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Iodine-131 Characteristics

TO THE EDITOR: I have a right to expect that writers, editors and especially reviewers of articles about contamination from ^{131}I would know the characteristics of the nuclide. When ^{131}I decays, about 0.7% becomes ^{131m}Xe. Seven-tenth percent is a negligible amount of the usual dose of ^{131}I, but when Ibis and Beierwaltes talk about gigabecquerels, that tiny amount becomes many megabecquerels of a heavy gas with a 12-day half-life. This medium-energy level gamma-emitting gas is not easily confined in open air space. Thus, when an ^{131m}Xe patient's handlers are "tested for contamination" by measuring their thyroid uptakes, I expect nuclear medics, especially Beierwaltes, to know that the thyroid will be silent. Only moronic NRC inspectors want the thyroid tested for ^{131m}Xe.

I published this decay data in 1968 but learned about it before 1950 from people who published it following the first "failure" of the Hanford reactor in 1944. That is almost a half century ago. Please tell your reviewers that sometimes a decay product of a nuclide is also radioactive. That fact was published by Rutherford in 1898, almost a hundred years ago. Do you people know that there is a very good library down the road from your office?

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