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note*

Brisbane, 14th June 1945

Dr. Robert A. Kehoe,
University of Cincinnati,
CINCINNATI 19,
OHIO,
U. S. A.

Dear Doctor Kehoe,

I would not wish you to measure my appreciation of your instructive letter and liberal donation of literature on lead poisoning by the delay in acknowledging them.

Your strictures on my note on lead in normal urine are well deserved. The note was written in haste primarily for the purpose of stressing the necessity for keeping the lead level in urine as low as possible, preferably below .05 milligram.

The level that you regard as innocuous may, if maintained, do harm to the organism, which may not be manifested in the kidneys.

You are well aware that one part of fluorine per million in water will affect the teeth of about ten percent of the children below the age of ten years who consume it regularly. Fluorine like lead is a cumulative poison and although there is evidence only in the teeth of the effect of minute amounts it may be injurious to other portions of the body.

The world is more or less an immense hospital ward. A healthy man, said Carlyle, is the most meritorious product of nature, but where do we find such a man. The statement that a level of .15 mgm. of lead is compatible with health appears to be based on negative evidence or on observations over too short a period.

We had gained the impression from our results that age was secreting more lead than youth, which has now been dispelled by one of the papers forwarded by you.

The Queensland Department of Health is very active in reducing the lead hazard in foodstuffs, paint, toys, crayons and tobacco. In Queensland, no person shall use or put any lead containing more than five per cent of soluble lead (lead soluble in 0.25 per cent HCl) upon any part of a house, rail, blind, gate or fence to which children under the age of fourteen years have easy access. As metallic lead is also a poison, use of it in toys is also prohibited. Lead in children's crayons is limited to 0.5 per cent.

I would say that my note on lead illustrates that there is much published that need not have been if adequate use had been made of the literature. Your valuable contribution to our library has rectified that position.

This laboratory, like your own, is concerned with much war work.

I thank you again, Doctor Kehoe, for your courtesy and assistance.

Yours sincerely,

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