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Volunteers needed for flu drug experiments at medical school

By ANDREA VALLS
Six hundred healthy student volunteers are needed to participate in a nine-week experiment conducted by the Texas A&M Medical School on the prevention of Russian Flu, said Dr. John Quarles, a virologist for the medical school.

Quarles said Monday the compensation for participation in the experiment is approximately \$30. The volunteer must be 18-24 year old and in good health with no acute or chronic disease or disorder. He or she may not be under any medication at the time of the experiment and women may not be pregnant.

The two drugs being studied are amantadine and rimantadine, said Quarles. Amantadine is a commercially available medicine (trade name Symmetrel) recommended for prevention of Russian Flu. Rimantadine is a closely-related experimental drug which is reported to be more effective in flu prevention than amantadine.

"The procedure for interested students is fairly simple," said Quarles. Each volunteer will take two capsules per day, one in the morning and one at night for about six weeks. The capsule will contain either amantadine, rimantadine or will be a placebo (no active medicine). The experiment will be double blind, said Quarles, therefore neither the student or the researchers will know which type of capsule they are receiving.

Three blood samples, each 20 milliliters (1.5 tablespoons), will be collected from the volunteer's arm during the experiment to determine if adequate concentrations of drug are in their systems, he said.

Each volunteer must also complete a weekly form to indicate that they have had no illness and are continuing to take the capsules regularly, said Quarles.

If any illness or unusual symptoms develop during the study, the volunteer should report to the University Health Center so the cause can be evaluated. If the illness resembles the flu, a throat swab for viral culture

will be taken, and the capsules will be stopped if the symptoms are due to the medication, said Quarles.

Some discomforts may result from the experiment, said Quarles. For example, amantadine and rimantadine may have slight side effects, such as depression or drowsiness. Another discomfort may be from the three veinpunctures for blood samples, he said.

Quarles said student participants who receive amantadine or rimantadine are expected to have a 50 percent or greater reduction in the likelihood of contracting the Russian Flu virus while taking the capsules. He added that Russian Flu usually lasts only three to four days.

The main benefit expected from this experiment, said Quarles, is to further the development and use of

medicine effective in preventing influenza A virus infection. Texas A&M Medical School is conducting the experiment in conjunction with Dr. Robert Quarles, Director of Beutler Health Center at Baylor College of Medicine, and Dr. Charles Director of Beutler Health Center. Quarles said any records in the study will be confidential and any presentation of results will identify the volunteer.

Students interested in participating in the experiment should contact Heldenfelds Hall, Room 101, one of the following times:

Wed., March 1 - 12:00 p.m.
Thurs., March 2 - 10:00 a.m.
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Play presented despite obscenity controversy

United Press International
NEW ORLEANS — The play "Oh, Calcutta!", which includes 20 minutes of nudity, waits to be presented in one Louisiana city Tuesday night, but a prosecutor still hopes to halt the production further down the road.

The Louisiana Supreme Court ruled 5-2 Monday the play could be presented in Lake Charles, La., Tuesday night. The product on is scheduled to swing into Chalmette, La., a New Orleans suburb, for a three-night stand beginning today.

The court overturned a decision by state District Judge Ward Fontenot of Lake Charles who said the play was obscene by city standards. But the Supreme Court reversed

Fontenot's decision because the judge failed to see the play.

"Apparently the Supreme Court is going to make the right decision," said Bernard L. Livadas, a St. Bernard parish attorney. He said he would appeal the judge hearing the challenge would attend the play in Lake Charles.

"The next best thing would be to see it Wednesday night in Bernard Parish and then next two nights," said Livadas.

The play, seen in Lake Charles, includes about 20 minutes of nudity. Producer Dyle said the show was not obscene because it contained no sexual activity.

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