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(Tear here)
This month Cancer Research cites the events leading to the identification of a possible etiological agent of certain malignant lymphoproliferative diseases in immunodeficient patients. The contributions of three groups have pointed toward Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) as being associated with lymphomagenesis. Gatti and Good [Cancer (Phila.), 28: 89, 1971] had noted an enormous increase in risk of malignant lymphoproliferative disorders in congenitally immunodeficient persons. Similar findings of increased risk of lymphoma and also cancers of skin and uterine cervix were reported earlier in immunosuppressed renal transplant patients by Starzl and Penn et al. (Transplant. Rev., 7: 112, 1971).

In 1969, the proband depicted on the cover had succumbed to EBV-induced infectious mononucleosis as had his brothers in 1960 and 1973. Maternally related cousins developed agammaglobulinemia and two half-brothers developed malignant lymphoma following infectious mononucleosis in 1965 and 1973. Purtilo and colleagues (Lancet, 1: 935, 1975) recognized that six boys in the Duncan family had possibly succumbed to EBV-induced lymphoproliferative diseases. They had postulated that an immunodeficiency to EBV due to the X-linked lymphoproliferative syndrome had allowed EBV to induce the diseases.

Subsequent studies, summarized in this issue, implicate EBV, a B-cell lymphotropic virus, as an etiological agent in a variety of lymphoproliferative diseases in immunodeficient patients, in addition to those seen in the Duncan kindred.

Thomas E. Starzl was born in 1926 and received his M.D. and Ph.D. degrees from Northwestern University. He has been Professor and Chairman of the Department of Surgery at the University of Colorado Medical School since 1972. Recently, he moved to the University of Pittsburgh Medical School.

Israel Penn was born in 1930 and received his medical degree from Witswatersrand University. He is a Professor of Surgery and has developed a tumor registry in transplant recipients at the University of Colorado School of Medicine.

Richard A. Gatti was born in 1937 and received his M.D. from St. Louis University School of Medicine. He pursued postdoctoral immunobiology studies with Robert A. Good in Minneapolis. He continues his research on genetic susceptibility to cancer at the University of California at Los Angeles where he is Professor of Pediatrics.

Robert A. Good was born in 1922 and received his Ph.D. and M.D. degrees from the University of Minnesota Medical School. There he has pioneered in the study of immunodeficiency diseases. In 1973, he moved to Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center.

George Klein, M.D., D.Sci., was born in 1925 and became Professor of Tumor Biology at the Karolinska Institute. During the ensuing two decades, he has contributed substantially to the immunobiology of EBV and its relationship to diseases in human beings.

David T. Purtilo was born in 1939, received his M.D. from Northwestern University, and trained in pathology in Boston and Minneapolis. He is Professor and Chairman of the Department of Pathology at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

Pictured are the Duncan brothers and their pedigree. The six investigators are pictured left to right in the order in which they are mentioned in this legend. We are indebted to the Duncan family for the picture and to Dr. Purtilo for the information.