

July 20, 1970

Dr. Jennifer Loggie
Acting Director
Division of Clinical Pharmacology
University of Cincinnati

Dear Doctor Loggie:

I find that I have not replied to your letter of May 19th and I am embarrassed that this is the case. Perhaps you can forgive my apparent discourtesy when I tell you what was done some weeks ago.

I have not been unmindful of the tragic problem of lead poisoning among children in this and other cities. I was so distressed by the departure of Hugo Smith from our midst, that I went over to see Dr. Pratt, to find out what steps his Department had taken to fill this gap in its performance. I have made myself available to Dr. Pratt as well as to Dr. Baumslag and her students, to assist in any possible way. I shall continue to look into this matter, in which I have been engaged (until recently) for many years.

The problem to which you refer, of maintaining contact with the people involved, is now a serious one, since it must be given a new start under the direction of one person who will, like Hugo Smith, keep after it incessantly. There have been periods since the thirties, notably during the war, when staff facilities diminished greatly, when the record of non-performance says that few or no cases occurred. This part of the problem is one of the alertness of house staff.

The main problem, however, is that of preventing this quite unnecessary disease in this community and elsewhere. What is needed, essentially, is the determination to wipe out the sources. This can be done at considerable cost in effort and money, by the renovation of the housing responsible for the exposure. This is a social and economic problem, which must be recognized and dealt with properly by the appropriate authorities. We have pussy-footed with it for a quarter of a century in what I consider to be a disgraceful manner. I know the difficulties fairly well, and many of them are real. They seem fairly puny, however, when set against the actual loss of life which we seem to have accepted as a misfortune for which the citizens of Cincinnati have no responsibility.

Please do not misunderstand me. I have the greatest respect for the maintenance of the record, for the clinical skill which results in case finding, and the gathering of material for teaching and for the stimulation of further research. The fact remains that keeping tab on the casualties of an utterly preventable disease is a blot on the performance of a civilized community. There should be, after more than a quarter century of information, no cases of infantile lead poisoning to record. You may note that I did not include the care and treatment of cases in my list of assets above. I do not depreciate the medical care provided for the victims of this disease, but I prefer to say very little about the futility of our medical therapy. There is no satisfactory treatment of the disease. The death toll in the serious cases has been but little affected. The only available measure is prevention, and we have done poorly in

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this rich country (and city) with this part of the issue.

I am taking a much needed vacation, leaving Cincinnati tomorrow. When I return, I shall look further into our plans and purposes and be prepared to render useful assistance in getting this matter taken care of.

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.
Professor Emeritus of
Occupational Medicine

RAK:wb

Dictated but not read

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