They may not be reused after decay if leakage is caused by saturation with contaminants. However, they may be reused if leakage is caused by excessive air flow.

It is common knowledge that the binding of Xe-133 is a rather loose arrangement. Migration without air flow has been demonstrated by others. We have demonstrated on our trap, the Nuclear Associates trap, and the Atomic Development trap, the chromatographic-like phenomena seen when air is washed continously over the Xe-133 trapped on the charcoal bed. Subsequent decay of all three cartridges and later reuse revealed no indication of saturation. One can conclude that the leakage which developed had nothing to do with saturation or "poisoning." Statement 6 of the discussion section of my letter stands as written.

I am totally confused by Mr. Panetta's statement that "a monitor on the output of a xenon trap, although good in principle, is an after the fact confirmation of a leakage situation." He then proceeds to describe a procedure where they collect exhaust from the output of a xenon trap and monitor the collected exhaust for radioactivity. I cannot find any difference between these techniques with regard to after-the-factness.

I would like to point out that my statement on this subject (No. 7 in the discussion) was very clear and general in nature, and made no reference to the method of monitoring the traps. The statement was that "the exhaust port of xenon traps should be monitored continously or at least daily for Xe-133." From Mr. Panetta's statements, I must conclude that he agrees with the "continous" portion of this statement and I would join with him in urging all users of traps not having a built-in monitoring system to collect *all* the trap effluent in 50 l bags and quantitatively analyze the contents of each bag for Xe-133.

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DOSE CALIBRATOR PERFORMANCE AND QUALITY CONTROL

We would like to comment and provide further information regarding the performance of dose calibrators as reported by Kowalsky, Johnston, and Chan in the *Journal of Nuclear Medicine Technology* of March 1977 (*1*). Of particular interest is the failure of a CRC-6A dose calibrator (Manufactured for E.R. Squibb & Sons, Inc. by Capintec, Inc.) to remain linear over a wide range of activity.

TABLE 1. Calibrator Information

Calibrator	Model	Serial No.	Chamber No.
1	CRC-6A	62326	R-2135
2	CRC-6A	62617	T-836
3	CRC-4	41646	T-900
4	CRC-6A	62617	T-4626
5	CRC-6A	62617	R-2089

Our firm has used Capintec calibrators for some time and feels that they are the most reliable and convenient calibrator available. We did, however, experience a situation similar to that of Kowalsky et al. (*1*), in that a new CRC-6A gave extremely low readings when performing whole vial assays from large Mo-99/Tc-99m generators. During a period of three months we accumulated data on five ionization chambers, which were placed into three dose calibrators. The technical information regarding the calibrator type, serial number, and most importantly, the ionization chamber number is presented on Table 1.

Our primary calibrator (Table 1, No. 1) has proved over a period of a year and a half to provide a linear response up to 1.8 Ci of activity. Since the other calibrators exhibited variation, a comparison of whole-vial generator eluates was undertaken between calibrator No. 1 and each of the other calibrators. The percent difference for each is graphically illustrated in Fig. 1. In all cases the readings were lower than for calibrator No. 1.

It is interesting to note that ionization chambers with Capintec lot designation "T" all exhibited marked nonlinearity, especially in the high-activity range. The two "R"-lot chambers remained linear throughout a wide range of activity showing less than 3% variation. We brought this information to the attention of personnel at

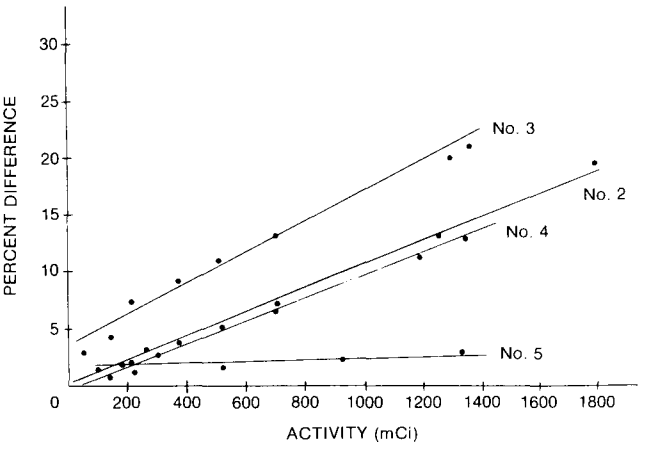

FIG. 1. Comparative calibrator assay of whole-vial generator eluate.

