

April 26, 1973

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The primary reason for limiting the content of lead in paint is to prevent childhood lead poisoning.

In this as well as other subjects with which we work there is no legal definition that I know of of poisoning.

The presence of a poison in a system is certainly not sufficient evidence of poisoning.

Not all measurable effects of a material commonly labeled "poison" are toxic. Increases or decreases in enzymes, for example are not likely to be meaningful below a certain magnitude.

The literature on childhood lead poisoning needs a very comprehensive review in the light of the above.

Needed are:

1. Establishment of significant parameters of adverse effects of lead.
2. Definition of adverse effects of lead.
3. Establishment of the prevalence and incidence of adverse effects of lead.
4. The relationship between anemia and blood lead and pica.

Anemia may well be the cause of pica in many cases and the severe anemia is the cause of some of the neurological sequelae ascribed to lead.

5. There is significant variation in the analysis of lead which must be considered in evaluation of the literature.

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