

CONFIDENTIAL

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Epi - Belcher

Date February 11, 1988  
To Russell Luepker and Henry Blackburn  
From John Belcher JB  
Subject Ivan Frantz and Kanta Kuba

It has become increasingly apparent that Ivan and Kanta are unwilling to fully integrate the operations of the former LRC laboratory into Epidemiology. They continue to make unilateral decisions without the consultation of Russell, Dean or myself. Specific instances include failure to move Wendy Lawrence (secretary) and the laboratory's IBM microcomputer into the provided office space within Epidemiology after repeated requests to do so since last October. Trips to the Centers for Disease Control and New Jersey (for new instrument training) for both Ivan and Kanta without consulting me. Continued harassment of Dean Surbey over financial matters. They continue to keep track of the LRC finances separately from the BELRC account and present these reports at BELRC committee meetings. They have accused Dean of stealing money from the laboratory equipment fund (that they feel somehow belongs to them) to purchase an autosampler for nicotine/cotinine analysis.

Perhaps most frustrating of all is the inability to separate Kanta and Ivan. They are like two little puppies in love that follow each other everywhere they go. They are not capable of working independently within the lab. Kanta is under the complete control of Ivan and vice versa. In addition, Kanta always seems to have a reason for why she doesn't think something can be done - "I have never done it that way before" or "It just can't be done". I do not like negative attitudes. When I assign a task to somebody I expect it to get done the best way that person knows how. My requests for action get an okay we'll do it - but it either doesn't get done or it takes an excruciatingly long time and usually it takes several repeated requests. They have repeatedly delayed moving all of the KE laboratory to Epidemiology because "we're more comfortable up here". This has resulted in a terrible inefficiency for laboratory personnel who have to make many trips between KE and Unit A. In addition, it maintains the "us and them" attitude that seems to pervade their thinking.

A quote from Ivan at one of our weekly lab meetings after I suggested we give Myron Gross some technician time sums up their attitude best: In a whining voice he says, "You just can't do that to us, we've taken an awful beating since we came over here."

These are my recommendations:

- 1) We tell Ivan it is time to completely step down. Our original agreement was that when he was asked to step down, he would do so. This divorce must be as complete as possible. He is not likely to do this

unless it is firmly and clearly stated what this means.

- a) He has no input or say in the operations of the lab.
- b) He is not to make any work requests from any of our employees especially Kanta or Wendy.
- c) He is not to work in the lab.
- d) He is to refer all internal and external laboratory business and contacts such as CDC to myself, i.e. he is not to represent the lab in any official or unofficial manner.
- e) All laboratory equipment, data books and operations are to move out of the KE lab into Epi.
- f) He will not draw any salary from the lab.

2) In return we will offer him limited secretarial support for the typing of manuscripts and letters. All work requests must go to Kathy Ramel, not Wendy.

3) Kanta should not be fired at this point in time. We should give her one more chance to convert. It might be much easier to control her with Ivan out of the picture. This has several advantages:

- a) She might quit anyway and this would be preferable from our point of view to firing her.
- b) If she doesn't quit, she would be valuable in the post-Ivan transition in terms of training new people to perform the reference cholesterol method (see implications below) and maintaining quality control.
- c) I see either of these two scenarios as a win win situation.
- d) She can always be fired at a later date if she doesn't conform.

4) Kanta should receive a strong warning from both of you to integrate into the new lab structure. It needs to be made clear to her that Ivan will no longer be involved with the lab and that she will be expected to follow my explicit instructions in a timely and professional manner. No more foot dragging. She is not in charge of the lab. Her job will be to supervise employees specified by me. Those employees' job duties will be decided by me not her. Her job is to implement my policies not hers. In addition to supervision, she will be given other job duties by me-no more free-lancing.

#### Implications

Quality control will not suffer if both of them leave. QC is routinely monitored by the technicians performing the measurements. Kanta or Ivan are only involved in correcting a recurrent QC problem. I am perfectly capable of dealing with any problems that might arise.

The only area that might be a problem initially will be the reference cholesterol method. Ivan and Kanta every 3 months make several pools of serum and measure the

cholesterol values ten times with the Abell Kendall reference procedure to establish a target or reference cholesterol value for each pool. These pools are then packaged and shipped to a small number of laboratories for use as reference material. Nobody in the lab has ever been allowed to participate in this measurement except Ivan and Kanta. We use CDC supplied standards to monitor our QC, so the loss of this service would not harm the lab QC in any way. However, if you feel it is an important service for our lab I could research this further. This is the primary area where Kanta could ease the transition.

I hope this note has enlightened you enough to better understand the laboratory situation. I don't think we should put this off for very long. I'm not looking forward to it, but it has been a long time coming. You can bet it won't be easy to retire a man as honorable (or is that onere) and proud as Ivan - please be gentle.

cc: Dean Surbey