

January 19, 1953

Dear Dr. Duran-Reynals:

Thank you for your letter of the 16th. I am sorry if my comment was confusing— perhaps because I am not entirely clear myself. I have gotten the impression from conversations with various people that you had found fowl pox virus to be closely associated with tumor viruses under special, obscure circumstances. I have not been able to follow your work as closely as I would like, and for just this reason am looking forward to your promised reprints.

The suggestion that I was trying to put forward was that, in certain situations, latent viruses having no special relationship to tumors might acquire a tumor-inducing capacity by the very fact of their growth in neoplastic cells. On this basis, the tumor change would be intrinsic to the cell, but might also be transmitted by viruses growing in these cells. This would be comparable in its way to genetic transduction in bacteria. Its only virtue is that it would possibly help to unify the somatic mutation and virus induction facts and theories of carcinogenesis. I do not know whether any existing data would justify this notion. If the tumor viruses can be grown in indifferent host cells (e.g. embryonic tissues) and retain their carcinogenic potency, this would tend against the theory. On the other hand, it might be worth while to try growing various viruses on tumor cells from which a transmissible agent cannot ordinarily be extracted.

  
Yours sincerely,

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