Hello Volunteers!

Here it is, the first AVRC newsletter of the millennium. Indeed, the coming year(s) hold a great deal of promise for research and new drug/vaccine developments. Hopefully, an HIV vaccine will be one of these! This issue of the AVRC newsletter contains updates on our studies, some news from Dr. Mulligan himself, as well as useful information about the recent events taking place around the AVRC@UAB. As I said in the last issue…sit back, relax, and enjoy!

-Jonathan Cothran

May 18th Marks National AIDS Vaccine Awareness Day

The third anniversary of President Clinton’s challenge to Americans is fast approaching. It was on this day in 1997 that the President gave a speech reminiscent of JFK, issuing a challenge to all Americans to “commit ourselves to developing an AIDS vaccine within the next decade.” This day has been set aside in order to recognize the volunteers who have contributed to AIDS vaccine research, and to highlight research efforts currently under investigation. Watch for our media coverage!

A letter from our Principal Investigator, Dr. Mark Mulligan:

Dear Volunteers…

Thanks to you, progress in human trials of vaccines for diseases of young people is being made in small but steady steps. Over 350 vaccine volunteers at UAB have rolled up their sleeves to help fight HIV or HPV.

You all know that HIV is the virus that causes the disease AIDS. But what is HPV? …human papilloma virus (HPV) is the virus that causes cancer of the uterine cervix in women. We recently began a new study of an HPV vaccine to prevent cervical cancer in women. Dr. Paul Goepfert (Assistant Professor; Medical Director, AVRC@UAB) is principal investigator for the study, which is currently enrolling women aged 18-30. Volunteers are needed now…hear our radio ads on 107.7 the X, and 95.7. Come on ladies!

The VaxGen trial, with 125 UAB volunteers – out of 5,000 nationally – continues. This is the first phase III/efficacy trial ever performed for any HIV vaccine…to find out if this particular vaccine works. Most of our UAB volunteers are about 1 year into this 3-year study. Thanks for the great turnout!

We have renamed our vaccine clinic the Alabama Vaccine Research Clinic at UAB (AVRC@UAB). The new name reflects our broadened scope of activities: industry as well as government-sponsored vaccine trials; HIV as well as other diseases (e.g., HPV and cervical cancer) targeted in the vaccine trials.

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In the next newsletter I’ll update you about the canarypox HIV vaccine trials sponsored by the government (currently recruiting, hear our radio ads on 103.7 the Q, and 107.7 the X), the new DNA HIV vaccine trial sponsored by Merck, Inc. (to begin soon), the activities of our vaccine laboratory, and the fate of our application to become one of only ten government HIV vaccine clinics for the next five years...we should hear soon...keep your fingers crossed.

Best Regards, Mark J. Mulligan, MD  
(Principal Investigator, AVRC@UAB)

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S.A.V.E. Community Partners

We’ve started a brand new program here at the AVRC@UAB. Because we understand the need for community support, we knew we had to figure out a way to get the Birmingham community itself involved in our research efforts. That’s why we created S.A.V.E. Partners. S.A.V.E. stands for “Supporting Alabama’s Vaccine Efforts”, and these businesses are doing just that. Our Partners have given us their moral support, which is much more important than financial support could ever be. By becoming our Partner, these businesses have made a public statement, saying that they believe in the research we’re doing. It is our hope that people who may be skeptical about our research will see businesses they respect and patronize as Partners. This will break down some of the initial feelings that a person may have that would prevent them from investigating our studies further.

What are our goals?

- **Promote** awareness of the research being undertaken right here in OUR community!
- **Educate** the community about vaccine research!
- **Motivate** the community to participate!
- **Encourage** our community’s commitment to fighting disease!

A special thanks goes to our current S.A.V.E. Partners:

For information on how businesses can become a S.A.V.E. Partner, or to suggest one you think we should approach, please Call Jonathan at 975-2843. Thanks!
Web Crazy???

Check us out on the Internet! Our web page is: http://www.uab.edu/avrc. The site is still in the process of being updated, but it’s got some great information and some useful links as well.

Current Events Being Sponsored by the AVRC:

The AVRC@UAB, in its attempt to recruit a wide variety of volunteers and to enhance community outreach, is contributing to several city and statewide events. In addition to a strong presence at this year’s Southern Shootout softball tournament, we’re corporate sponsors of Rites of Spring and Pride 2000. Stop by and see us if you’re there, we’d love to talk to you! Besides, we also have brand new t-shirts available to AVRC volunteers…even more incentive for you to come out and participate!

Clinic Updates – Current Studies

**MedImmune:** As previously mentioned, this is the AVRC@UAB’s first non-HIV trial. We’ve been very successful at recruiting potential volunteers, however our job isn’t finished yet! If you or someone you know is a healthy female, between the ages of 18 and 30, call Jonathan at 975-2843 to schedule an appointment or get more information.

**AVEG 203:** This is our second Phase II trial! This very, very important trial involves a canarypox vaccine and we need volunteers of each sex, all races, and every sexual orientation! If you have any friends that you think might be interested, pass them Jonathan’s number: 975-2843. We need your help—tell your friends!

Don’t Forget!

National AIDS Vaccine Day is…

May 18th

We’ll be issuing a series of press releases and video interviews of high-ranking AIDS vaccine development/political figures. Be sure to keep an eye out!
National AVEG Meeting –
Washington, D.C.

The Staff of UAB’s AVRC will be attending the last national meeting of the AIDS Vaccine Evaluation Group in May 2000. Our summer newsletter will contain highlights of this meeting. Representatives from our Community Advisory Board will also be in attendance.

Alaska AIDS Vaccine Ride

As previously mentioned in our last newsletter, one of our AVRC team members, Jonathan Cothran, is going to be participating in the Alaska AIDS Vaccine Ride. He’ll be riding 510 miles, from Fairbanks to Anchorage in order to raise money and awareness for AIDS vaccine research. If you’d like to help by offering either your moral or monetary support, please call him at 975-2843, or email him at jcothran@uab.edu.

Did you know?

The AVRC@UAB is starting its seventh year of HIV vaccine clinical trials!

Comments? Questions?

Your input is invaluable, so please, if there is anything you’d like to find out more about, or if there’s any input you’d like to give us, please contact us below.

Jonathan Cothran, Res. Spec.........975-2843
Susan Duncan, Clinic Coord...........975-2840
Billy Tingle, Nurse Coord.............975-2841
Catrena Johnson, Nurse Coord.......975-2842
Peter Bonventre, Nurse Coord........975-2839

Have a great SPRING!

From,

Your Friends At the Alabama Vaccine Research Clinic @ UAB