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Kayahiko Wada, right, a member of the news interpreter who accompanied Wada.

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# Effects of Radioactive Fallout Still Appear Among Islanders

A significant number of Marshall Islanders are only now—11 1/2 years later—beginning to show thyroid gland damage after being accidentally by dropped, with radioactive fallout from an American H-bomb, test in the Pacific.

The finding of latent damage, according to the Government doctor in charge of treating the islanders, for thyroid damage, means that atomic experts now must re-view upwards: their estimates of the hazard from short-lived radioactive debris. This is the kind of fallout, such as radioactive iodine, that occurs mostly near an atomic blast and gets into the human body through food and drink.

Moreover, said Dr. Robert Conrad in a telephone interview, there is some evidence that thyroid damage to the gland might also be the cause of an observed illness among some of the islanders exposed to the fallout. Dr. Conrad is the leader of a medical survey team that

communities between Brookes, Long Island and Rongelap. The island's most recent report to the Atomic Energy Commission is being circulated this week to members of the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy. What this report shows is this: Between March and October of this year 10 new cases

been found among the 500 people to follow in the first week of March, 1964. This group of 50 islanders, natives who show thyroid gland abnormalities.

Most of the abnormalities are thought to be benign in nature. But at least one has turned out to be cancer of the thyroid gland. Significantly, in a control group of Rongelap natives who escaped the 1964 fallout—including some near relatives of those not as lucky—there had been no evidence of thyroid disease.

Six of the thyroid victims here undergo successful operations. Three, with benign tumors, underwent surgery at the U.S. Naval Hospital on Guam in 1964. Three other

Dr. Conrad said he was hopeful that additional cases of thyroid tumors among the islanders can be averted through treatment with a thyroid hormone. He is believed the hormone can arrest the development of the tumor and possibly even cause their regression.

The Brookhaven medical scientist also is anxious to learn whether the hormone

in the relationship between radiation, damaged thyroids, and the retarded growth seen among some of the exposed children.

In Dr. Conrad's view, the emphasis hitherto given, to the immediate and external effects of radiation, now must be balanced with a new emphasis on the latent, internal effects that can be caused by radioactive materials, such as radioactive iodine, that get into the body. Radioiodine selectively concentrates in the thyroid gland.

The Rongelap findings reported this week to the Joint Committee follow a U.S. Public Health Service report last week of a tenuous link between fallout in Utah and Arizona and the incidence of suspicious thyroid nodules or small lumps, among children there.

The Utah report, actually a preliminary report of a support medical study, is drawing heavy criticism from other Government agencies. The critics point out that there was no real agreement among the non-thyroid experts who performed the physical examinations. There is virtually no data from other areas for judging the Utah-Arizona findings. And many of the children examined were born after most of the fallout fell.

The Rongelap report is being circulated, too, at a time when France is preparing an atmospheric test of an H-bomb in the Pacific over the vigorous protests of islanders there.

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