Capintec, who stated that apparently an impurity was present in the gas of the T-lot chambers which caused the nonlinearity. Because of this, we currently use only the R-lot chambers.

We would caution departments receiving a new calibrator to study the linearity of the machine over the total range of the department's activity usage. This can be accomplished by comparative assay if another calibrator is available and known to be linear, or by the concentration-volume method mentioned by Kowalsky et al. (*1*). A probelm with the concentration-volume method is the fact that saline reservoir generator systems provide a different elution volume each time. This can be overcome by using the weighing technique described by Benedetto (*2*).

We hope that this communication will provide further information regarding the performance and quality control of dose calibrators.

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MORE ON DOSE CALIBRATOR PERFORMANCE

The article "Dose Calibrator Performance and Quality Control" in the March 1977 issue by Kowalsky, Johnston, and Chan is to be commended and is long overdue.

Mr. Kowalsky, however, reports an experience with a Radx Mark V dose calibrator which we have not been able to duplicate. First of all, it should be noted that the Mark V has been out of production for several years. It is also of interest that Mr. Kowalsky and his group have the dubious honor of owning the very first Mark V ever manufactured. Early Mark Vs differ from later Mark Vs in two respects, which could account for the "saturation effect" that Kowalsky et al. experienced.

The first difference is that the first-stage amplifier would saturate at an output equivalent to 700–800 mCi of Tc-99m. This was modified in later units by adding an electronic relay and a 3.0×10^8 Ω resistor in such a fashion that when the 0–1000-mCi range selector button is depressed, the amplifier gain is lowered by a factor of 10. With this modification, the Mark V is capable of reading up to 7–8 Ci without saturating the amplifier. Our number of 700–800 mCi of Tc-99m required to saturate the first-stage amplifier is suspiciously close to the saturation effect at 709 mCi seen by Kowalsky et al.

Our records indicate that Mr. Kowalsky's unit was modified in May 1975 to include this relay and resistor. Unless this work was done prior to that time, amplifier saturation does not explain the effect seen. The experiment the authors ran on amplifier saturation would also negate this as a possible cause.

The second difference between early and late units is found in the ionization chamber. Chambers in early Mark Vs were made from acrylic butyl styrene (ABS) plastic, which was not checked for linearity at high activities since at that time high activities were not employed in clinical nuclear medicine. Later Mark Vs and the new Meletron utilize a polystyrene ionization chamber which has been checked for linearity at activities greater than 2 Ci. The amplifiers are capable of producing linear assays to levels greater than 10 Ci.

There are two possible explanations why their chamber may saturate at the levels indicated. The first is something all users of dose calibrators should be aware of—that an ionization chamber has a finite life and that one of the symptoms of aging is a lower saturation point. The chamber in Mr. Kowalsky's unit has never been replaced. The second possible explanation is that the ABS plastic had higher levels of contaminants than the polystyrene. When we were building ABS chambers, the raw material used had to be carefully selected; otherwise very erratic readings and low saturation points were experienced as a result of impurities in the plastic. There may be a relationship between saturation point and the amounts of impurities.

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ONE APPROACH TO IN-SERVICE EDUCATION

Reading the literature available and attending seminars and meetings are two time-honored means of continuing one's education. When time and funds are short, however, in-service education programs offer an excellent alternative.

Each nuclear medicine department can and should develop an in-service education program. The Joint Commission of the Accreditation of Hospitals states that, "all nuclear medicine personnel should participate in in-service education programs as well as outside workshops and professional society meetings.... The director shall contribute to the in-service education of nuclear medicine personnel." (*1*).

All nuclear medicine technologists have an excellent opportunity for learning on a daily basis within their own