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## Was the Nuclear Blast Just an Accident or a Provocation?

**N Square Collaborative** | *A joint effort by N Square, an initiative to stimulate nuclear disarmament, created five plausible scenarios set in the year 2045 for reaching the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons. These stories offer events that change attitudes toward the use of such weapons, but each one hints at a darker possibility. Here begins one such scenario:*

To this day, people still argue if it was really an accident. More than a decade later, after the cleanup, after the resettlements, after the lawsuits and arrests and assassination attempts, it still isn't known with certainty whether the nuclear weapon that went off in Jammu-Kashmir was just a horrible accident or an even more horrible provocation.

Weighing in on the side of "accident" was the political context: the relationship **NUCLEAR**, continued on page 2

## Tuskegee Study's Terrible Toll Is Found to Be Much Steeper

**The Atlantic** | The Tuskegee Study is perhaps the most enduring wound in American health science. Known officially as the Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis in the Negro Male, the 40-year experiment run by Public Health Service officials followed 600 rural black men in Alabama with syphilis over the course of their lives, refusing to tell patients their diagnosis, refusing to treat them for the debilitating disease, and actively denying some of them treatment. Whistleblowers brought an end to the incredibly unethical study in 1972, finally prompting the development of what would become modern medical ethics. But the lives of those black men and many of their families were mostly ruined; many men died from complications of syphilis, and several of their wives and children contracted the disease.

Research has long suggested that the **TUSKEGEE**, continued on page 3

## Video | The Older Woman and the Sea

In the pitch-black night, stung by jellyfish and choking on salt water, Diana Nyad kept moving through the ocean. Her goal was to finish a 100-mile swim from Cuba to Florida in August 2013 at age 64. **Watch as she tells her story.**



Steven Lippman

## Women Are Up Against a 20-Week Abortion Clock

**Elle Magazine** | Lynae feels a wave of nausea at the scent of baking bread drifting from a Subway she passes on her way to the hospital clinic. Still, it's no match for the excitement she feels from the stirring in her belly. When she arrives at the clinic, she's met by her husband, Paul. (Lynae and Paul asked that we use only their first names.) They lock hands **BAN**, continued on page 2

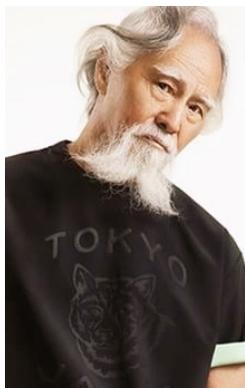
## Research Clears 'Patient Zero' in How AIDS Epidemic Started

**NPR** | It's one of the biggest medical mysteries of our time: How did HIV come to the U.S.?

By genetically sequencing samples from people infected early on, scientists say they have figured out when and where the virus that took hold here first arrived. In the process, they have exonerated the man accused of triggering the epidemic in **'PATIENT ZERO'**, continued on page 3



### QUOTE-WORTHY



"One way to tell if you're old or not is to ask yourself, 'Do you dare try something you've never done before?'"

**-Wang Deshun (left), 80, model; China's "hottest grandpa"**

"This is not a hard problem to solve. We didn't have a heroin crisis before OxyContin started being handed out like candy."

**-Vermont Gov. Peter Shumlin, on his proposal to limit opioid prescriptions**

"The success rate [is] astonishing. What we're not seeing is where PrEP is needed and that is in higher risk communities."

**-Alan McCord, director of HIV advocacy group**



The blast in the N Square scenario, which took place in the Jammu-Kashmir region, was followed by evacuations, riots and assassination attempts. Photo: U.S. Dept. of Defense

## NUCLEAR, continued

between India and Pakistan in 2027 was calm, even if still very frosty.

The cycle of saber-rattling and semimobilization over disputed regions was at its low point, and neither military was prepared for an attack (as demonstrated in the immediate aftermath of the warhead explosion: there was so much confusion in the early moments that neither Islamabad nor Delhi went on full military alert for nearly 30 minutes). The global press started screaming about “nuclear terrorism” almost instantly, along with some online claiming that the region was hit by a large meteorite, but neither Delhi nor Islamabad had anything concrete to say in the immediate aftermath.

