

# Funding for possible AIDS vaccine sparks discussion

By Stephanie Greer  
Staff Writer

A potential vaccine for AIDS recently received a \$20 million appropriation from Congress to fund human testing of the drug.

The vaccine, gp160, is designed to produce more antibodies in those who already are infected with the AIDS virus, said Dr. Mervyn Silverman, president of the American Foundation for AIDS Research.

"It looks like this may be a helpful vaccine — it is supposed to treat people

who already have AIDS instead of prevent it," Silverman said.

Silverman said that although there were significant amount of AIDS drugs and vaccines being developed, there were no AIDS drugs or vaccines other than gp160 that have been developed sufficiently to be tested on this level.

The vaccine has been tested at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., for approximately two years, only for its safety in humans, said Virginia Stephanakis, public affairs officer for the U.S. Surgeon General's Office.

The results of the recent studies of gp160 were published in the June 1991 issue of the New England Journal of Medicine.

"The initial results are encouraging," Stephanakis said.

Although the vaccine has not shown any harmful side effects for humans yet, the Army believes that it is not ready for a large-scale human testing of gp160, said Maj. Rick Thomas, an Army spokesperson.

"It is the Army's opinion that it is premature for (more in-depth) phase three testing because we're still in the middle of our studies... we don't want to try gp160 on humans before the studies have been completed and analyzed," Thomas said.

Thomas said the Army did not ask for funding for additional research.

"The Department of Defense was not

aware of the provision. We were not consulted about it," said Susan Hansen, a public affairs official with the Department of Defense.

Controversy has developed as a result of the methods by which the drug received congressional funding.

The new funding for the drug comes about as the result of lobbying on behalf of MicroGeneSys, a Connecticut-based firm that produced the vaccine, Silverman said.

"People are upset because of the process by which the vaccine is getting funded," Silverman said.

"We certainly want politicians to provide sufficient funds for research, but we want the scientists and researchers to direct where it goes," he said.

Silverman stressed that he was encouraged with the development of a new vaccine but that his disagreement

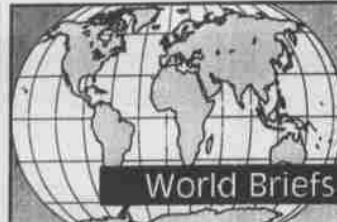
was with the method by which the drug received funding.

Silverman said he thought that MicroGeneSys pushed the appropriation for testing through Congress purely for economic reasons.

In six months, the secretary of defense, the commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration and the director of the National Institute of Health might be obligated to submit to Congress an assessment of gp160, Thomas said.

The Army is not required to test gp160 immediately, he said.

"I think the key is that right now, we've got no intention that doesn't comply with FDA regulations," Thomas said. "We're proud of our AIDS research program; at the same time, the protocols of the review process are important and are there for a reason."



## Six injured in three London bomb blasts

LONDON — Three explosions rocked London Wednesday, injuring six people. One of the blasts hit a rail line an hour after the Irish Republican Army complained that police had ignored its warning that a bomb had been placed there.

The first blast at 4:43 p.m. damaged a standing train in north London, injuring three passengers.

Authorities had not closed the rail line before the explosion, although an IRA statement more than an hour earlier said the bomb was on the bridge.

Three other people were injured in a second explosion four hours later near the Territorial Army's Princess Louise Barracks in west London, police said.

The IRA — an urban guerrilla organization fighting to drive the British from Northern Ireland — said in a statement issued to a news agency in Dublin at about 3:30 p.m.: "In spite of repeated phone calls to a number of London radio stations, British police have made no effort to act on authenticated warnings that our volunteers have left a bomb on the rail line at Four Bridges, on the North Circular Road, London."

A third explosion hit a railroad line at Willesden junction in north London, but there were no casualties, the fire brigade said.

## South Africa rejects political amnesty bill

CAPETOWN, South Africa — Parliament on Wednesday rejected a bill pardoning people accused of political crimes, with one legislator saying the law would protect "crooks, criminals and assassins."

President F.W. de Klerk said he would try to force the bill into law by sending it to the President's Council. His comment set the stage for a confrontation with the African National Congress and other opposition groups.

The 60-member advisory body, dominated by de Klerk's National Party, could recommend that he override Parliament by signing the bill.

The law does not define a political crime but gives each person applying for amnesty the opportunity to argue that his offense was motivated politically.

The bill could apply to ANC members who planted bombs, as well as to security officials who tortured or killed anti-apartheid activists or detainees and to right-wing militants accused of bombing black schools.

It calls for a government-appointed commission to hear each person's case in private. Much of the opposition to the bill arose because those granted indemnity would have their crimes kept secret.

— The Associated Press

# Pope, Wicker debate turns ugly

The Associated Press

RALEIGH — The race for North Carolina lieutenant governor, already filled with personal attacks, has turned even nastier.

Republican Art Pope and Democrat

Dennis Wicker clashed repeatedly and heatedly Tuesday, especially about recent hard-hitting TV ads aired by each of the campaigns.

The candidates were so upset at the end of the hour-long forum hosted by the Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce that they refused to shake hands, The Charlotte Observer reported.

They differed on taxes, education policy, a veto for the governor and economic development strategy, among other subjects.

But they clashed most about the TV ads they started airing last week.

Pope's ad says that Wicker voted last year for a \$650 million tax increase and against a bill to make all murders of law officers subject to the death penalty.

Wicker responded with an ad accus-

ing Pope of lying. Wicker says Pope unfairly implies Wicker opposes the death penalty.

Pope, a two-term House member from Wake County, rejected the liar label applied to him in Wicker's commercial.

"Is that what this campaign's come down to? Rather than debate the issues and defend your voting record, have personal attacks and call someone a liar?" Pope asked during the debate.

Wicker, a six-term House member from Lee County, responded: "... I feel very strongly that I had to do that, and I'm going to continue to do it so long as he continues to distort and lie about my record."

Both candidates are scheduled to appear before the North Carolina League of Municipalities next Monday.



Art Pope



Dennis Wicker

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