

8 October 2008

## **Chem-Bio News**

### **1. NIAID ANNOUNCES 25 NEW AWARDS TO DEVELOP RADIATION**

**COUNTERMEASURES:** *"The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), part of the National Institutes of Health, has awarded 25 new grants to develop new and better diagnostics and treatments for radiation exposure after a nuclear attack. Several of these grants were awarded under Project Bioshield Authority, legislation that enables NIAID within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to use a rapid award process to help stimulate research on medical countermeasures against chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) threats."*

### **2. CDC AWARDS \$10.9 MILLION FOR PREPAREDNESS RESEARCH CENTERS AT**

**SEVEN SCHOOLS OF PUBLIC HEALTH:** *"The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has awarded \$10.9 million to seven accredited schools of public health for the establishment of Preparedness and Emergency Response Research Centers (PERRCs)."*

### **3. EXPERT DISPUTES U.S. RADIATION DETECTION STRATEGY:**

*"A nuclear physicist has questioned the feasibility of programs to detect and intercept potential nuclear and radiological weapons materials as they move through U.S. entry points, Congressional Quarterly reported yesterday."*

### **4. USING HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM TO MAKE MEDICAL PRODUCTS POSES**

**DOUBLE RISK, EXPERTS WARN:** *"Relying on highly enriched uranium to produce medical isotopes leaves the United States vulnerable to acts of nuclear terrorism and a drastic shortage of one crucial material in coming years, experts warned yesterday."*

### **5. FBI CALL ON NAS TO STUDY ANTHRAX CASE:**

*"The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has provided the US National Academy of Sciences (NAS) with a list of 15 questions that it wants the academy to consider in its review of the scientific evidence in the FBI's case against Bruce Ivins, the US Army microbiologist implicated in the anthrax letter attacks of 2001."*

### **6. MYSTERY S.AFRICA KILLER DISEASE MAY BE CONGO FEVER:**

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## **CB Daily Report**

## **Chem-Bio News**

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### **NIAID ANNOUNCES 25 NEW AWARDS TO DEVELOP RADIATION COUNTERMEASURES**

NIH News

October 7, 2008

"The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), part of the National

Institutes of Health, has awarded 25 new grants to develop new and better diagnostics and treatments for radiation exposure after a nuclear attack. Several of these grants were awarded under Project BioShield Authority, legislation that enables NIAID within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to use a rapid award process to help stimulate research on medical countermeasures against chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) threats."

"Five investigators have received grants from NIAID, estimated to be up to \$4 million over 18 months, via the Project BioShield Authority rapid award program, to explore methods or treatments to enhance blood platelet regeneration after radiation exposure. The investigators awarded these grants are as follows:

- \* Amelia M. Bartholomew, M.D., University of Illinois at Chicago, IL
- \* George Georges, M.D. Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Seattle, WA
- \* Andrei V. Gudkov, Ph.D., Cleveland Biolabs, Inc., Buffalo, NY
- \* Holger Karsunky, Ph.D., Cellerant Therapeutics, Inc., San Carlos, CA
- \* Kathleen E. Rodgers, Ph.D., University of Southern California, Los Angeles

In addition to the Project BioShield awards, NIAID has funded 10 investigator-initiated grants focused on improving the diagnosis and treatment of individuals exposed to radiation. These five-year awards are estimated to be up to \$4 million for the first year. The recipients are as follows:

- \* R. Shane Addleman, D.Sc., Battelle Pacific Northwest Laboratories, Richland, WA
- \* Susan M. Bailey, Ph.D., Colorado State University, Fort Collins
- \* Tao Cheng, M.D., University of Pittsburgh at Pittsburgh, PA
- \* David G. Kirsch, M.D., Ph.D., Duke University, Durham, NC
- \* Andrei V. Gudkov, Ph.D., Roswell Park Cancer Institute Corporation, Buffalo, NY
- \* James Palis, M.D., University of Rochester, NY
- \* Amanda G. Paulovich, M.D., Ph.D., Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Seattle, WA
- \* Gabor J. Tigyi, M.D., Ph.D., University of Tennessee Health Science Center, Memphis
- \* Marcel R.M. van den Brink, M.D., Ph.D., Memorial Sloan-Kettering Institute for Cancer Research, New York, NY
- \* Daohong Zhou, M.D., Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston

A new area of investigation being supported by NIAID is "radiation combined injury." If a nuclear weapon attack were to occur in the United States, the wounded would also be expected to have other injuries such as burns, trauma or infections, in addition to radiation exposure. However, research in the area of radiation combined injury has been lacking.