It was only when the radiation sensors started going crazy that the reality of the situation took hold.

Early estimates that the explosion was in the 10–20 kiloton range were more-or-less correct (the current analysis says that it was a 12.3kt blast), centered in the downtown of the state’s capital city, Jammu. The urban center was largely destroyed, and because of the mountainous terrain channeling the blast the immediate effects could be felt in Sialkot, Pakistan, about 20 miles away. It’s believed that around 40,000 people died in the initial explosion, with nearly a million showing signs today of being physically

affected by the event; almost a hundred thousand people more lost their lives in the ensuing days due to panicked evacuations and riots. The number of people still suffering psychologically from the Jammu Disaster, of course, is far greater.

That neither India nor Pakistan took

## There was so much confusion in the early moments after the blast that neither Islamabad nor Delhi went on full military alert for nearly 30 minutes.

this crisis as a trigger to declare war is notable, the result of decades of communication building as well as a very real fear of what would ensue.

The U.S., Russia, and China immediately pressed the two nations to show restraint, but evidence suggests that neither set of leaders had any stomach for a conflict, nuclear or otherwise, especially as images of the catastrophe started coming in.

**Read** this scenario and others, get **information** on the size of nuclear arsenals by country, and learn **more** about disarmament. ■

## BAN, continued

and sit amid the hum of the waiting room, making bets on their baby’s gender. Lynae, then 34, wants a boy; Paul, then 32, suspects it’s another girl—a sister for their daughter Avery, then 2. Lynae is here for her 20-week ultrasound, the moment when many expectant parents learn the gender of their child. Finally, she’s called.

Lynae lies on the examining table, feeling giddy as the ultrasound technician squeezes jelly onto her swollen belly. Her ears perk up at the thump of a heartbeat. She and Paul have their eyes fixed on the monitor: head, arms, legs, stomach—their first glimpse of their future child.

The sonographer moves down for the reveal. It’s a girl. They look at each other and laugh.

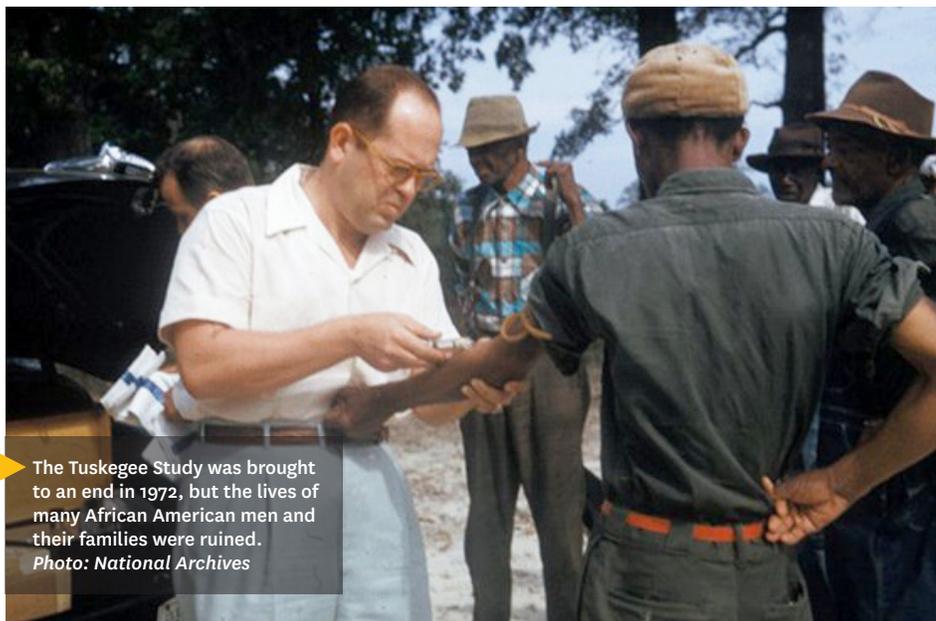
Fifteen minutes into the ultrasound, the technician lingers around the baby’s head.\* She’s having trouble getting a measurement and calls for help. The couple exchange reassuring smiles. The second tech enters; she has a stern demeanor and quickly takes over. She asks if they had any preliminary genetic testing. “Of course,” Lynae replies. “Everything was normal.” Panic crawls into Lynae’s chest. The first tech attempts to calm her, saying the hospital does longer ultrasounds these days.

