

VIRUSES, NUCLEIC ACIDS, AND CANCER

*A Collection of Papers Presented at the Seventeenth Annual
Symposium on Fundamental Cancer Research, 1963*

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*Dedicated to the Memory of
Francisco Duran-Reynals, M.D.
(1899–1958)*

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AND CANCER**

Table of Contents

Session Chairmen	xii
Invited Discussants	xiii
Introduction	1
R. LEE CLARK	

STRUCTURE OF VIRUSES

A Comparative Study of the Structures of a Variety of Bacteriophage Particles with Some Observations on the Mechanism of Nucleic Acid Injection	7
DESMOND KAY	
Structure and Assembly of Regular Virus Particles	27
D. L. D. CASPAR and A. KLUG	
Electron Microscope Studies on the Structure and Symmetry of Virus Particles	40
R. W. HORNE	
Icosahedral Viruses—A Geometric Approach to Their Maturation	63
HEATHER DONALD MAYOR	
Morphology of the RNA Phage FH5	68
J. HUPPERT, ANTOINETTE RYTER, and JEANNE FOUACE	
The Arthropod Viruses	72
KENNETH M. SMITH	
Studies on the Structure of the Mammary Tumor-Inducing Virus (Bittner) and of Leukemia Virus (Gross)	85
L. DMOCHOWSKI, C. E. GREY, F. PADGETT, and J. A. SYKES	
Structure and Genetic Properties of Bacterial Viruses	122
THOMAS F. ANDERSON	
Virus Particles of Mouse Lymphomas and Mammary Carcinoma	141
R. KINOSITA and T. KAKEFUDA	

REPLICATION OF VIRUSES: BIOCHEMISTRY OF VIRUS-INFECTED CELLS

Influence of Phages on the Synthesis of Host Enzymes of Bacteria	151
MICHAEL B. YARMOLINSKY	

The Functions of the RNA of Bacteriophage f2	173
NORTON D. ZINDER	
Substances Produced During Replication of Plant Viruses	180
ROY MARKHAM	
Biosynthesis of Viral Ribonucleic Acids	191
M. HOMMA, A. V. RAKE, W. PARANCHYCH, D. B. ELLIS, and A. F. GRAHAM	
The Programing of Herpes Virus Multiplication in Mammalian Cells	205
BERNARD ROIZMAN	
Studies of Replication and Properties of the Bittner Virus	224
DAN H. MOORE and MICHAEL J. LYONS	

VIRAL NUCLEIC ACID: PROPERTIES AND MODE OF REPLICATION

Viral Nucleic Acid: Properties and Mode of Replication. Intro- duction	245
W. M. STANLEY	
Replication of the Nucleic Acids of the Bacterial Viruses	246
ROBERT L. SINSHEIMER	
Biosynthesis of Infectious Ribonucleic Acid of Tobacco Mosaic Virus by Extracts of Healthy Plants	252
GEORGE W. COCHRAN	
Properties of the DNA of Polyoma Virus	271
RENATO DULBECCO	
Early Events in the Reproduction Cycle of Animal Viruses	282
P. HAUSEN, H. HAUSEN, R. ROTT, C. SCHOLTISSEK, and W. SCHÄFER	
Early Changes Following Virus Infection: Thymidine Kinase In- duction in Cells Infected with Vaccinia and Herpes Simplex Viruses	296
SAUL KIT	
Changes in RNA and Protein Synthesis in Mammalian Cells In- fected with a Virulent Virus	310
RICHARD M. FRANKLIN and DAVID BALTIMORE	

AVIAN VIRUSES AND NEOPLASIA

Avian Viruses and Neoplasia: Introduction	329
W. R. BRYAN	
Biological and Structural Properties of Rous Sarcoma Viruses	331
R. J. C. HARRIS	
Studies on the Biological, Biochemical, and Biophysical Properties of Avian Tumor Viruses	344
J. W. BEARD, R. A. BONAR, URSULA HEINE, GUY DE THÉ, and DOROTHY BEARD	

The Infection of Chicken Fibroblast Cultures by Avian Myeloblastosis Virus	374
PETER K. VOGT	
Induction of Differentiation in Certain Target Cells by Avian Myeloblastosis Virus: An In Vitro Study	387
M. A. BALUDA, I. E. GOETZ, and S. OHNO	

BERTNER FOUNDATION LECTURE

Properties of a Virus Isolated from Leukemic Mice, Inducing Various Forms of Leukemia and Lymphomas in Mice and Rats	403
LUDWIK GROSS	

VIRUSES AND INTERFERON

Viruses and Interferon: Introduction	429
W. HENLE	
Interference and Cell Division	430
KURT PAUCKER	
The Effect of Interferon on the Synthesis of Viral Nucleic Acid	447
ROYCE Z. LOCKART, JR., and T. SREEVALSAN	
Interference and Interferon in Relation to Tumor Viruses and Tumor Cells	462
A. C. ALLISON	

BIOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF TUMOR INDUCTION BY VIRUSES