The NIAID initiative will help stimulate research in the area of treating people with radiation combined injuries. Ten grants, estimated to be up to \$2 million over five years, have been awarded to the following investigators:

- \* Shyam Biswal, Ph.D., Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD
- \* Nelson J. Chao, M.D., Duke University, Durham, NC
- \* John R. Fike, Ph.D., University of California San Francisco

- \* M. Waleed Gaber, Ph.D., and Duane D. Miller, Ph.D., University of Tennessee Health Science Center, Memphis
- \* Juliann G. Kiang, Ph.D., Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute, Bethesda, MD
- \* Elizabeth J. Kovacs, Ph.D., Loyola University Chicago, IL
- \* James A. Lederer, Ph.D., Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston, MA
- \* David M. Rocke, Ph.D., and R. Rivkah Isseroff, M.D., University of California Davis
- \* Ping Wang, M.D., Feinstein Institute for Medical Research, Manhasset, NY
- \* Hartmut Weiler, Ph.D., Blood Center of Wisconsin, Incorporated, Milwaukee

Through these combined efforts, NIAID and HHS hope to accelerate the development of medical countermeasures against radiation exposure to help the public health community successfully protect and treat people in the event of a nuclear terrorist attack.

NIAID conducts and supports research — at NIH, throughout the United States, and worldwide — to study the causes of infectious and immune-mediated diseases, and to develop better means of preventing, diagnosing and treating these illnesses. News releases, fact sheets and other NIAID-related materials are available on the NIAID Web site at <http://www.niaid.nih.gov>.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) — The Nation's Medical Research Agency — includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is the primary federal agency for conducting and supporting basic, clinical and translational medical research, and it investigates the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit [www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov). Award descriptions can be found on the NIAID Web site under "Expired Opportunities"

<http://www3.niaid.nih.gov/research/topics/radnuc/funding/expiredOpportunities.htm>"

The full article can be found at: <http://www.nih.gov/news/health/oct2008/niaid-07.htm>

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## **CDC AWARDS \$10.9 MILLION FOR PREPAREDNESS RESEARCH CENTERS AT SEVEN SCHOOLS OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention News Release  
October 6, 2008

"The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has awarded \$10.9 million to seven accredited schools of public health for the establishment of Preparedness and Emergency Response Research Centers (PERRCs). The seven schools will conduct research that will evaluate the structure, capabilities, and performance of public health systems for preparedness and emergency response activities."

"The seven schools receiving funding and their research priorities are:

- \* Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia - Create and Maintain Sustainable Preparedness and

Response Systems, \$1,562,676

\* Harvard School of Public Health, Boston, Massachusetts - Generate Criteria and Metrics to Measure Effectiveness and Efficiency, \$1,717,286

\* Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland - Preparedness to Address the Risks of Vulnerable Populations, \$1,495,398

\* University of Minnesota, Minneapolis - Enhance the Usefulness of Training, \$1,470,307

\* University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill - Create and Maintain Sustainable Preparedness and Response Systems, \$1,695,189

\* University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania - Create and Maintain Sustainable Preparedness and Response Systems and Generate Criteria and Metrics to Measure Effectiveness and Efficiency, \$1,701,845

\* University of Washington, Seattle, Washington - Improve Communications in Preparedness and Response, \$1,270,632"

The full article can be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/media/pressrel/2008/r081006.htm>

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## **EXPERT DISPUTES U.S. RADIATION DETECTION STRATEGY**

Global Security Newswire

October 8, 2008

"A nuclear physicist has questioned the feasibility of programs to detect and intercept potential nuclear and radiological weapons materials as they move through U.S. entry points, Congressional Quarterly reported yesterday (see GSN, Sept. 4).

