



Dr. Ram Yogev, director of the pediatric HIV/AIDS program at Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago, examines a former foster child who is now adopted. (AP photo)

AIDS Drugs Tested on Foster Kids Care exposes vulnerable children

(AP) - To gain access to hundreds of HIV-infected foster children, federally funded researchers promised in writing to provide an independent advocate to safeguard the kids' well-being as they tested potent AIDS drugs. But most of the time, that special protection never materialized, an Associated Press review has found.

The research funded by the National Institutes of Health spanned the country. It was most widespread in the 1990s as foster care agencies sought treatments for their HIV-infected children that weren't yet available in the marketplace. The practice ensured that foster children - mostly poor or minority - received care from world-class researchers at government expense, slowing their rate of death and extending their lives. But it also exposed a vulnerable population to the risks of medical research and drugs that were known to have serious side effects in adults and for which the safety for children was unknown.

The research was conducted in

at least seven states - Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, New York, North Carolina, Colorado and Texas - and involved more than four dozen different studies. The foster children ranged from infants to late teens, according to interviews and government records.

Several studies that enlisted foster children reported that patients suffered side effects such as rashes, vomiting and sharp drops in infection-fighting blood cells, and one reported a "disturbing" higher death rate among children who took higher doses of a drug, records show.

Some foster children died during studies, but state or city agencies said they could find no records that any deaths were directly caused by experimental treatments.

Those who made the decisions say the research gave foster kids access to drugs they otherwise couldn't get. And they say they protected the children's interest by carefully explaining risks and benefits to state guardians, foster parents and the children themselves.



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Police Shooting Tragedy Recalled

Kendra James, the unarmed African American woman killed by police while trying to flee a traffic stop, was remembered Thursday. Among the group marking the two-year anniversary of the tragedy on the North Skidmore I-5 overpass was Perlia Bell (from left), a mother whose daughter was killed by gun violence; community activist Vesia Loving and Huey Martin. The local activism following James' death brought about some policy changes in the Portland Police Bureau.

Insurgents Increase Fight on U.S. Forces

Violent attacks spiral in Iraq

(AP) - U.S. forces hunting down followers of Iraq's most wanted terrorist pushed into a lawless region near the Syrian border Tuesday after meeting unexpected resistance from insurgents hidden in remote desert outposts

along the southern banks of the Euphrates River.

Marines fought house-to-house Monday against dozens of well-armed insurgents firing at them from balconies, rooftops and sand-bagged bunkers in the border town of Obeidi and surrounding villages, the Los Angeles Times reported.

As many as 100 militants have been killed since Operation Mator, one of the largest American



An injured child is rushed to a hospital Tuesday, after a car bomb exploded in central Baghdad, killing at least seven people and wounding 16. (AP photo)

offensives in Iraq in six months, began Saturday night in Qaim, 200 miles west of Baghdad, the military said.

At least three U.S. Marines have been killed in the offensive, which involves more than 1,000 Marines, sailors and soldiers backed by helicopter gunships and fighter jets.

A Los Angeles Times reporter embedded with U.S. forces said 20 American troops were wounded, but the U.S. military could not im-

mediately confirm that.

Gunmen, meanwhile, kidnapped the governor of Iraq's western Anbar province Tuesday and told his family he would be released when U.S. forces withdraw from Qaim, relatives said.

The offensive comes amid a surge of militant attacks across Iraq, often targeting security forces and civilians.

Two car bombs killed seven in Baghdad on Tuesday.

Chemical Blast Injures Three

Three people suffered minor injuries in an early morning explosion Monday at a chemical plant near the Columbia River in north Portland.

The explosion at Lacamas Laboratories Inc. occurred at about 4:15 a.m. sending shock waves and a loud boom through adjacent neighborhoods. Investigators suspect a 500-gallon tank caused the blast.

The plant makes intermediate chemicals for pharmaceutical

companies.

The residents of a nearby houseboat community were asked to stay indoors with the windows closed, but not evacuated. About 200 workers at a nearby Nordstrom warehouse were evacuated following the explosion.

The Coast Guard and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality were assisting fire crews to evaluate potential contamination.

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