The Interaction of Polyoma Virus with Hamster Fibroblasts	487
MICHAEL STOKER	
The Role of the Mammary Tumor Virus in Mouse Mammary Noduligenesis and Tumorigenesis	498
K. B. DEOME	
Significance of the Absence of Infectious Virus in Virus-Induced Tumors	508
H. RUBIN and H. HANAFUSA	

INTERRELATIONSHIP OF VIRUSES: INTRACELLULAR AND EXTRACELLULAR FACTORS IN NEOPLASIA

The Possible Role of a "Transmissible Factor" in Leukemia Induction by Radiation Plus Urethan	529
I. BERENBLUM	
The Combined Action of Viruses and Other Carcinogens	544
M. H. SALAMAN, K. E. K. ROWSON, F. J. C. ROE, J. K. BALL, J. J. HARVEY, and G. DE BENEDICTIS	

Studies on the Oncogenicity of Human Adenovirus	559
JOHN J. TRENTIN, YOSHIRO YABE, and GRANT TAYLOR	
Observations on a Specific Adenovirus 12 Antigen in Virus-Free Adenovirus Tumor Transplants	564
R. J. HUEBNER, W. P. ROWE, and L. D. BERMAN	
Lymphoma in ICR Mice Treated with 4-Nitroquinoline N-Oxide (4-NQO)	571
R. KINOSITA and T. TANAKA	
"Newer" and "Older" Viruses in Mammalian Malignancy	580
MAURICE R. HILLEMANN	
A Children's Cancer Dependent on Environment	615
DENIS BURKITT	
The Role of Viruses in Relation to Cancer in Animals and Man	630
FRANK L. HORSFALL, JR.	
Index	643

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- H. L. FRAENKEL-CONRAT, Virus Laboratory, University of California, Berkeley, California
- W. HENLE, Research Department, The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
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- R. E. SHOPE, The Rockefeller Institute, New York, New York
- W. M. STANLEY, Virus Laboratory, University of California, Berkeley, California
- R. C. WILLIAMS, Virus Laboratory, University of California, Berkeley, California

Invited Discussants

In addition to the speakers invited to present formal papers at the Symposium and to take part in the discussions, the following individuals were invited as discussants.

- H. J. BENDIXEN, Statens Veterinære Serumlaboratorium, Copenhagen, Denmark
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Introduction

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In an attempt to distinguish between the realities and the hypotheses of viral infection as a cause of cancer, the program of this Seventeenth Annual Symposium on Fundamental Cancer Research will be concentrated upon the topic, "Viruses, Nucleic Acids, and Cancer."

There was one man who did much to crystallize earlier work on viruses, to expand and interpret observations on tumor viruses, and to keep alive research on oncogenic viruses during the years when the theory of viral carcinogenesis was in general disfavor throughout scientific communities of the world. Cancer research is indebted to the work of this man, the late Dr. Francisco Duran-Reynals. At least two major theories were introduced by Duran-Reynals. One theory was that the so-called ordinary viruses which induce inflammatory changes are implicated in neoplasia induced by chemical and hormonal carcinogens; another, that the so-called tumor viruses under certain conditions behave like ordinary viruses and induce inflammatory and destructive changes. Because of his brilliant and farsighted experimentation, his lucidity of thought, his logical approach to the problems of cancer research, and his awareness of the distinction between fact and theory, we respectfully dedicate this monograph to our colleague whom we were fortunate to have as participant in our 1957 symposium, the late Dr. Francisco Duran-Reynals.

The first virus-induced tumor described was avian leukosis, as noted in 1908 by Ellermann and Bang. In 1911, Rous reported that avian sarcoma was also of viral origin. The first virus to be obtained in a purified state was the tobacco mosaic agent, successfully isolated in 1935 by Stanley. The isolation of this virus and the ensuing contributions to the knowledge of viral chemical structure have greatly accelerated progress in virology. By 1940, Duran-Reynals had observed that newly hatched chicks could respond to the inoculation of sarcoma virus with a hemorrhagic type of lesion rather than by a neoplastic growth. Gross reported in 1951 that mouse leukemia could

be transmitted by cell-free filtrates injected into newborn mice of a susceptible strain. This fundamental discovery furnished a new incentive for studies on oncogenic viruses. Other pioneers in the discovery and analysis of oncogenic viruses have included Shope, Bittner, Dmochowski, Stewart, Eddy, Beard, Friend, Moloney, and many other researchers.

On the viral theory of carcinogenesis, the late Dr. Charles Oberling could correctly assert in 1944 that the only major disadvantage of the virus hypothesis was that it had not been proved. Between 1944 and 1963, such amazing advances have been made in virology, biochemistry, and related spheres that this statement would no longer be exact.

Parallel to the increasing interest in a possible viral etiology for certain neoplasms, our institution increased its research activities in this area. In a survey reported in 1951, Dr. William Russell summarized recent advances in the development of a viral theory of tumorigenesis, and indicated its potentialities. By 1955, our research program in virology and related fields had expanded sufficiently to allow the establishment of a Section of Virology and Electron Microscopy, headed by Dr. Dmochowski.

The topic of the eleventh in this series of symposia was "Viruses and Tumor Growth." At this 1957 meeting, fundamental discoveries in this rapidly developing area of cancer research were reported, many of them for the first time (Texas Rep. Biol. & Med. 15(3):1-378, Fall, 1957).

