

*Human Experimentation
Veneral Disease*

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

804 Medical Arts Bldg.
Baltimore, Maryland.

Feb. 18, 1943.

Mr. James V. Bennett, Director
Bureau of Prisons
Department of Justice
Washington, D.C.

Declassified per Memo,
Acting Secretary of Defense
dated Aug. 2, 1960, by *[Signature]*
NARS, Date 6-26-84

Dear Mr. Bennett:

In anticipation of our meeting next week I enclose herewith a series of documents relating to the proposal for human experimentation in the prevention of gonorrhoea.

The first of these - a copy of a letter to Dr. A. N. Richards, Chairman Committee on Medical Research, outlined the problem, its importance, and the military desirability of doing it, together with a discussion of the population groups which might be selected for study.

The second is a detailed statement of the proposed plan of procedure.

The third consists of a group of letters from the Surgeons General U. S. Army, Navy, and Public Health Service in support of this experimentation.

I am informed that the proposals for this scientific study have been approved by the Committee on Medical Research on the ground of their military and scientific necessity; and that they have been forwarded to Dr. Vannevar Bush Director of the Office of Scientific Research and Development, for final approval on these grounds and on the additional one of expediency.

I am further informed that Dr. Bush, on receiving these approved proposals, raised three issues:-

1) That the letters from the several Surgeons General, as originally presented, did not adequately cover the question of expediency, and additional letters from these officers have now been requested. An additional letter from Dr. Thomas Parran, Surgeon General U.S. Public Health Service, which is responsible for the medical care of Federal prisoners, has been received and is appended to the three original letters from the Surgeons General. I am informed that additional letters are being written by General Magee and Admiral McIntire, and that copies of these, should you desire them, will be available the first of next week.

2) Dr. Bush raises the issue that it would be desirable to call for volunteers only among men who have already been infected with gonorrhoea at some

Mr. Bennett-2

time in the past. While this is open to certain scientific objections, it is probably nevertheless feasible and certainly better than the possible alternative of dropping the experiment altogether.

(3) Dr. Bush has also raised the issue of the possible desirability of limiting such experiments as this to Federal prisons rather than to State institutions. You will note that in Section 6 of my letter of February 1 to Dr. Richards, herewith appended, Federal prisons are not mentioned. This was deliberately done because in the opinion of the members of my committee and of others whom we had consulted on the topic, it was felt that Federal prisoners might be a psychologically unsuitable group, in that having offended against Federal laws, many of them might nurse a grievance against the U.S. Government which inmates of State institutions, having offended only against local laws, would not feel. Nevertheless and in spite of our, perhaps too hastily considered, opinion in this connection, Dr. Bush wishes me to explore with you the possibility of utilizing Federal prisons for experimentation of this nature. This is the matter which I wish to discuss with you the first of next week.

In the meanwhile, may I draw your attention to the fact that this entire matter is in a confidential category.

I shall telephone you on Monday morning for an appointment.

Sincerely yours,

J. E. Moore, M.D., Chairman,
Subcommittee on Venereal Diseases.

JEM:G

