aman's training program will be completed by May 2002. Prior to joining the Registries' team he worked as an undergraduate researcher in the University of Idaho Chemistry Department.



M. Aman



From all of us
at the
United States
Transuranium and
Uranium
Registries

Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act

The Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act of 2000 passed by Congress went into effect on July 31, 2001. The law provides \$150,000, tax free, lump-sum compensation, as well as related medical expenses coverage to eligible workers who are diagnosed with chronic beryllium disease, chronic silicosis, or cancer caused by radiation as a result of working for the Department of Energy, its contractors or subcontractors.

This program is applicable to eligible current and former DOE employees, their surviving spouse, and/or dependent children.

This law also has provisions to provide payments and medical expense coverage to individuals previously awarded benefits under Section Five of the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act or RECA.

The Department of Labor (DOL) is administering the provisions of this law in conjunction with the Department of Energy (DOE), Department of Health and Human Services, and Department of Justice.

For additional information on the program or to schedule an appointment to attain free assistance in filing a claim, contact:

Energy Employees Compensation
Resource Center

1029 N. Kellogg Street
Kennewick, Washington 99336
509-783-1500
1-888-654-0014 (Toll-free)
509-783-0651 (Fax)

Email: hanford.center@eh.doe.gov



The USTUR is not involved with the administration of the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act. The USTUR agreed to place this article in our newsletter to inform our Registrants.

UNITED WE STAND

United States Transuranium and Uranium Registries
Washington State University
2710 University Drive
Richland, WA 99352



Phone: 509-372-7317
Fax: 509-375-1817 or 509-372-7160
Toll-Free: 800-375-9317