Cytochemical and electron microscopic studies have greatly contributed to our knowledge of the structure of viruses and malignant cells. At this institution, in the Section of Electron Microscopy, studies have been made in which the host-virus relationship in polyoma virus of mouse embryo cells was investigated by bright-field, phase, fluorescence, and electron microscopy. At our 1957 symposium, the presence of so-called viruslike particles in cytoplasmic inclusions of cells from the lymph nodes of a patient with acute lymphatic leukemia was first reported. This major contribution to virology was facilitated by electron microscopic techniques. Later, detailed tissue culture studies of human leukemia were also made. Phase-contrast and fluorescence microscopic examination showed that certain sequential, morphologic changes which eventually led to the destruction of the tissue cultures might be associated with a viral agent in the cells of lymph nodes from patients with leukemia or lymphoma. Electron microscope and tissue culture studies of cells derived from cancer eye lesions were also made. Results have suggested that a virus may be associated with bovine ocular squamous carcinoma and its benign precursor. Investigations, such as these, at the levels of fine cellular structure and biochemical interaction at the molecular level are now possible because of highly developed tools such as fluorescent antibody, radioactive tracer materials, and electron microscopy.

Nevertheless, the viral concept of oncogenesis, as it pertains to human cancer, still remains a "working hypothesis." Basic and unanswered questions still hamper access to an ultimate solution of the problem of human neoplasia.

- Do viruses cause all tumors and cancers in animals?
- Are viruses one of the indispensable factors in tumor development, or are they only occasionally one of many factors which are individually responsible for tumor induction?
- What is the chemical composition of tumor viruses, and the structure of oncogenic nucleic acids?
- After a virus or nucleic acid initiates tumor growth, is the presence of either of them in some form necessary for the continued growth of the neoplasm?
- How does the virus development take place?
- Do many or only some of the infectious viruses play a part in the origin of cancer in animals or in man?
- Above all, what and how much can we learn and apply to the problem of human neoplasia from the ever-increasing and fascinating knowledge in the field of bacterial, plant, insect, animal, and human viruses?

These are some of the questions that must be confronted. They are representative of some problems upon which much of cancer research today is focused.

In unnatural hosts, even such well-recognized oncogenic viruses as those of Rous sarcoma, Shope rabbit papilloma, and mouse parotid gland tumors yield tumors in which viruses can no longer be detected. Only the immune response occasionally remains to indicate the viral origin of the tumor. This phenomenon has been variously explained in terms of "masking" of the virus, or as variation in the quantity of active virus. This absence of detectable virus in tumors that are known to be virus-induced was reported by Rous and Murphy as early as 1914, but no definite solutions to the questions evoked by this observation have been forthcoming. However, this phenomenon, on the basis of experimental evidence available to date, could be attributed to a possible modified state of the virus, or, more likely, to the presence of its nucleic acid, at least for the Shope papilloma virus. Therefore, the biochemical aspect is not to be overlooked as a distinct possibility.

Polyoma virus has been shown to contain deoxyribonucleic acid, and infection of cell cultures and induction of hamster tumors with nucleic acid preparations have been reported by DiMayorca and his associates. The recent discovery by Ito that infectious or tumor-inducing nucleic acid can be extracted from rabbit papillomas from which the virus itself no longer can be obtained indicates perhaps one approach to the study of the hypothetical human cancer virus. These exciting discoveries pertaining to viral nucleic acid indicate the possible existence of an immature or incomplete virus-naked viral nucleic acid that is deficient or totally lacking in a protein component. In confirmation of Duran-Reynals' theories and experimental results, other infectious viruses have been shown to act as cocarcinogens, and as direct carcinogens in susceptible hosts, both *in vitro* and *in vivo*.

Exciting prospects are foreseeable in future studies on viruses, nucleic

acids, and their relationship to neoplastic processes. A group of proteins, known as interferon, that are capable of inhibiting viral growth are being analyzed to determine whether they can be utilized as antiviral therapeutic agents. Other researchers are attempting to demonstrate a possible parallel between oncogenic viral action and that of the temperate phages. In testing known human viruses for possible oncogenic properties, Trentin, Yabe, and Taylor have recently reported that tissue culture fluid of human adenovirus type 12, injected into hamsters within 24 hours after birth, induced a high incidence of malignant tumors at the injection site within one to three months. Other workers have demonstrated that human adenovirus type 18 has oncogenic activity in newborn hamsters. Further work is required to isolate and purify more oncogenic viruses, to study the epidemiology of human tumors, and to determine the chemical structure of the nucleic acid components of oncogenic viruses.

Viruses have been demonstrated in many hosts and systems, even in tissue cultures, that manifest malignant developments. In order to prove the viral theory of tumor induction, a virus must be regularly isolated, and shown to be proliferative and etiologically related to the tumor from which it has been isolated.

The facts, ideas, theories, and discussions presented at this symposium are intended to converge the various research disciplines upon a common goal . . . the solution of the human cancer problem.

STRUCTURE OF VIRUSES

