

Toxin new fighter in cancer battle

United Press International
DALLAS — A research team at the Southwestern Medical School reports it has discovered a poison successful in treating leukemia cells in mice and thinks the same treatment may be used on humans.

The researchers said the poison ricin, chemically attached to a cancer seeking antibody, has killed 99.9 percent of the tumor cells in mice with leukemia.

"We found a mouse antibody that would react with tumor cells, but not the stem cells that manufacture the white blood cells, which are part of the immune system," Dr. Ellen Vitetta said.

"To that antibody, we attached a form of the plant toxin ricin. The antibody killed only the cancer cells and not the normal stem cells in bone marrow. We know that we killed 99.9 percent of the tumor cells because none of the mice had developed tumors several months

later. It may work in cancer therapy because the human and mouse leukemias are similar."

Vitetta worked with Drs. Jonathon Uhr and Keith Krolic. The three reported on the procedure in the scientific journal Nature, released Thursday.

"This is a major step forward" in the use of bone marrow transplants in cancer patients, Vitetta said. "It could prove to be a large improvement in the existing techniques," she said.

The risk in bone marrow transplants has been the inability to detect all cancer cells in a patient. Cancer cells left in the patient after the transplant can begin multiplying, spreading the leukemia again.

But Vitetta said the ricin compound developed at Southwestern could be an effective treatment for attacking the undetected cancer cells.

Ricin, derived from the castor bean, is a deadly poison. One droplet can kill a man, the researchers said.

Wrecked train spills deadly acid

United Press International
SHREVEPORT, La. — More than 10,000 gallons of deadly sulfuric acid leaked from five tank cars in a 26-car train derailment and forced the shutdown of gas pipelines to three industrial plants, officials said Thursday.

A fire department spokesman said workers toiled through the night to right two of the tank cars that slipped off the track

Wednesday, spilling the toxic chemical into a nearby ravine.

The spokesman said pipelines leading to the General Motors plant, the Atlas Processing complex and the Libbey Glass facility were shut down. Plant spokesmen said, however, the curtailment would not affect their operations.

Five tank cars of a Missouri Pacific freight train started leaking sulfuric acid after they de-

railed in the southeast part of the city, Fire Chief Dallas Green said.

One of the cars was carrying 20,000 gallons of the toxic substance and about half that load

poured out after the train derailed, he said. Approximately 100 gallons of the chemical leaked from the other four tank cars.

No one was injured in the

accident.

Crews worked to upright the derailed freight cars and officials on the scene predicted the cleanup would last through today.

Threats to inmates cause trial delay

United Press International
GALVESTON — Nine Texas prison inmates reportedly have been threatened not to testify about prison conditions during the trial of an inmate who confessed he killed his warden and another official in self-defense.

Although they have been offered protective orders, it was not known whether the first of 41 subpoenaed inmates would testify Thursday in the how to capital murder trial of inmate Brown.

Brown, 31, of Waco, is on trial for the April 4 drowning of Texas Department of Corrections Ellis unit Warden Wallace Billy Max Moore, 49, also killed that day, but Brown has not been scheduled for trial that slaying.

Defense attorneys have subpoenaed 41 inmates to testify about conditions at the Ellis Unit and hopefully shore up Brown's case because he feared they would be killed if they testified in a secured area of the unit called "The Bottoms."

A snag developed in defense attorneys Wednesday afternoon shortly before Defense Attorney Craig Washington planned to call the first of the inmates to testify.

Neither Washington, Walker County District Attorney Mark Ward nor Judge Henry Dalehite would disclose why the judge called the nine inmates into his chambers for individual meetings and sent home the jury.

However, a source close to the judge said the inmates were unwilling to testify because they had been threatened by TDC officials or other inmates.

The judge reportedly offered protective orders — to hold TDC in contempt if anything happened to the witnesses. Some reportedly accepted, but others requested transfer to federal custody — which Dalehite said he could not guarantee.

During testimony Wednesday, Brown appeared to sob while blaming Pack for the struggle leading to the warden's drowning in a drainage ditch.

"He kept on wanting to fight," Brown told the seven-man, five-woman jury. "I begged and pleaded with him. He just kept on."

Brown seemed to withstand cross-examination by Ward.

Brown stuck to his self-defense explanation, although Ward managed to reiterate his argument Brown committed the slayings in a rage over a denied furlough and planned to try to escape in Pack's car.

Brown has testified Pack and Moore threatened him with drowning at "The Bottoms" on the Trinity River and Pack held a cocked .38-caliber pistol to Brown's head, threatening to "Spatter your brains."

Brown, dramatically acting out his testimony under the leadership of Washington, said he tried to talk his way out of trouble, but struggled with the prison officials when that failed.

Brown said the whole incident began because Moore apparently feared Brown might reveal Moore's theft of tires and fuel from TDC. Prison officials deny such thefts occurred.

Brown testified both Moore and Pack had a reputation for violence against inmates.

TDC officials deny the claims.

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Olympic Academy may pick Lubbock

United Press International
LUBBOCK — Texas Tech University is one of four schools being considered to host the 1983 meeting of the United States Olympic Academy, university officials report.

A three-member selection committee will inspect Texas Tech facilities Monday as part of a four-school inspection tour, officials said Wednesday.

Other schools under consideration are Georgia State University in Atlanta, Ga., Frostburg State College in Frostburg, Md., and James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Va.

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