

May 7, 1970

Professor Enrico C. Vigliani, M.D.
Clinica del Lavoro
Via San Barnaba, 8
20122 Milano, Italy

Dear Enrico:

In agreeing to prepare the articles submitted at the Conference in Amsterdam for publication in the Archives of Environmental Health, I took on a rather large and somewhat troublesome task, since many of the papers had not been prepared for such disposition, and some had to be modified linguistically to fit the American journal. I have taken the group literally and have not hesitated to alter the language, without changing the meaning of the authors.

In the case of your article the alterations have been simple, and I'm sure you will not object to my editorial intervention. The one significant thing which I have done is to improve the documentation of the background. Your references, with one or two exceptions, were satisfactory for the group at Amsterdam, but were not sufficient for readers of the Archives who lack familiarity with the pertinent work of the past forty years, and knew little about the people involved. Let me be specific below and give you my reasons for deleting certain of your references and including others.

First, with respect to Haley's article, the controversy concerning the significance of "Environmental Contamination" with lead was not handled well in this article. I do not believe we dare deal with it in his manner, and I doubt that you are fully aware of the undesirability of introducing this article, alone, as the background of this controversy. I have deleted it because I think it is unwise to regard it as an adequate discussion of the subject.

Second (and skipping to your 3rd reference), I have deleted the article by Kubota and Losee, because it is certainly not the best reference for two reasons. The methods of analysis employed by them gave fairly good information about a number of metals, but not sufficiently precise information about lead. On the face of the evidence submitted, the findings on lead are generally low, in my opinion. Certainly, the documentation of the reproducibility of the results and of the specific sensitivity of the method is not adequate. The best and most comprehensive information in the entire literature of this field is that given in the publication of the Public Health Service No. 999-AP-12, which I have included among your citations, as reference No. 1. (Incidentally, this survey is now being repeated to include 6 American cities - Cincinnati, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, New York, Chicago and, I believe, Washington, D.C.)

By the same token, I am including, with respect to lead in food and beverages, a reference to the First Harben Lecture (Reference No. 2) which contains more valid information on this subject than does any other single publication. I don't believe any article on this subject should fail to refer to this source

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of information, and I suspect that you omitted it only because most of the people at Amsterdam were familiar with it. (I am reluctant to refer thus to the work of this Laboratory, in speaking to you, but once this output of our Conference is published in a national scientific journal, it should refer to the really extensive sources of information.)

I have also taken the liberty of eliminating the reference to Len Goldwater's publication (with Jacobs) on lead in the blood. You may not agree with me in this, but in my view, much too much has been made of these data. Len is a good friend of mine, and his idea in obtaining these data appeared to be a good one, but I have never thought he carried it out very well, for the reason that the method of obtaining the samples was not good enough, while the data, by themselves, without the information which should accompany them, are not sufficient for the purpose which he undertook to serve. Incidentally, he is the last man to claim to be expert in this field, regarding it only as an incidental effort to get wider information than was available. This was done, but how far it is to be trusted is quite another matter. I have never said anything about this previously, but, on the other hand, I have never had to take any responsibility for it previously. As a guest editor for the Archives, I have some such responsibility.

The references to the observations of Yamamoto and Teisinger remain in the article as you placed them.

I trust that you will accept my comments in the spirit in which they have been made, and I have no doubt that they will be so accepted.

As I indicated above, this has been quite a chore, but I believe that almost everyone who has had a hand in the Conference will have reason to be pleased at the publication, which will appear in a special issue. Several of the papers were rejected by reviews, requested by the Chief Editor, for reasons which I have to accept. Others have had to be abstracted either because they had been published elsewhere by their authors, or because they were not in such form as I could make acceptable. However, I think we shall be able to present the parent organization with this as a useful report for their guidance.

With kindest professional and personal regards, and my warmest greetings to your charming wife.

Yours sincerely,

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

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