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Notre Dame, Indiana 46556

Department of Microbiology

May 21, 1971

Hobund Laboratory

Dr. Joshua Lederberg  
Department of Genetics  
Stanford University  
Stanford, California

Dear Dr. Lederberg:

I read with great interest your thought-provoking column in Current Topics of May 5, 1971 on the subject of "Cancer Cure."

We have been much impressed with results of aging studies in our germfree and conventionalized rats. We have arbitrarily killed germfree rats at ages beyond two years and they show neither lesions of aging nor of malignant neoplasms. The conventionalized control rats usually die by age 18 months and they show the above lesions. We have interpreted the data as evidence of pathogenic factors in the environment which have been excluded by the germfree system. This is further supported by the induction of malignant neoplasms in germfree rats by sterile carcinogenic agents (x-rays, methylcholanthrene, DMBA), and the development of degenerative lesions by dietary deficiencies and by x-rays. Actually, we do not know how long germfree rats will live, nor what they will eventually die of. In general, this supports your view that preventive measures will provide more immediate benefits to man than are now evident in the area of therapy.

With cordial regards,

Sincerely,

*No answer necessary*

*Morris Pollard*  
Morris Pollard  
Director