

E-Coli

Throbbing Gristle

The scientists have been experimenting with ... transplanted genes. The bacteria, E. coli They create the hybrid recombinant DNA in the E. coli bacteria. E. coli multiplies very rapidly. ... The work ... Imperial College, if he was allowed to go ahead, would mean that E. coli bacteria would be created with the ability to create castrated mice. The worry is that it might create castrated humans. ...

The argument ... capability to transfer information, which would interfere with the process pieces of DNA would look very similar ...

What for? I say that they feel the benefit of developing ... cause infection one chance in a hundred, which is almost nothing. A more realistic figure than that would be one chance...in a million. But in fact, we stuck with the one chance in a hundred. Now if you combine that with that, we get the chance that that laboratory worker ... It should be carefully noted that the strain of E. coli with which we work is the laboratory strain ... is extremely sick, very attenuated, is generally incapable of growing outside the laboratory environment. And the strain of E. coli which is known for being ... are very different from the strains we work with in the lab. And it's not just the laboratory strain that's actually incapable of ... human beings ... Uh, so in general...the bacteria we work with are very unlike each other growing in the outside environment

Even less likely that they will survive outside of a carefully controlled laboratory environment. Almost everywhere the danger ... Eventually, something goes wrong. Uh, the green monkey disease didn't get out, of course, but it certainly infected one of the people working there. In the last ten years, there have been, uh, half a dozen incidents in which either people have become infected and therefore been taken to the hospital, and led to a situation in which an organism could or- could have got out, or in fact there's a situation where one did get out. I don't think that it's possible to accurately assess I know that some people have tried this, and ... possible and ... calculations...come out with some kind of a number. As far as I'm concerned, that number is not reliable...the number of assumptions that enter the calculation are large, um, and indeed, some of the assumptions are...unknown. Perhaps the largest, most important factor is the, um, the human factor, which cannot be assessed. Uh, try to put a probability, a number, on an accident, I think is virtually impossible. Um...one can make a strain of bacteria ... foreign DNA, in places where there normally would not be. Uh, some of these strains are going to be viable. They're going to ..., and they're going to, uh, therefore, by definition

, introduce a new species to the, uh, bacterial world. Perhaps the viral world, and maybe even the animal world....and the plant kingdom as well. Um...I would therefore think that, uh, for example, if a ... in the bacterial world, uh, it would be a process which probably could not be stopped, because, uh, as you know, E. coli is an organism ..., an actual contaminant in the environment. And you introduced new forms of it ... the same evolutionary pattern. There would be...no way of reversing this without having to exterminate all E. coli on the planet. Uh, which would bring other kinds of catastrophies; E. coli is a natural and necessary contaminant of our Uh, my personal belief is that we do not have the wisdom to improve on nature. I think that history shows that, whenever man has tampered with the natural environment, it has done nothing but ruin ... face of the world. We should not be playing god. That's not a religious statement, and it's not personal one; we're just not smart enough

...And anyway many of the experiments will be done with strains of the E. coli which we have purposefully genetically engineered within the laboratory to make them even less likely to be able to survive outside of a carefully controlled laboratory environment. Almost everywhere...