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**News**  
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\*\*\*Diabetes lab celebrates 3,000th  
glucagon run.

DALLAS--The staff in Dr. Roger Unger's laboratory at Veterans Administration Medical Center celebrated their 3,000th run of plasma glucagon with lunch at the Adolphus Grill Aug. 2.

With each run containing duplicate samples of 150 to 200 tests, the total number of samples analyzed approaches one million. Unger is sure his lab holds the world's record for glucagon assay, which was the second radioimmunoassay to be developed.

Most of the tests are done for animal studies although many are done for patients -- insulin and somatostatin as well as glucagon. Since this UT Health Science Center lab developed the glucagon radioimmunoassay in 1958, many other medical centers all over the world send their samples here to be tested.

Guests at the lunch were Virginia Harris, chief technician and senior research associate; Kay McCorkle, research associate; Loretta Clendenen, research technician; Helen Gibson, research assistant; Lovie Peace, research technician; Daniel Sandlin, technician; Susan Kennedy, administrative assistant; Dr. Akitaka Hisatomi and Dr. Achim Starke, fellows in Internal Medicine.

But the glucagon radioimmunoassay story cannot be told without mentioning the health science center's most famous rabbit -- 30K. More than half the tests done have been done with her serum.

Although other rabbits produced antibodies to glucagon, 30K's seems to have the highest concentration (0.004 teaspoon does 2,000 blood tests), it has the highest affinity for glucagon (being able to detect a very small amount) and it is very specific in attaching to the C-terminal part of the glucagon molecule. Most other antibodies attach to parts of the molecule that are like other compounds, yielding a false test result if the sample contains any of these other compounds.

That's the reason that sales of 30K's serum have been sufficient to support more than 25 post-doctoral fellows in diabetes research and have paid for a lot of needed supplies for the diabetes lab during the past 12 years. Today 20 microliters (about 0.004 teaspoon) of serum bring \$250 although 30K has been dead for 10 years.

Harris estimates that the lab has enough of 30K's serum to last another year and a half. In the meantime, Rabbit 04A has developed glucagon antibodies that are at least as good as 30K's so the lab is still set to continue glucagon testing into the millions.

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