

City Cites Peril Of Lead Poisoning

The City Health Department today reported that the record of 49 cases of lead poisoning, including 13 deaths, established last year already has been reached in 1960.

Dr. Eugene A. Gillis, health commissioner, said there have been a total of 217 cases and 41 deaths reported in the city since 1955.

"Any illness which takes the life of one out of every five vic-

tims must be considered a very serious problem, particularly when more than 80 per cent of the cases have occurred among children between 18 and 36 months of age," he said.

Dr. Gillis said more than half the cases were the result of victims chewing painted surfaces or chips of paint containing a dangerous amount of lead.

Lead Poisoning Study Is Pushed

The city's efforts to determine the cause of accidental lead poisoning enters its final phase today.

Dr. Norman R. Ingraham, deputy health commissioner, said more than 250 blood samplings will be taken from residents of the Northeast this week as part of the study of lead in the atmosphere.

The survey is a joint venture of the City's Health Department and the U. S. Public Health Service. It was started after the cause of 25 per cent of the lead poisoning deaths in the city last year was listed as unknown.

Blood sampling stations will be set up in the Northeast starting today. The stations will be at St. Jerome's Church, 8100 Collax st., from 7 to 9 P. M. tonight and Wednesday and at the Pennypack Clinic, from 1 to 3 P. M. and from 7 to 9 P. M. Tuesday and Thursday.

Samples will be taken only from persons who have lived in the area bounded by Roosevelt Blvd., Pennypack Park, Frankford av. and Grant av. for at least five years, said Dr. Hanlon.

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Lead Poisoning Studied Here

U. S. and City Begin Check of Air Here

A study of the amount of lead in the air here and its effects on people has been started by the U. S. Public Health Service and the City Department of Public Health.

Dr. Eugene A. Gillis, health commissioner, said the joint study will determine the amount of lead people breathe daily, the possible connection with the 25 per cent of lead poisoning cases in which the source is unknown and what part the use of tetra-ethyl lead in gasoline plays in the picture.

He said Philadelphia and Los Angeles were chosen to take part in the study because of their well-recognized programs in air pollution control and the lead poisoning control program in effect here.

Dr. John J. Hanlon, director of public health services, said Dr. A. C. Brown has been assigned by the Federal agency to work with the local staff in obtaining blood samplings of persons in different occupational and residential categories.

The city last year reported 59 cases of lead poisoning of which 32 occurred among children under five years of age.

"The source of the lead in some 25 per cent of the cases which produced 12 deaths was undetermined," said Dr. Hanlon.

City Sets Out To Cut Cases of Lead Poisoning

76 Pct. of Deaths

Are Children Under 2; Unsafe Paint Blamed

The City Health Department wants an amendment to the health code to help fight the hazard of lead poisoning.

Four persons have died this year from lead poisoning. Nine persons died last year.

The accident control division of the Department of Public Health is pushing preparation of the proposed amendment which the department hopes will give the health code a strong set of teeth.

It will be similar to an ordinance enacted several years ago in Baltimore, which, according to Salvatore Miano, assistant chief of the accident control division, has been effective in reducing the number of lead poisoning victims.

More Cases Reported

While fatalities this year have been lower than in 1951, the number of cases reported have been higher: 134 this year as against 105 in 1951.

"It's a real problem," said Miano, "but without a law with some teeth in it we're considerably hampered. In the absence of legislation, we've been doing the best we can."

Appeals to owners of tenements to remove layers of toxic paints and resurface the areas with lead-free paints have been ineffective, he said.

Unsafe Paint

Miano estimated that approximately 60 per cent of the victims lived in homes with unsafe paint, and that 74 per cent of the deaths were among children one to two years old.

A compulsion on the part of certain children to chew on window sills (medical authorities have a name for it—Pica) underscores the necessity of removing the dangerous paint, often an undercoating applied decades ago and subsequently covered with new paint.

That's why, Department of Health officials believe, one large wedge of the city is the area from which most cases are reported.

PGH Meeting Called On Lead Poisoning

The City Department of Public Health will hold a day-long symposium tomorrow on the control of lead poisoning among children.

The symposium, to be held at Philadelphia General Hospital, will begin at 9 A. M. and will bring together experts from the fields of medicine, health, welfare, industry and various community groups.

Dr. John J. Hanlon, director of community health services, said about 60 children in the city suffer from lead poisoning every year and an average of one out of six dies. He said most of the cases occur in areas of the city where homes are old and the interior surfaces are covered with several layers of paint.