



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH
BETHESDA, MARYLAND 20014

August 21, 1975

Dr. Robert M. Baer
Metadata Corporation
P.O. Box 746
Mill Valley, California 94941

Dear Dr. Baer:

In response to your letter of July 29, 1975, regarding your interests in the SUMEX-AIM program, we can provide the following information.

With respect to your request for a complete list of projects in the area of AIM which have received Federal support, we do not have this information except in a general way for the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Even in the case of NIH support the information is of uncertain value because of the wide variety of research activities that have at least a peripheral relationship to AIM, a subject which is variably defined by different scientific interests.

The complexity of the matter of NIH support for AIM is shown by the data on the enclosed computer printout listing (prepared by the NIH Division of Research Grants) of all currently active PHS grant- and contract-supported research involving artificial intelligence. We hope that this information may be useful to you in your planned teaching program. Information on support for AIM research by Federal agencies other than the PHS may be obtained from the Smithsonian Institution Science Information Exchange, 1730 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. (telephone: AC 202: 381-5511).

With respect to your question regarding the decision of the SUMEX-AIM Executive Committee, on the recommendation of the SUMEX-AIM Scientific Advisory Committee, that the program for hypertension analysis/treatment at the Oakland Naval Regional Medical Center did not qualify for access to the facility, there is nothing we can add to the voluminous correspondence over the past several months between you, Dr. Wallin, Dr. Lederberg, Dr. Levinthal, Dr. Lindberg, and Dr. Brewer, especially Dr. Lederberg's letter to you of July 2, 1975. We concur with this decision for the reasons previously communicated to you.

BAER, R.

With respect to your question about the use of the SUMEX-AIM resource for studies of "organic compounds (chemistry) and protein structure" (the DENDRAL program), support for these studies was requested in the original SUMEX-AIM grant application to the NIH, and was specifically reviewed and recommended for approval by the Study Section and the Council. The inclusion of support for DENDRAL did not need or seek review and approval from Dr. Lederberg or his staff or the Advisory and Executive Committees.

Your reference to "while an actual AIM project is excluded" presumably refers to the decision mentioned above that the proposal by you and Dr. Wallin did not meet eligibility requirements. We can only repeat that this proposal as submitted was given thorough consideration and found not to meet the requirements. Dr. Lederberg has suggested that if you believe the request submitted by Dr. Wallin and you for access to the SUMEX-AIM resource could be more completely and effectively described, you are welcome to submit a revised request for reconsideration. To be successfully considered, all of the information asked for in the questionnaire for prospective users of SUMEX-AIM sent to you by Dr. Elliott Levinthal on January 17, 1975, would have to be submitted; and the proposal would have to meet the stated guidelines. It must be understood that SUMEX-AIM is a research program for the development of new theory and methodology in AIM. It cannot provide support for on-going test programs in patient-care regimens or for disc storage capacity for large data bases. The data storage capacity is totally required for AIM research per se.

With regard to documented decisions, no verbatim transcripts of the discussions of the Advisory and Executive Committees have been made. No considerations other than those previously communicated to you and Dr. Wallin in several letters were involved.

In conclusion, we quote with our full concurrence the second paragraph of Dr. Lederberg's letter of July 2, 1975, to you: "I am sure you realize that it is impossible for us to sustain an indefinite dialogue or we will have time for no other activity. I can assure you that your application was dealt with with very great care and in full accordance with our established procedures."

We trust that this response will meet your needs.

Sincerely yours,

James F. O'Donnell, Ph.D.
Acting Chief
Biotechnology Resources Branch
Division of Research Resources

bcc: ✓ Dr. Joshua Lederberg
Dr. Donald A. B. Lindberg