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\$5,000 FROM HOFFMANN-LA ROCHE TO UM
FOR DEVELOPMENT OF BLOOD TEST

MISSOULA---

The University of Montana in Missoula has received a \$5,000 grant from Hoffmann-La Roche Inc., a medical and chemical firm, for a six-month study to determine the feasibility of converting a skin test for gonorrhea into a simple blood test for the disease.

Dr. Walter L. Koostra, an assistant professor of microbiology at UM who is director of the study, will utilize blood samples from a number of local medical sources during the project, which will continue until Oct. 1 in University laboratories.

Koostra said an advantage of a gonorrheal blood test compared with the skin test is that blood taken from a patient can be treated at will, whereas the substance used in the skin test must undergo rigorous testing before it can be used on individual patients.

"Also, the gonorrheal blood test can be combined with a well known blood test for syphilis from the same blood sample," Koostra said.

Commenting on the comparative advantages of various test results, Koostra said: "While the results of a blood test are almost immediate, the results of a skin test usually aren't known for about two days, which may represent a considerable delay in the start of medical treatment. Also, when a patient sees the results of a skin test he may decide not to return to the doctor for needed medical treatment."

Koostra said the gonorrheal blood test will have to meet at least two requirements in order to be valuable medically--it must measure only the presence or absence of gonorrhea and it must be simple and economical.

The grant to the University is being administered through the University of Montana Foundation. Hoffmann-La Roche Inc. has international headquarters in Basel, Switzerland, and U.S. facilities in Nutley, N.J.