

NEWS From



Lead Industries Association, Inc.

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RELEASE:

Further information:

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IMMEDIATELY

NEW YORK, N.Y., September 10 -- Charges made by Clair C. Patterson, of the division of geological sciences, California Institute of Technology, as to harmful distribution of lead in the atmosphere and in the human bloodstream contradict all reliable medical and public health data on lead as a health hazard, Don G. Fowler, Director of Health and Safety, Lead Industries Association, declared today.

Mr. Fowler's statement was made in the light of recent publicity given Dr. Patterson's assertions that lead pollution in the air has reached "alarming" proportions.

"The Patterson findings," Mr. Fowler pointed out, "are based on his own geological studies of lead occurrence and his own interpretive extensions upon these studies into non-geological fields, ignoring the recognized body of clinical and biological evidence. By this technique," Mr. Fowler continued, "he has established through inferential analysis a level of so-called 'natural' lead content in blood that is unsupported by any medical evidence."

"On the contrary, the existing body of medical data establishes that the amount of lead consumed and retained by the public is well below toxic levels. Furthermore, lead is not a significant factor in air pollution and represents no public health problem."

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"This assurance of safety," Mr. Fowler continued, "rests not only upon numerous public health studies, continuous medical reporting, and clinical analysis, but also upon the widely renowned research program that has been carried out for many years at University of Cincinnati's College of Medicine. This work is directed by Dr. Robert A. Kehoe, one of the world's leading authorities on the physiological effects of lead. Other supporting data are found in the results of extensive public health investigations conducted by the U. S. Public Health Service and state public health authorities."

The most intensive of these studies was reported this year by the U. S. Public Health Service and is known as the Survey of Lead in the Atmosphere of Three Urban Cities. Its findings, based on comprehensive investigations in Los Angeles, Cincinnati, and Philadelphia, again confirm that lead content in the air is very low and as such does not constitute a public health hazard. It further supports and augments the data compiled by the National Air Sampling Network indicating no increase in lead concentrations in the three cities over the last five years. In one city, Cincinnati, the trend has been downward.

In addition to reporting environmental data, this U.S.P.H.S. study included a broad scale human sampling program to establish parallel biological data. The biological samplings obtained revealed no significant accumulation of lead. Blood and urine analysis from groups having high atmospheric exposure (police, mailmen, etc.) also

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showed low lead levels. Blood lead values for these groups, expressed in micrograms of lead per 100 grams of whole blood, ranged from a low of 13 to a high of 31. Accepted normal values for occupationally exposed persons are from 40 to 60.

Dr. Leonard Goldwater, a noted professor of occupational medicine at Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons, commented on the Patterson theory, "A mathematically deduced statement of the presumed lead levels of pre-industrial man has little or no bearing on the health problem we face in our environment today. What we need as a guideline for action are contemporary clinical facts. We have on hand extensive evidence that there has been no increase in lead levels in the general public over the last 30 years and that lead levels in the human body today are in ranges considered safe by competent medical authorities. This is substantiated by researches I have made of blood and urine samples of people in 15 different countries. I plan to report these findings to the World Health Organization in Geneva this October."

"In light of this great weight of reliable medical data," Mr. Fowler concluded, "the public can rest assured that lead constitutes no public health problem."

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