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Apollo Bjt NL 400, Two Takes Total 640

AP Aerospace Writer

SPACE CENTER, Houston AP - Apollo 15 astronauts David R. Scott and James B. Irwin suffered brief spells of irregular heart rhythm while they were on the moon, probably as a result of extreme fatigue, the chief doctor of the astronauts said Friday.

Irwin also suffered from spells of dizziness in space and all three Apollo 15 crewmen have failed to fully recover from the effects of weightlessness as fast as expected, Dr. Charles A. Berry, chief of the space center's medical office, told a news conference.

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Apollo Bjt NL 460, Two Takes Total 700

By PAUL RECKER

AP Aerospace Writer

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Irwin also suffered from spells of dizziness in space and all three Apollo 15 crewmen have failed to fully recover from the effects of weightlessness as fast as expected, Dr. Charles A. Berry, chief of the space center's medical office, told a news conference.

Berry said the arrhythmic heart beats and Irwin's dizziness were concealed from newsmen earlier because tests still were being conducted and complete information was not known.

The doctor said that until Friday, Irwin was still suffering from effects of space weightlessness. This, he said, caused some dizziness. The astronaut also reported that his bed on earth at first felt like "it was tilted about 30 degrees," when he lay down. These symptoms have now disappeared.

However, Berry said Scott, Irwin and Alfred M. Worden, the third crewman, are yet to return to the pre-flight physical norms as measured by very precise instruments.

The physician emphasized, however, "there is no medical danger so far as the crew is concerned."

"Things from past space flights were all going in a pattern and now suddenly these guys don't fit the pattern," he said.

The irregular heart beats of Irwin and Scott on the moon's surface, said Berry, were very brief and not serious. But he said they were the first such irregularities noted in astronauts since the earth orbit flight of John Glenn in 1962.

The doctor described the irregularities as "premature auricular and ventricular contractions," which lasted only about 10 heart beats on both moon walkers.

"These are usually associated with fatigue," he said. "It's also been noted in instances of low potassium level and with increased adrenalin flow. We feel that all of these were present in our crew."

Berry said because of the fatigue levels, "which often the individual is not aware of himself," flight surgeons are considering recommending changes in the flight plans of Apollo 16 and Apollo 17, next year. Both of these missions presently are to follow timelines on and about the moon very similar to that of the 12-day Apollo 15 flight.

In earlier news conferences, Berry has said that one of the prime areas of concern in the planned Skylab program is the study of long term effects on man exposed to the weightlessness of space for periods of 28 to 84 days. Skylab is scheduled to begin in 1973 and the program includes one three-man mission of 28 days and two three-man missions of 58 days. The missions will be confined to earth orbit.