

MEDICAL and SCIENTIFIC
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National Multiple Sclerosis Society

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An Association for the Advancement of Research in Multiple Sclerosis

March 5, 1956

Dr. Viktor Hamburger
Chairman, Department of Zoology
Washington University
St. Louis 5, Missouri

Dear Dr. Hamburger:

Our scientific advisers have urged that we start a sub-program of our regular research grants program, in which we endeavor to give out small sums of money, no more than \$2,500 each, for a period of one year. Further, they have urged us to develop a mechanism so that these requests can be handled as swiftly as possible, with a minimum of delay. I did not need much urging in this regard and perhaps might have been guilty of sowing a little seed myself. I would like to develop a procedure whereby we could receive and process these requests and notify the senders within no more than two months. The enclosed is the tenth such request we have received, and we know that many others are on the way.

I am writing you this letter in order to get your good advice and suggestions as to how this type of program should be administered (lately many scientists have strongly urged that we not compose, for this purpose, a detailed, structured application, such as I am used to in the USPHS). The disadvantages of an unstructured application can be noted in the attached material. We can, however, provide our applicants with considerable advice as to what types of studies we hope to support. I am going to ask you, as a special favor, to write us a recommendation concerning whether or not we should support the attached study and request that you feel perfectly free to turn this matter over to one of your staff members for review, if you feel that one of your people has a particular interest or competence in this field.

Our advisers hoped by this small grant procedure to stimulate new thinking and new research leads in our field. I have heard for a long period of time, even before I came with the Society, that the greatest lack in this field was new ideas concerning demyelinating disease or any of the processes fundamental to this pathology. Also great stress has been put upon the fact that we have little data concerning the development or metabolism of normal myelin in any of the standard experimental animals. Therefore, we hope to establish, stimulate and support preliminary or "pre-project" exploratory studies, which may develop into larger studies and perhaps open new fields of investigation. Admittedly, these studies will

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have to be of a very fundamental nature - this follows almost without saying. This program, to be successful, should not support the fringe or tag ends of already supported work. These funds should not be used to supplement a study which is already being supported by an agency, unless supplementation is for an associated but clearly divergent study. Our advisers have been unanimous in their discussions that we will be taking big gambles and that we will have to bet entirely on the man and his training. However, we feel that any returns that will develop will be worth the effort and worth the gambles.

With this rather long preamble, will you kindly give us your advice relative to the need expressed by the attached letter form application, and the advisability of making the award with respect to our program aims, as somewhat lengthily expressed above.

Please return the application with your reply.

Sincerely yours,

Frederick L. Stone

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