The Homeland Security Department could better use its financial, political and scientific resources to end the production, use and storage of highly enriched uranium, a material that can be detonated in a nuclear weapon, said Thomas Cochran of the Natural Resources Defense Council (see related GSN stories, today)."

"Cochran touted the ability of current technology to detect radiation sources, but warned that "these detectors as well as the newer [Advanced Spectroscopic Portal monitors] do not reliably detect highly enriched uranium. If the threat has the wherewithal to develop an improved nuclear explosive device out of HEU, the same threat would have the wherewithal to defeat those systems almost 100 percent of the time, even if they were guaranteed to be screened."

The full article can be found at: [http://www.nti.org/d\\_newswire/issues/2008\\_10\\_7.html](http://www.nti.org/d_newswire/issues/2008_10_7.html)

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## **USING HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM TO MAKE MEDICAL PRODUCTS POSES DOUBLE RISK, EXPERTS WARN**

By Chris Schneidmiller

Global Security Newswire  
October 8, 2008

"Relying on highly enriched uranium to produce medical isotopes leaves the United States vulnerable to acts of nuclear terrorism and a drastic shortage of one crucial material in coming years, experts warned yesterday (see GSN, June 19, 2006).

As there is no reasonable alternative to using technetium 99m for a widespread cardiac diagnostic test, the answer to these risks lies in employing facilities that produce the nuclear isomer without also creating a proliferation threat, they argued.

Four non-U.S. companies use highly enriched uranium to produce 95 percent of the global supply of technetium 99m, said Andrew Einstein, a clinical medicine professor at Columbia University in New York.

The United States each year sends 20 kilograms of weapon-grade uranium to a reactor at Chalk River, Ontario, where it is used to create much of the U.S. supply of technetium. The problem is that the waste produced through this work retains 95 percent of the original highly enriched uranium, creating the danger that it could be put to bad uses in the wrong hands.

There are increasing signs that terrorist organizations hope to use an improvised nuclear weapon, said Cristina Hansell, director of the Newly Independent States Nonproliferation Program at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies. Their intent is to craft a devastating weapon rather than a less-lethal radiological "dirty bomb," she said."

The full article can be found at: [http://www.nti.org/d\\_newswire/issues/2008\\_10\\_7.html](http://www.nti.org/d_newswire/issues/2008_10_7.html)

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## **FBI CALL ON NAS TO STUDY ANTHRAX CASE**

Physics Today.org  
October 6, 2008

"The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has provided the US National Academy of Sciences (NAS) with a list of 15 questions that it wants the academy to consider in its review of the scientific evidence in the FBI's case against Bruce Ivins, the US Army microbiologist implicated in the anthrax letter attacks of 2001. Besides asking whether the genomic analysis carried out to trace the source of the anthrax was valid, the questions address aspects such as the source of silicon found in the spores and whether the attacker needed specialized equipment to grind the spores into an easily dispersible powder."

The full article can be found at: [http://blogs.physicstoday.org/newspicks/2008/10/fbi\\_call\\_on\\_nas\\_to\\_study\\_anthr.html](http://blogs.physicstoday.org/newspicks/2008/10/fbi_call_on_nas_to_study_anthr.html)

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## MYSTERY S.AFRICA KILLER DISEASE MAY BE CONGO FEVER

By Michael Georgy

Reuters

"A mystery disease that has killed three people in South Africa and put medical authorities on high alert may be Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever, a health official said on Tuesday.

"We suspect that it may be Congo hemorrhagic fever but we have not made a diagnosis yet," Frew Benson, the South African Health Department's deputy director of communicable diseases, told Reuters. South African health officials said they were closely monitoring the illness, which causes external and internal bleeding, but called on the public not to panic. There were no signs it was airborne.

Officials said on Tuesday they were observing a total of 111 people who had come into contact with the deceased patients."

The full article can be found at: <http://africa.reuters.com/wire/news/usnL7247963.html>

ANALYST NOTE: This item follows up an article reported in the 6 October 2008 CB Daily, "Africa On Alert After Fatal Bleeding Sickness."

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