

Seattle school to study 1918 flu virus

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University of Washington scientists will use monkeys to study genes preserved from the deadly 1918 influenza virus that killed more than 50 million people.

David Anderson, acting director of the UW's Regional Primate Research Center where the genes are to be tested, told the Seattle Times threats of pandemic flu and bioterrorism have generated many grants from the federal government for research in the field.

Scientists hope their research will result in development of vaccines and medications against the most lethal forms of influenza.

Nearly \$5 million, most of it from the National Institutes of Health, is being spent to upgrade the UW's Primate Center in Belltown, Wash., to make it safer for the 1918 flu-virus work.

University officials said the lab could also be used to test anthrax or tularemia vaccines, which would be used to combat bioterrorism.

The UW is collaborating with other institutions in a five-year study of the 1918 virus, the Times said. The genes were constructed after studies of 1918 flu-virus particles salvaged from the bodies of World War I soldiers and an exhumed Alaska resident.

The "Spanish Flu" pandemic killed an estimated 650,000 Americans and up to 50 million worldwide.

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