

# MEMORANDUM

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE  
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE  
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

TO : Dr. Harold Varmus

DATE: May 20, 1974

FROM : Dr. Robert Huebner

SUBJECT: MS. - Detection of new and additional virus-specific DNA sequences in chick embryo fibroblasts after infection by RSV.

This is a very interesting, useful and significant contribution. I think what most needs to be determined is, what is RSV? It's been around 50+ years, is certainly a recombinant, and like AMV according to Rubin, a mixture of several ALV phenotypes (RIF-1, 2, etc.). I would suggest making DNA probes from natural ALV's isolated from RIF-free colonies. Both ecotropic and xenotropic viruses are certainly present and/or activatable. RSV and MSV have not turned up in large numbers of sarcomas in chickens and mice in my 10 years of extensive surveys for natural sarcoma viruses. There has never been one epidemic of sarcoma in any species. Existing RSV and MSV lab strains are laboratory-created artifacts and could not represent faithfully natural virus or viral genomes in natural host cells. There are almost as many variants of RSV and MSV as there are investigators working with them.