

WORLD HEALTH
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DE LA SANTÉEXECUTIVE BOARD

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WORLD INFLUENZA CENTRE

1. The memorandum sent to governments in August 1948, with the object of obtaining international collaboration in the field of influenza was very favourably received. 29 countries have already selected a laboratory to serve as regional centre or have designated observers.
2. The State Serum Institute at Copenhagen has prepared and sent to the Centre, antigens and reference sera for use in the haemagglutinin and complement-fixation tests; samples of these have been distributed to 13 co-operating regional laboratories.
3. Dr. C.M. Chu, who is attached to the World Centre, is now in a position to train in influenza techniques small numbers of visiting workers who intend to collaborate in regional laboratories elsewhere. Dr. Chu has been using a modified complement-fixation technique in an endeavour to clarify the serological relationships amongst influenza strains from various sources. He has already obtained evidence that A strains from outbreaks in the United States of America, Great Britain, Holland and Sweden in 1947 and from Australia in 1946 are antigenically closely related and different from at least the majority of strains isolated in previous years.
4. The influenza outbreak which originated in Sardinia in October 1948 has given the first practical test of the value of the Centre. Professor Carlinfanti (Naples), the observer appointed for Italy, reported that while virus B had been identified in Northern Italy, the agent causing the bulk of the epidemic was obscure.

An expert visited the Pasteur Institute, Paris, on 13 January 1949, on behalf of the Centre and the British Ministry of Health, and returned with throat washings from three French cases and sera. Influenza virus was isolated from both cases. Virus was received by air from Italy on January 14. Shortly after, two strains were obtained from Professor

