
NEWS BRIEFS

IOM Brain Symposium Features Developments in Cerebral Imaging

During a symposium sponsored by The Institute of Medicine (IOM) and the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) — designed to highlight research efforts directed against mental, neurologic, and addictive disorders — Marcus E. Raichle, MD, professor of neurology and radiation science, Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Missouri, discussed the evolution and current status of functional brain imaging and its relationship to battling mental illnesses.

Dr. Raichle's presentation, based on an article entitled "Exploring the Mind with Dynamic Imaging" — which is expected to be published in October in *Seminars in the Neurosciences* — dealt with how techniques of positron emission tomography (PET) can be used to describe and map the modular organization of the human brain and how it can measure changes in local cerebral blood flow and relate those changes in neuronal activity to mental behavior. He added that continued progress in the field of brain blood flow research, aided by modern imaging techniques, "will provide a rational basis for the understanding and treatment of some of man's most devastating diseases."

The symposium, held July 18-19 in the National Academy of Sciences auditorium in Washington, DC, inaugurated a program evolving from a congressional resolution that designated the 1990s as the "Decade of the Brain." Those in attendance included Senator Pete Domenici (D-NM) and Congressman Silvio Conte (R-MA), two of the principal proponents behind the "Decade of the Brain" proclamation. Dominick P. Purpura, MD, dean

of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, in New York City, who presented an overview of current activities in the field of cerebral research, told *Newsline*, "we hope we convinced the politicians and legislators in attendance to approve more Federal funding for brain research."

According to the NIMH, mental illnesses afflict 50 million Americans and cost the nation \$305 billion annually in treatment, rehabilitation, and lost productivity. The symposium was held to foster private and public sector alliance to expand the nationwide brain research effort and to stimulate research on methods to diagnose and treat the most common and debilitating mental disorders. ■

NRC Seeks Data on Impact of Lower Dose Limits

In light of the Reports of the fifth Biological Effects of Ionizing Radiation (BEIR) Committee and the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR), released in 1989 and 1988, respectively, the National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements (NCRP) is reviewing its dose limit recommendations. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission may, in turn, revise its exposure standards after reviewing the NCRP recommendations. To help determine how tightened standards would impact nuclear medicine and related fields, the NRC has asked researchers at Brookhaven National Laboratory in Upton, New York to develop a questionnaire for medical users of ionizing radiation. For further information or

to obtain the questionnaire, contact: Charles B. Meinhold, Radiological Sciences Division, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Building 703M, Upton, NY 11973; 516-282-4425, 516-282-5810 (Fax). ■

DOE Awards SNM Member for Lifetime Achievement

The Department of Energy (DOE) has conferred its prestigious Distinguished Associate Award to prominent radiation researcher, Victor P. Bond, MD, senior scientist in the medical department of Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL) and long-time member of The Society of Nuclear Medicine.

In ceremonies held in BNL's Upton, New York site on May 2, Dr. Bond, who has been associated with the Laboratory since 1955, was honored by the DOE for "outstanding leadership and scientific vision in radiation biology and biophysics" and was cited for "his research accomplishments, insight, and dedicated service, [which have] substantially advanced the scientific basis for radiation protection." David Galas, associate director of DOE's office of health and environmental research, presented the Award to Dr. Bond in recognition of his contributions to radiation research.

Dr. Bond's research activities focus on the development of a new method to evaluate low-level radiation exposure that is based on energy deposited in the genome rather than on an average force over the entire tissue or organ. "All cancers have their origin in a single cell," explains Dr. Bond. "Rather than study the dosage imparted over a million cells, my approach seeks to examine the individual cell from which the disease or cancer originates." ■