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I read in a paper of Zielhuis (Arch Environ Health 1977) that you consider "that there is no method of sampling blood and of preparing films for examination which will demonstrate such a quantitative relationship between the frequency of occurrence of stippled erythrocytes in human peripheral blood and the intensity of exposure to lead and the extent of its absorption by individuals"

This problem is in the very center of a discussion in France as the law about occupational disease (2 juin 1977, states that a worker is considered to be submitted to occupational lead poisoning (without necessarily a compensation)

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- 1) A level of ALAU superior to 20 mg for 1000 ml
- 2) A concentration of hemoglobin in blood inferior to 13 g / 100 ml of blood
- 3) A frequency of occurrence of stippled erythrocytes superior to 1 for 1000 red blood cells

It seems that the number of notification of occupational disease is probably very reduced because the third condition is rarely fulfilled. Consequently, the organism of control ("Comité Sociale") has apparently no imperative reason to ask for a decrease of lead in air (we have no legal limit in France, only recommendation), and the level of lead in the factories is frequently very high.

I belong to a "Collectif maladies professionnelles" and the Unions have asked us to what extent this third condition is valid (basophilic stippling). Please, could you precise your criticisms against the use of this biological test?

In an other paper (James Dählgren 1978) I read that you consider that the important factor is the total body burden of lead. Now, in France, since new regulation, in the majority of the factories, the workers must shift post as soon as their level of ALAU is superior to 20 mg / 1000 ml. After one or some month of a lower exposition, they return to a high exposition, etc...etc...

What are the consequences on the health of this organization of work, in which the workers are alternatively submitted to low

Yours sincerely



And could you send me the reports of your principal papers on the problem of lead poisoning? Thank you