Certain abnormalities in pregnancy can’t be detected until an ultrasound is done, usually at 18 to 20 weeks. But with a growing number of states banning abortions after 20 weeks, women who learn of potentially fatal anomalies are up against a clock, with an ever-narrowing window of time to consider all their options. Read the **story, more** on screenings, and go to a **chart** showing later-term abortion policies, by state. ■



## Who We Are

Hollywood, Health & Society, a program of the USC Annenberg Norman Lear Center, is a free resource for writers working on storylines about health, climate change, and safety and security. Our funders, past and present, include the CDC, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, N Square, The Aileen Getty Foundation and The SCAN Foundation.



The Tuskegee Study was brought to an end in 1972, but the lives of many African American men and their families were ruined.  
Photo: National Archives

## TUSKEGEE, continued

ill effects of the Tuskegee Study extend beyond those men and their families to the greater whole of black culture. Black patients consistently express less trust in their physicians and the medical system than white patients, are more likely to believe medical conspiracies, and are much less likely to have common, positive experiences in health-care settings. These have all been connected to misgivings among black patients about Tuskegee and America's long history of real medical exploitation of black people.

A new paper details the real health effects that the Tuskegee Study had on black people. The work from Marcella Alsan at the Stanford Medical School and Marianne Wanamaker at the University of Tennessee provides evidence for a strong claim: that by 1980, the public revelation of the Tuskegee Study in 1972 had reduced life expectancy among black men over 45 by over a year.

The study provides causal evidence in a body of research that stretches back a decade, and it is a major revelation. As *New York Magazine* notes, the main conclusion of Alsan and Wanamaker's work is that the Tuskegee Study was responsible for over a third of the life expectancy gap between older black men and white men in 1980. But the conclusions extend beyond that and fit with a body of anecdotal evidence from

physicians and patients. Disclosure of the Tuskegee Study disrupted a slow convergence of black health outcomes with white health outcomes in the mid-20th century, accelerated an erosion of trust in doctors, and dampened health-seeking behavior and health-care utilization for black men. And it did so more for those who were more

## The disclosure of the Tuskegee Study eroded health-seeking behavior for African-Americans.

similar to the Tuskegee Study's unwitting participants and those who were closely connected to the community of Tuskegee.

For Alsan and Wanamaker, the study spoke to longstanding interests, but required some methodological innovations. "From the medical side I had been sort of acutely aware of the Tuskegee experiment," Alsan told me. "It would come up among the medical staff and even occasionally with patients. So I think that was one of the seeds that made me think that this could potentially be important."

Read the **story**, more about the health **repercussions**, and learn **more** about the Tuskegee experiments. ■

## 'PATIENT ZERO,' continued North America.

A team of researchers at the University of Arizona sequenced HIV virus taken from Canadian flight attendant Gaetan Dugas, the man called "Patient Zero" in the best-selling book *And the Band Played On*, which chronicled the early days of the AIDS epidemic in America.

The scientists also sequenced the virus from eight other men infected with HIV during the 1970s. From these genetic codes, the scientists estimate HIV came to the U.S. from Haiti in 1970 or 1971, but it went undetected by doctors for years.

"The virus got to New York City pretty darn early," says evolutionary biologist Michael Worobey, who led the study. "It was really under the radar for a decade or so."

The disease spread around New York City for a few years, with the number of infections doubling each year. Then in 1976, one person took the virus across the country to San Francisco, Worobey and his team found.

But the study, published Wednesday in the journal *Nature*, offers more than just a record of HIV's path. It also finally puts to rest one of the most famous narratives surrounding the AIDS epidemic — an urban legend that all got started because of the misinterpretation of the letter O.

Back in the early '80s, behavioral scientist William Darrow was a young scientist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. He drew the assignment of a lifetime: Figure out why gay men in Los Angeles were dying of a strange illness.

Doctors were stumped. Some scientists thought maybe it was caused by "poppers," nitrite-based chemicals that are inhaled recreationally.

Listen/read the **story**, **more** on Gaetan Dugas, and get **information** on living with HIV. ■

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